



O&M OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE COSTS & CONSIDERATIONS

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROCESS

This booklet briefly covers the Operations and maintenance considerations that should be reviewed for capital asset development in your community.

The process below illustrates one of many processes for future capital asset projects that originate with community will, are constrained by fiscal viability, and take a long-term view of the asset costs to build, operate, maintain, and replace when the asset becomes obsolete. Each project will follow a unique path, in some cases less thought-out than in others.

Future booklets will cover additional information pertinent to other sections and expound on the information provided here.

**THIS BOOKLET FOCUSES
ON OPERATIONS &
MAINTENANCE COST
CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR
COMMUNITY**

IDENTIFY FUTURE PROJECTS

Identify future projects through resident requests, political campaign promises, response to service deficits, crises and emergencies, current asset assessment

CREATE SCENARIOS & PRESENT TO PUBLIC/LEADERS

The data should then be used to highlight different scenarios on asset size and scope, and funding and revenue possibilities that help leadership consider “worst-case” to “best-case” scenarios. This info is then presented to city leadership.

LEADERSHIP DECIDES OR REQUESTS MORE INFO

At this point, leadership may request more information, request that additional scenarios and options be presented at a future meeting, or leadership may decide to build or quash the project.

DETERMINE COMMUNITY DESIRES

Ascertaining community aspirations for a given project will help community leaders scale asset creation appropriately. Capital assets satisfy community desires; multiple or varied assets can fulfill community interests in different ways.

IDENTIFY O&M COSTS

Having the single option or short list of options, the project manager must identify probable operations and maintenance (O&M) costs, using similar projects or other data as available.

LEADERSHIP OPERATES & MAINTAINS ASSET

After acquiring the asset, leadership and the community bear full responsibility for the asset’s operations and maintenance. Generally, communities should save funds for specific asset repairs and potential replacement in the long-run.

DEVELOP POTENTIAL OPTIONS

After identifying community needs and desires, leadership should think flexibly about what options exist to meet those needs and desires. These create a shortlist of options from which leaders will select a project.

DECIDE ON MOST DESIRED OPTION

At this point, leadership tasked with the project must decide on the best option for the community. When making big decisions, the Rural Planning Group recommends considering multiple potential projects.

LEADERSHIP DECIDES TO REPLACE OR RETIRE ASSET

Finally, when the asset is no longer fit for service, leadership must repair, replace, or retire the asset. Some assets (like water and sewer) are essentially not optional; others will be based on community desires.



*Capital facility
projects originate from
community needs,
desires, and political
motivations.*

This is not an encyclopedia of or “how to” guide for O&M considerations; rather, this document illustrates the key components of incorporating O&M assessment into decisions. The document helps readers understand (1) where O&M considerations fit into community asset planning, construction, and use and (2) recognize major steps they need to take in considering O&M costs as a factor in the decision to purchase, build, or not build the asset.

DEFINITION

Operation and Maintenance (O&M) costs are the ongoing costs associated with maintaining, cleaning, repairing, staffing, operating, and insuring an asset to continue its operation after it is acquired.

INTRODUCTION

Operations and maintenance (O&M) can become an afterthought for community leaders, especially when those leaders lack the resources (time, staff, understanding) to adequately assess the long-term costs of a project. Inattention to O&M can increase when communities receive grants that cover building costs for a project. Leaders assume they will figure out how to pay for O&M—or don't think of it at all—and that they “can't pass up on this grant opportunity.” The result is a potential overextension of community finances. This document intends to highlight the importance of O&M cost considerations and two fundamental principles that will help leaders as they consider O&M *before* an asset is constructed.

O&M considerations apply to every physical project a community undertakes. It is an integral component of the project's cost-benefit analysis and should be considered as an important part on final decisions to pursue or not pursue asset acquisition or construction.

SOURCE INFORMATION

The two major concepts in this document were gathered from interviews of experienced community leaders. Through a series of interviews and survey work, the Rural Planning Group collected thoughts and ideas from leaders representing a combined 203 years of administrative experience in over 20 cities, towns, special service districts, or other governmental entities.

MORE THAN
200
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

IN OVER
20
COMMUNITIES

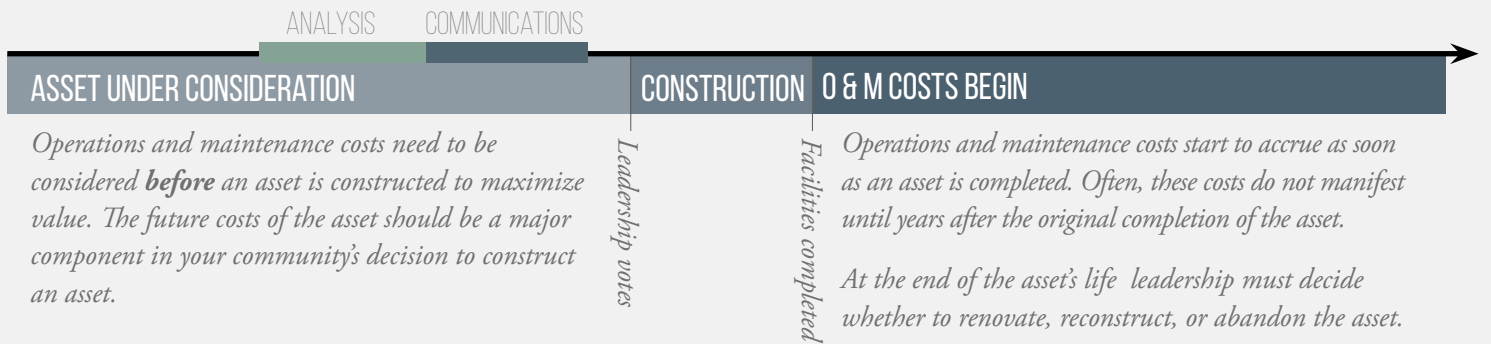


Capital Assets are a communities high cost assets; they include vehicles, buildings, parks, and other assets that will be used for long periods and exceed a cost threshold set by the community.

WHERE DOES O&M FIT IN AN ASSETS LIFE CYCLE?

All assets start as an idea, whether brought to community leaders by the public or identified by leaders themselves. At some point, leadership determines the asset is worth the financial investment and approves construction. At this point, backing out of the project becomes expensive and difficult. Advocates for the project are unlikely to allow leadership to back out; after construction, the community becomes financially liable for the asset's maintenance and operation.

