



What Can Our Community Afford?

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How Can We Help Make it Affordable?



Plan on Your Own First



Figure Out Your “House Payment”

- ▶ Do your financial planning first before beginning your infrastructure upgrade projects
 - Work with agencies like Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) to conduct a rate study
 - Include reserve funds, staffing needs and operation and maintenance costs in monthly rates
 - Conduct a community income study if necessary

Get Involved

- ▶ Use your community resources
 - Ecology staff can help your clerk or community volunteer to learn how to fill out payment request paperwork if you have a loan/grant
 - Partner with nonprofits in your community to increase grant opportunities
 - Encourage your public works staff to be a part of WOW (Water Operators of Washington) or other organizations so they can network with other public works staff
 - Join organizations like Evergreen Rural Water and Association of Washington Cities

Asset Management Plan

- ▶ Create an Asset Management Plan
 - Make it a “living document”
 - Ecology staff can help
 - Include your public works staff to identify equipment replacement and other future operation & maintenance needs
 - Tailor your infrastructure budget to reflect your management plan

Funding Opportunities

- ▶ Research the different funding types and how well they match with your proposed project
 - Ecology can help pull together a “tech team”
 - Commerce has a Small Communities Initiatives program that helps guide communities through a project from start to finish
 - The Governor’s Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) can help you with environmental permitting and governmental regulations
 - Attend conferences like IACC to learn about infrastructure funding opportunities

Energy Audit

- ▶ Work with your local energy provider to conduct an audit of your energy usage
- ▶ Identify equipment that has high energy usage and develop a plan to replace them with more efficient equipment
 - Are there alternative technologies that could offset costs?

Self-Help Resources

EPA Sustainability Resources:

<http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/sustain/resources.cfm>

Funding

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/funding>

<http://www.pwb.wa.gov>

Income Surveys

<http://www.infracfunding.wa.gov/>

Manage Your Projects

- ▶ Be in charge and involved in the process
 - Talk with other communities about their experiences with infrastructure planning/upgrades
 - Carefully review contract proposals
- ▶ Be a part of project management from planning through construction
 - Do you need a new system, or can the existing system be upgraded/retrofitted

Clean Water Act Amendments (beginning in fiscal year 2016)

- ▶ Before receiving funding, it will be required that the recipient has:
 - ▶ studied and evaluated the cost and effectiveness of the processes, materials, techniques, and technologies for carrying out the proposed project or activity
 - ▶ selected, to the maximum extent practicable, a project or activity that maximizes the potential for efficient water use, reuse, recapture, and conservation, and energy conservation taking into account:
 - the cost of constructing the project or activity;
 - the cost of operating and maintaining the project or activity over the life of the project or activity; and
 - the cost of replacing the project or activity;

Role of the Funding Agency

- ▶ Ecology’s role is to review documents for technical soundness and financial soundness
- ▶ Clean Water Act Amendments requires Ecology engineers to look more closely at whether the preferred alternative is the most fiscally responsible
- ▶ A technically sound, but not financially sound plan may not be deemed a good use of public funds and therefore not offered funding

Wrap Up

- ▶ Your community can help offset planning costs by doing as much non-technical legwork on your own
- ▶ Get motivated
- ▶ Get involved
- ▶ Stay involved
- ▶ Hire a technical expert for the technical pieces, but take charge of protecting the health and welfare of your community members
- ▶ There is no such thing as a stupid question
- ▶ Trust your instincts
- ▶ Our Ecology team is available to help you through the process