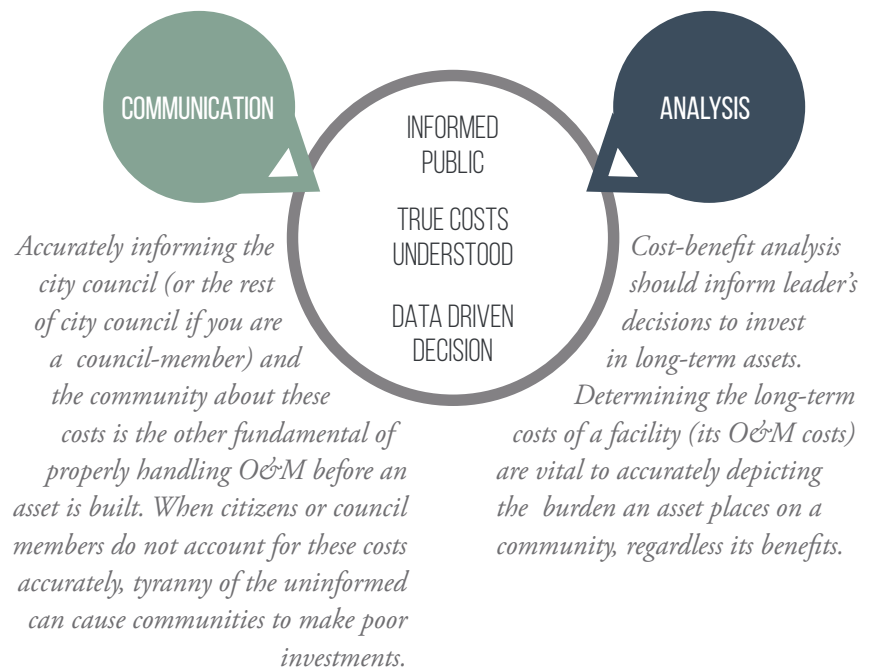
Consequently, the appropriate time to complete analysis of an asset's O&M costs is **before** leadership votes to approve construction of the asset. The analysis must be completed with enough time to inform leadership *and* citizens of the long-term obligation the asset will create for tax payers. This ensures the public is willing to foot the bill for long-term expenses and that leadership can feel confident in the project's fiscal viability.



ANALYSIS & COMMUNICATION: KEYS TO GOOD ASSESSMENT

Analysis and communications emerged as the primary concepts associated with good O&M management from surveys and interviews with community leaders and officials.

Leaders stated that ensuring analysis is completed correctly and that cost information is provided simply and accurately to both the public and decision makers ensures informed decision making for future asset acquisition or construction.



ANALYSIS

Accurate information improves leadership's ability to incorporate O&M costs into their decision to purchase, build, or not to build capital assets. This section provides ideas and insights that can be applied to a wide range of projects. It is a reference document for considering the political and financial feasibility of a capital project.

Survey respondents recommended analysis of comparable facilities from multiple communities. The communities used in the analysis should have similar socio-demographics and climates. **Leaders identified this as the most effective way to estimate the true cost of maintaining and operating a capital asset.** Most communities will be able to find a project similar to theirs within the State of Utah. This is a cheap, effective way to determine the feasibility and long-term viability of a proposed asset's creation. Similarly, it informs leaders of potential hidden costs that they have not recognized.

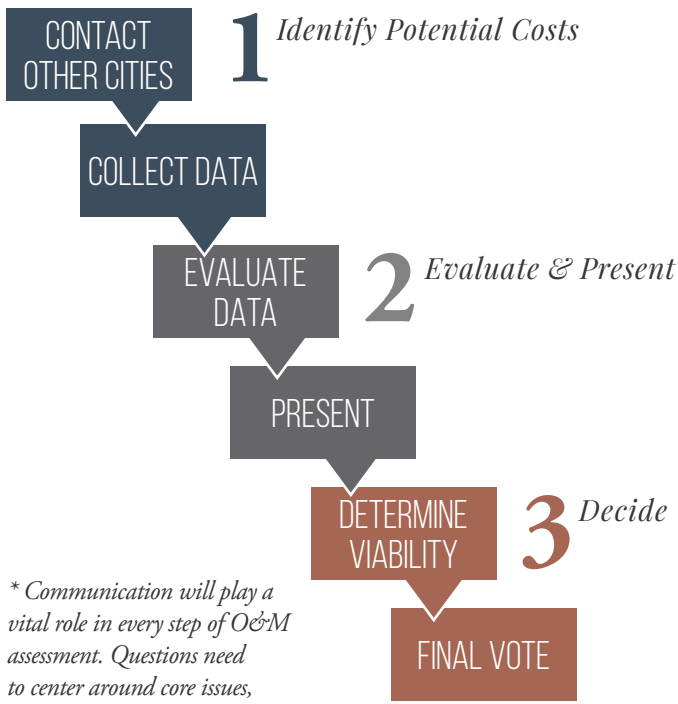
Multiple comparisons improves an analysis' accuracy, when available. This is easier for a project like a fire station and more difficult for uniquely designed projects. Multiple comparisons account for variations between projects, offer more certain conclusions about costs, and provide protection against political fallout by demonstrating due diligence. Still, if data from multiple assets are not available, analyzing one comparable asset is significantly better than going into a project with no knowledge of what long-term operational costs could be.

The table on the right lists questions leaders should take into account when analyzing comparable assets from different communities. It is a starting point for comparative analysis. Considerations unique to each project will need to be collected and discussed by city leaders.

These questions should also be asked to the engineering firm and contractor who you are hiring to complete the project to verify the information you collected from other communities. Significant differences between your builder's estimates and the information from other communities should be investigated thoroughly.

Have we considered...

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
<i>Size</i>	How do the assets compare in size? Square footage? Number of floors? Etc.
<i>Longevity</i>	How long before key systems needed repairs (i.e. pumps/HVAC etc.)? What is the useful life estimate for their project? What are you told by builders about your project? Are they similar?
<i>Community</i>	Is the population similar in size, age spread, income levels, gender balance, etc.? How could differences impact asset use?
<i>Wages</i>	Do comparable projects employ staff? What do cities with similar assets pay in annual wages for continued operations?
<i>Repairs</i>	How much do repairs cost for comparable assets over time? How frequently are repairs needed? What are the most frequent repairs made? Is staff capable of completing the repairs or are specialists required?
<i>Revenue</i>	If applicable, what type of revenue do comparable facilities generate? What percentage of their costs are covered by revenues?
<i>Fee</i>	If applicable, what fees are charged for asset use and how were those fees assessed? What is the goal of the fees? What percentage of costs are other communities able to offset with fee collection?
<i>Funding</i>	In addition to revenues the asset generates, how do communities with similar assets fund the O&M costs for the asset? Is it subsidized through the general fund? How much?
<i>Unexpected costs</i>	What construction and O&M costs surprised other communities as they built and use their asset? How will we prepare for those costs?
<i>Age</i>	How new are the assets you are comparing? How will this impact comparison data? What can we learn about what is coming in the future from older facilities?
<i>Type of Systems</i>	Will your asset use the same brands for its major systems or materials? Are your materials and systems higher quality? Lower? The same? How will this affect longevity?
<i>Location</i>	Are the comparison assets in very different climates? Will differences impact longevity and needed repairs? Will seasonal use vary?



** Communication will play a vital role in every step of O&M assessment. Questions need to center around core issues, and collected data needs to be interpreted correctly by those presenting and receiving the data.*

This flow-chart illustrates simplified steps in good comparative analysis. These steps should be taken before the final decision to build or purchase an asset is made. These steps were taken from the survey and represent the three most common responses.

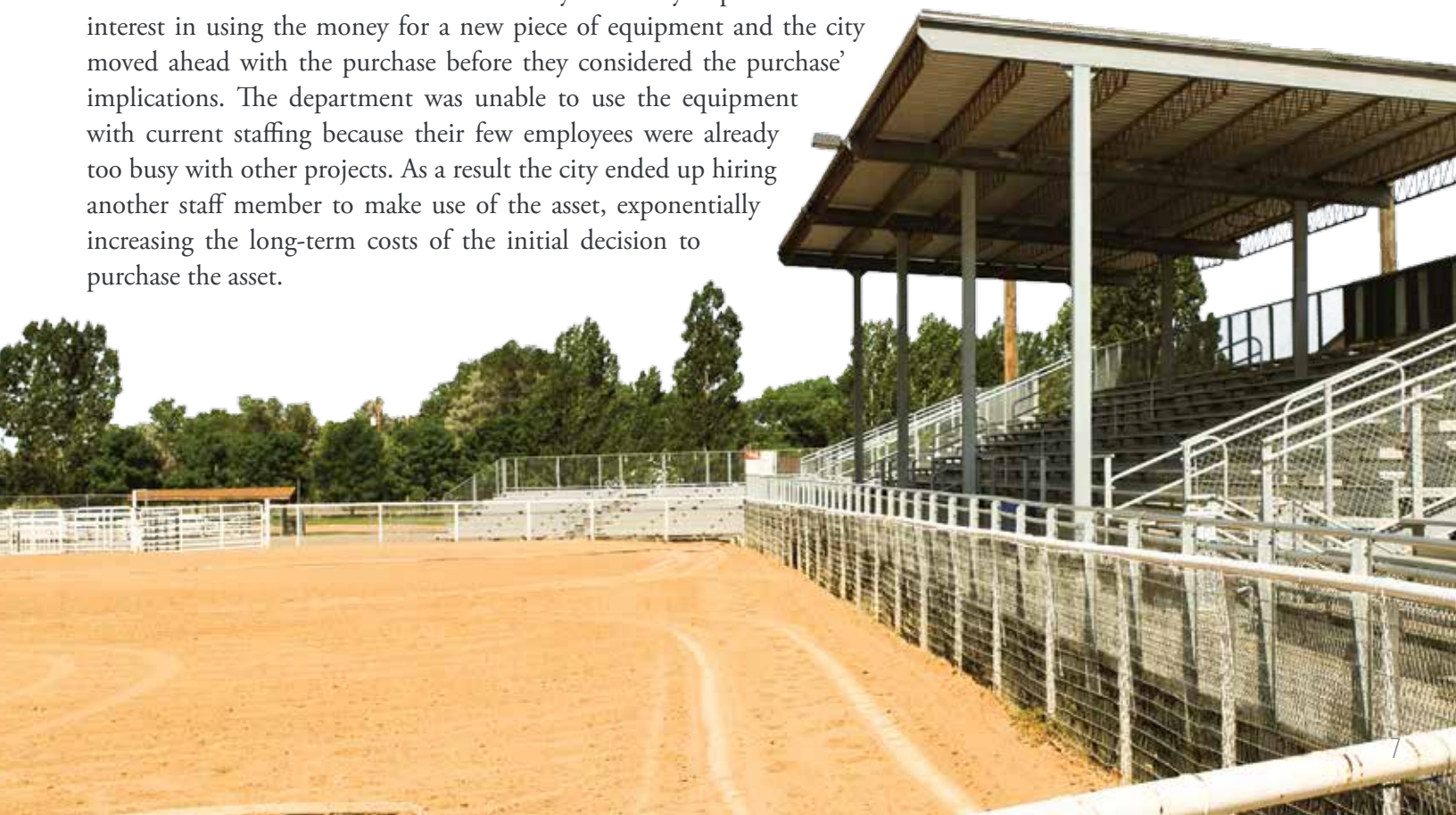
1 Contact other cities (county, etc.) and review what costs they've had with their asset. Document and aggregate the data.

2 Evaluate the data by assessing similarities between your proposed project and the comparable projects you assessed. Using the data, develop a most likely, high, and low O&M cost estimate. These scenarios then need to be presented to elected leaders clearly.

3 At this point, decision makers need to determine project viability by informing the public of O&M costs and potential subsidies the community may have to provide. After informing the public, leaders should decide whether to construct the asset.

Most projects include large systems that require preventative maintenance; for example, a pool pump system for a large community pool. For these components of a project it is wise to consult with experts in the field. People familiar with these systems will give the best, most up-to-date information on the longevity of and expected repair horizons for the asset.

One interviewee highlighted the importance of analyzing all possible future costs of an asset with a brief story. Their city had uncommitted funds at the end of the year. A city department stated interest in using the money for a new piece of equipment and the city moved ahead with the purchase before they considered the purchase' implications. The department was unable to use the equipment with current staffing because their few employees were already too busy with other projects. As a result the city ended up hiring another staff member to make use of the asset, exponentially increasing the long-term costs of the initial decision to purchase the asset.



STEPS TO GOOD ANALYSIS

Analysis of any type must be objective to be useful. The purpose of analysis is not to justify preconceived notions of an asset's fiscal viability but is instead to gather sufficient data to facilitate data driven decision making in place of emotional management of public funds. Steps identified in the survey included:

1. Identifying potential costs
2. Evaluating data & presenting to residents and leadership
3. Deciding on the project

The process of contacting other communities to explore their experiences with specific assets will help frame up what data is needed (i.e. Collecting historical O&M costs and revenues on comparable assets). Leaders do not need to be experts in data analysis to make the analysis valuable; rather they need to take the time to rationally think through the probable costs and revenues after looking at other communities experiences and considering how their asset's O&M costs and revenues will be similar and how they will differ.

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL COSTS

Potential costs include any asset component that could require repair before the asset passes its useful life, that will need replacement before the assets intended replacement, or the asset's operation costs. Examples include a pump for a well, an HVAC system for a building, filters for a water purification system, power bills, water bills, employee costs, etc. These expenses are the most important component of understanding the assets full cost over time.

Before collecting data, consider developing core questions that will guide how the data is collected and how it will be presented to leadership.

COLLECT DATA

Data on these assets is best accessed from similar assets in communities with similar characteristics to your community. The total purchase price (and potential long-term cost) of an asset should dictate the amount of effort and care used in obtaining comparable information. When available, data should be collected across multiple similar assets in different communities.

Creating a survey that standardizes the information you are trying to collect from other communities will be valuable in standardizing the data and making it comparable. The survey should make sure to ask about any surprises the community experienced with their asset.

After collecting data on similar assets, the data needs to be entered into a spreadsheet that allows aggregation of the data. Some asset types will require significantly more analysis. For instance, a swimming pool analysis should look at revenue generation vs. expenditures on the asset for as many years as possible, while the costs for specific components (like a pump) are more point in time cost estimates.

Collect more data than you think you'll need. You'll be glad you have it in the event the decision is highly contested or uncertain.

ESTABLISHING CORE CRITERIA

When developing a survey, the person responsible for analyzing the data should establish core criteria. Core criteria are “tipping points” on which leadership decides to construct, or not construct, an asset. For example, if my town were determining whether or not to build a swimming pool, leadership might be primarily concerned with:

1. How much the pool will cost to operate and maintain versus total expected pool revenues
2. How many people from the community will be expected to use the swimming pool
3. How much repairs and renovations for the pool will cost in the short-term and long-terms

These core criteria may be the three factors that leadership can agree on being important, and, while other factors will play a role in the decision for each leader individually, these factors will be most important for the collective decision.

QUESTIONS TO ASK LEADERS WITH COMPARABLE ASSETS:

As leaders consider O&M costs and start finding comparable assets to evaluate against, it is vital that they keep track of the information they are going to gather from each asset. This will enable community leaders to assess the asset under consideration with extra perspective gained through the experience of other, similar communities. This list of questions highlights some of the data that should be sought from each location, though additional information can and will be valuable.

TOPIC	QUESTION	EXAMPLE (A POOL)
<i>Size</i>	What is the asset's size and dimensions?	How many square feet is the building? How many gallons is the pool? What different sections does the pool have (i.e. kiddie, diving boards, lap, etc.). What is the max capacity?
<i>Age & Longevity</i>	What is the expected life of the asset?	What year was the pool completed? Has it undergone any foundational remodels that have significantly extended the life of the pool? How long do you expect the pool to be in operation?
<i>Usage Statistics</i>	Do you have any usage statistics available on a spreadsheet?	How many people do you have visit per month? Do you have past attendance data?
<i>Revenue</i>	Does the asset gain any revenues? Do you have a data sheet of revenues by month since the assets opening?	How much do you charge for entrance? Have you raised rates in the past? How much do you earn on average each month of the year? Do you have past revenues data?
<i>Repair Costs</i>	Do you have historical repair costs recorded?	What have you had to fix most often? Do you have historical data on repair costs for the pool?
<i>Wages</i>	Do you employ people to operate or care for this asset? Do you have cost information on these assets?	How many people do you have to employ for safety, selling passes and food, etc.? How much does this amount to annually? Do you have a per month breakdown on wage costs for the pool?
<i>Unexpected Costs</i>	What were the most surprising expenses in the construction and subsequent maintenance of the asset?	What costs have been most surprising through the building and operation of the swimming pool?
<i>Funding</i>	How do you fund the O&M and debt on the asset?	Are there any special funding mechanisms for the swimming pool? Grants? Do you use a rec district? Is it subsidized by the general fund?

EVALUATE

Collected data next needs to be compared; how similar are the revenues vs. costs? How are they different from one another? At this point leaders may need to reach out to find out why specific communities data is unique to the other assets being compared (higher than expected revenues for instance). This can highlight potential pitfalls or best practices. The costs over time can then be graphed, illustrating revenues and expenses over time, expected one-time replacement costs, etc.

Estimating future costs is not a science; you will not be able to perfectly foretell the costs. Your asset will differ from those you are comparing to. As a result, RPG recommends developing a high, expected,

and low scenario to present to leadership. The expected cost would be the average O&M over time of your comparison group. You can then vary roughly 10-15 percent on either side of your expected scenario or use the highest and lowest of your comparison assets as the high and low with the average as the expected (see example on 11).

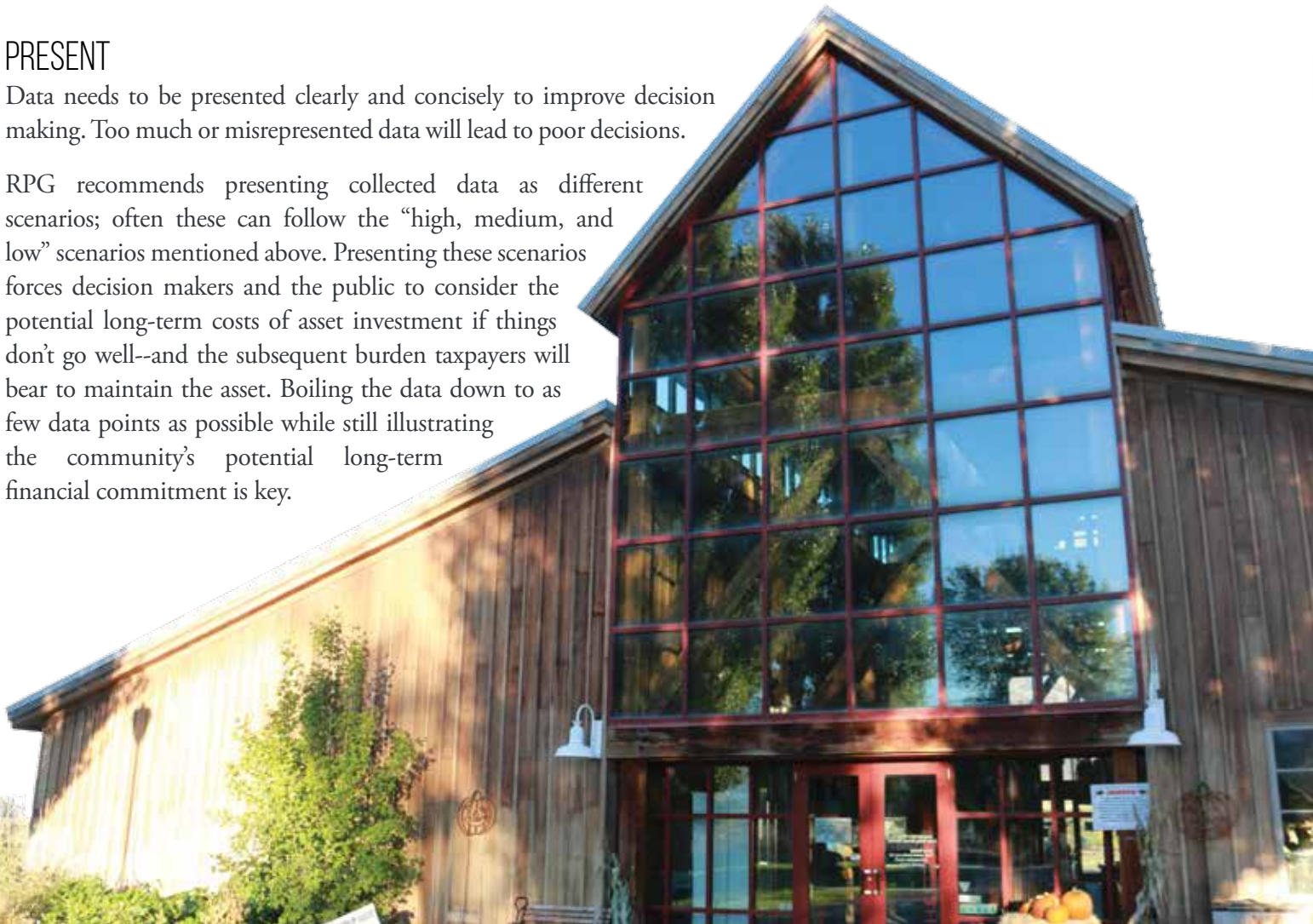
PRESENT

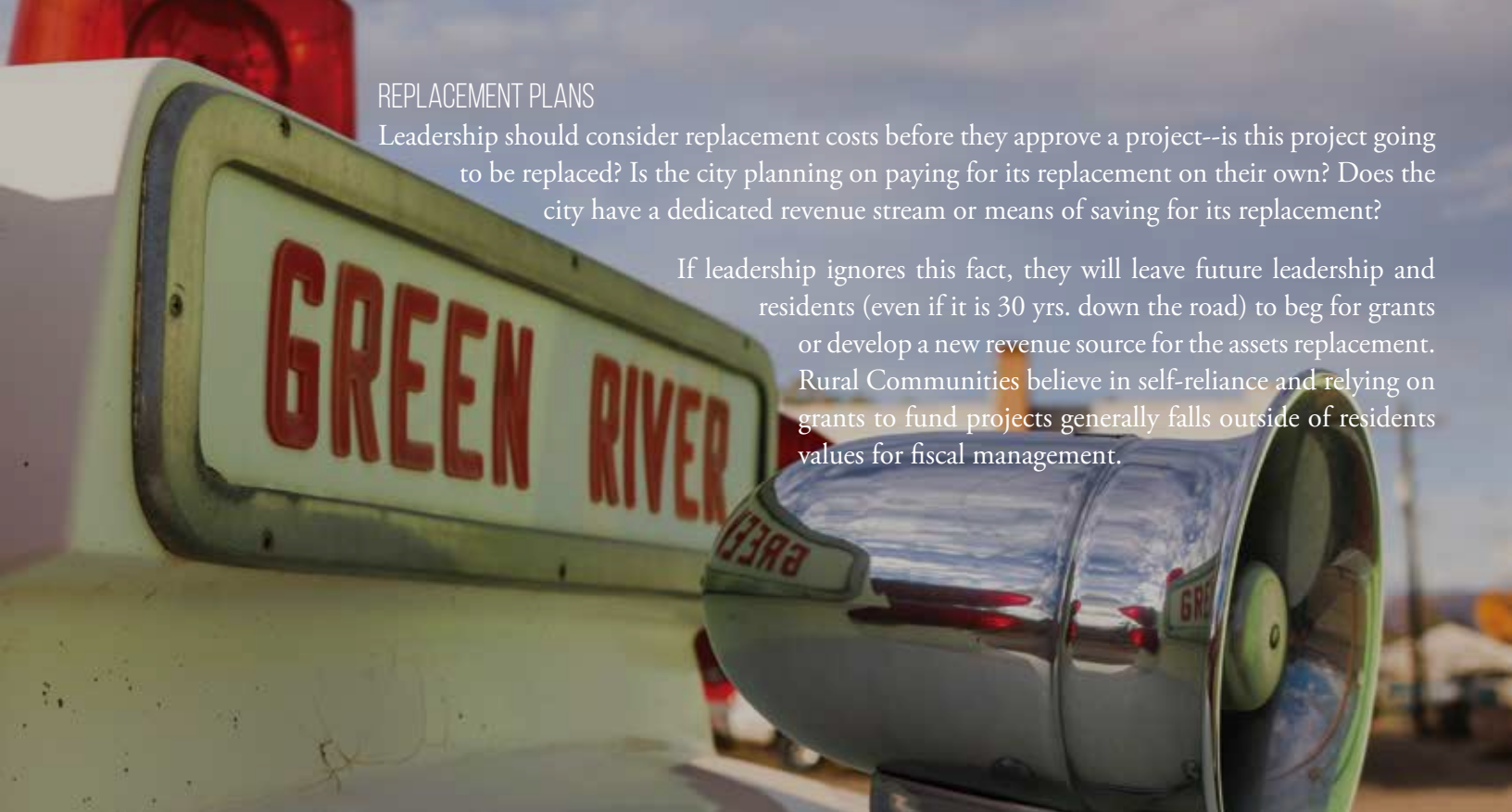
Data needs to be presented clearly and concisely to improve decision making. Too much or misrepresented data will lead to poor decisions.

RPG recommends presenting collected data as different scenarios; often these can follow the “high, medium, and low” scenarios mentioned above. Presenting these scenarios forces decision makers and the public to consider the potential long-term costs of asset investment if things don’t go well--and the subsequent burden taxpayers will bear to maintain the asset. Boiling the data down to as few data points as possible while still illustrating the community’s potential long-term financial commitment is key.

PUBLIC INPUT

In the event that a community is completing a general obligation bond, residents will vote on the project, making their decisions the final go no-go criteria for a project. Otherwise, leadership will have the final say in the assets creation, though community input should be gathered regardless to ensure the investment meets community desires.





REPLACEMENT PLANS

Leadership should consider replacement costs before they approve a project--is this project going to be replaced? Is the city planning on paying for its replacement on their own? Does the city have a dedicated revenue stream or means of saving for its replacement?

If leadership ignores this fact, they will leave future leadership and residents (even if it is 30 yrs. down the road) to beg for grants or develop a new revenue source for the assets replacement. Rural Communities believe in self-reliance and relying on grants to fund projects generally falls outside of residents values for fiscal management.

3 DECIDE: TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD DETERMINE VIABILITY

After presenting, unless you are a member of the City Council and were tasked with creating the asset evaluation, the work is turned over to elected officials.

Elected officials must determine how the information presented will impact their decision. Ideally, the information presented to the city council would also have been presented to the public and they have had an opportunity to comment.

RPG recommends that, prior to the presentation of data, city leaders determine the criteria on which they are going to base their decision. Creating these criteria beforehand protects leaders from being 'forced' into voting yes or no, but rather allows them to vote based on the projects merits.

FINAL VOTE

After grading or scoring the project on predetermined criteria, city council members must then decide if the project is viable. They have responsibility to decide the viability of expensive long range projects, and thereby seriously impact the long range financial situation for the community. No single factor should dictate the community leader's vote for yes or no; rather, it should be based on sound analysis of the pros and cons of the project.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS (EXAMPLE)

The analysis below illustrates costs and revenues for several swimming pools in rural Utah using multiple criteria (this is only a small sample of what was collected and considered). To decide which swimming pools to compare against, the evaluators looked at population size, number of households, size of pool, and geographic location; they selected pools that were similar to the community in question for these factors, along with one urban community to contrast results.

Once pools with comparable statistics were identified, multiple areas for comparison were established. The tables below show one of several considerations: average number of visits per day and what percentage of the population those visits represented compared with the number of visits per day that would be required to cover the pools O&M and debt service costs.

It is clear from this example that none of these facilities were not able to cover all of their costs and were therefore using taxpayer money to subsidize the swimming pools. This may not be a bad thing if the citizens are willing to pay the extra taxes, but the community in question needed a rough idea of how much they would have to spend on the asset in addition to the assets revenue for O&M. This way, the community could illustrate to the taxpayers a clear choice: choose the pool, face probable increased taxes, or don't have the pool.

Once data that illustrates probable ongoing costs and the impact of those costs on the community are identified, communicating those costs and impacts to the city council and general public is the most important step in appropriately considering O&M in the decision to pursue the project.

	Eagle	Grant	Marsh	Greco	Topsburg
Pool Visits (per day)	81	19	9	158	1142
% of Population (daily visits)	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%	1.7%	1.1%
Annual Passes (total)	591	70	126	2312	6945
% of Population (w/annual passes)	5.4%	2.1%	3.8%	25.1%	6.5%

Table 1 Actual number of visitors per day and annual passes sold by each city

	Eagle	Grant	Marsh	Greco	Topsburg
Pool Visits (per day)	247	200	122	404	1264
% of Population (daily visits)	2.3%	6.1%	3.7%	4.4%	1.2%
Annual Passes (total)	1803	729	1784	5899	7690
% of Population (w/annual passes)	16.4%	22.2%	54.5%	64.0%	7.2%

Table 2 Asset use needed to cover the costs of maintaining and operating the pool

**The example above comes from a comparative analysis of swimming pools for a prospective pool project. The project was completed as a service by BYU graduate students. This example provides examples of key considerations for comparative analysis for O&M. These figures are actual municipal pool data, however, names have been changed.*



LOANS & USEFUL LIFE

As leaders prepare for financing a project, they should be careful to assure that their loan terms are not longer than the useful life associated with the asset. Generally funding organizations will review for this, however leaders should ensure that they are not burdened with a loan after the asset has lost its value.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication must occur two directions: to city leaders and to the general public. Unfortunately, city staff, leaders, and volunteers have limited time. As a result, the level of analysis and subsequent level of engagement with leaders and community members needs to match the level of impact of the asset--i.e. its potential costs and benefits to the community.

Communications with leadership should take place in public meetings, though documents that are sent for review beforehand can enhance the conversation by ensuring that everyone has had an opportunity to review the project, some of the key considerations, and any data that needs to be presented prior to leaderships decision on the asset. For major assets, RPG recommends having one meeting where criteria and data is presented to leadership followed by a meeting designed for a final decision to give ample time for consideration and informing the public of implications for funding or not funding.

These meetings will often be bridged by communications between Town council members, the public, and other interactions. Community leadership can formalize these with the use of any number of other information dissemination or collection methods (i.e. if leadership wants to hear community opinion they might survey or have open houses, if they just want to inform they might have flyers and billboards).

Outreach options are exceptionally diverse and outreach for each community should be tailored to the unique characteristics of your community and the communication methods that are most acceptable and effective for your population. The table on the right contains a short list of common options for obtaining community feedback and disseminating information to the public.

OUTREACH TECHNIQUES

Survey on City Website

City Facebook

Twitter

Post Office Flyers

Local club meetings

Physical survey

Local Scout Troops

Local rec center flyers

Information booth

Online survey

Mailer w/utility bills

Local sporting events

Public hearings

Flyers at parks

Steering committees

Local sporting events

Utah Public Notice Website

Local paper site

Leadership social media

Flyers to doors

Knock-and-talk

Email blast

School flyers & announcements

Open-houses

Primary local employers

Billboards

Local religious meetings

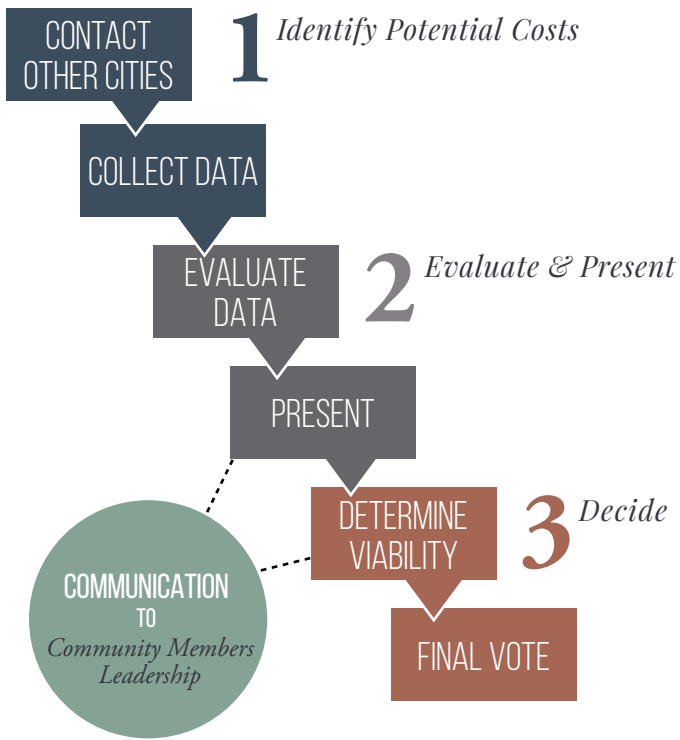
Institution Facebook pages

Local institution websites

Focus groups

Community Center banners

Local stores



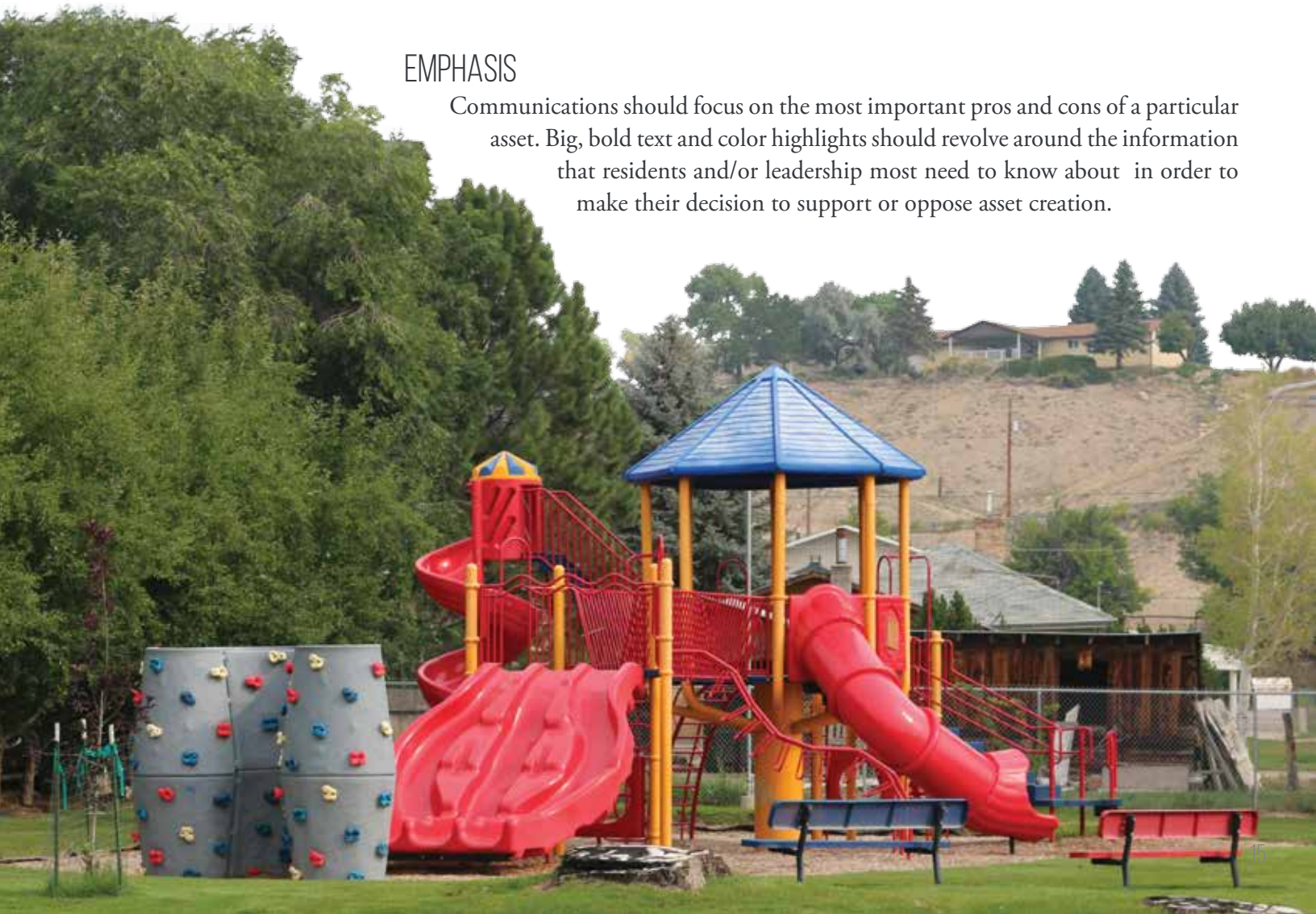
COMMUNICATIONS PLACE AND AUDIENCES

Communications fits into the O&M process between evaluating the collected data and leadership's or residents vote to build or not create or purchase an asset. Communication needs to occur two directions: to leadership and to community members. The cost and impact of an asset should determine the level of community engagement (see below), however preparing information that clearly delineates community benefits and impacts is crucial to receiving good public feedback on whether to build or not build an asset. Everyone has been to a meeting where a resident has attacked leadership for deciding to fund a project for any number of reasons. That residents tone, however, may do a 180 if he finds out that not taking action could double the communities costs in the long-run. Informing the public is key.

The ability to communicate findings simply will assist overburdened leadership accurately factor in data points and it will help residents understand the impacts of leaderships decision to fund.

EMPHASIS

Communications should focus on the most important pros and cons of a particular asset. Big, bold text and color highlights should revolve around the information that residents and/or leadership most need to know about in order to make their decision to support or oppose asset creation.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach should focus on impacts and benefits to community members. Honestly and completely sharing all applicable data is the best information to help leaders assess community demand for assets. The variety of outreach methods should match the relative impact and benefit the asset provides to the community.

Outreach is key to transparent government and citizen support for leadership decisions in the future. “Slipping” a project “past” without obtaining credible community input on the decision will invariably have negative ramifications for faith in leadership. We recommend assessing the capital projects skeptically, looking for potential financial difficulties that the asset could bring to the community. After honestly assessing these threats as a leader and in public meetings with residents, leaders can confidently move forward with a project, knowing that community members support the project, even if it has threats.

Conversely, some situations will require leadership to make decisions to fix or build an asset, even when it is politically unpopular. These decisions should be made with an eye to the future benefits the decision will have, while still acknowledging the frustrations of residents who oppose the project. We recommend making this decision only in very serious situations where basic services are required for health, safety, or welfare of residents.

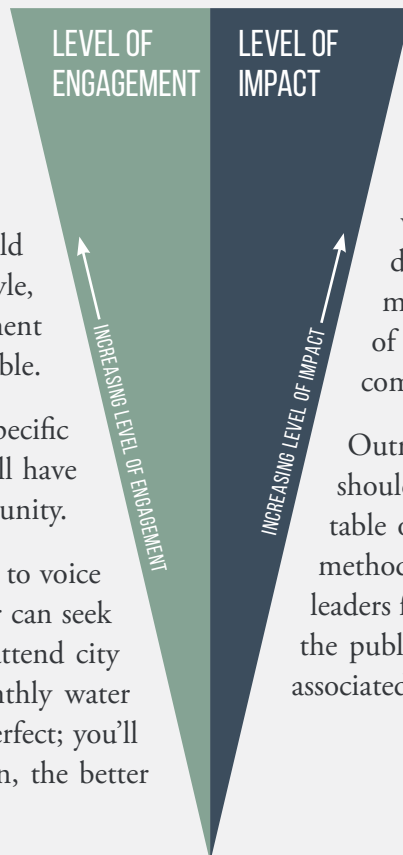
LEVELS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The level of impact that a specific asset will have on city finances and public quality of life should dictate the amount of time and level of outreach city leaders should spend on a specific project.

There is no simple equation to indicate how outreach should be conducted. Your specific population’s communication style, alongside the assets level of impact should dictate your engagement approach and level most likely to reach the most citizens possible.

Similarly, the amount of time leaders spend considering a specific asset should be tailored to the probable impact the asset will have on quality of life and taxing burden for residents of the community.

Outreach methods can aim at getting people to city meetings to voice their opinions or concerns (ex flyers for a public meeting), or can seek to obtain information from individuals who rarely, if ever, attend city meetings (community survey tool distributed with the monthly water bill). It is important to remember that no outreach will be perfect; you’ll never get everyone’s opinion. However, the more information, the better leaders can represent their residents.



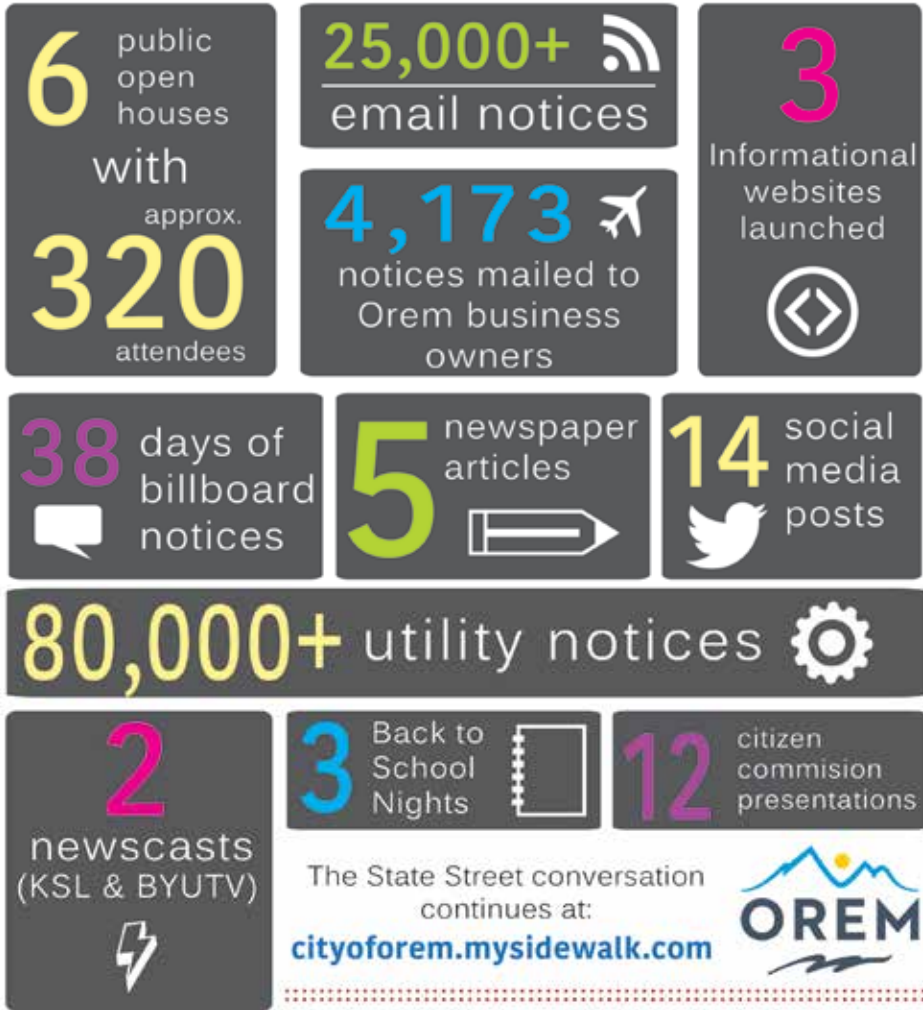
OUTREACH METHODS

Outreach methods can and should be extremely diverse. Different methods will reach different demographics to maximize knowledge of the project across community demographics.

Outreach methods can and should vary greatly. See the table on page 14 for outreach methods available to local leaders for obtaining input from the public on projects and their associated costs.

★★★★★ TAKING ★★★★★
STATE STREET
 TO
THE PEOPLE

The State Street Corridor Master Plan process included an unprecedented public outreach effort to get citizens involved in helping reinvent State Street.



SAMPLE:

This graphic displays the City of Orem's outreach efforts for a State Street redesign project, with the intent to increase community use and match community desires.

The diversity and level of outreach illustrated to the right is generally above and beyond the level needed to reach a small, rural community's population. This information is intended to show the wide range of outreach techniques available to community leaders.

SAMPLE:

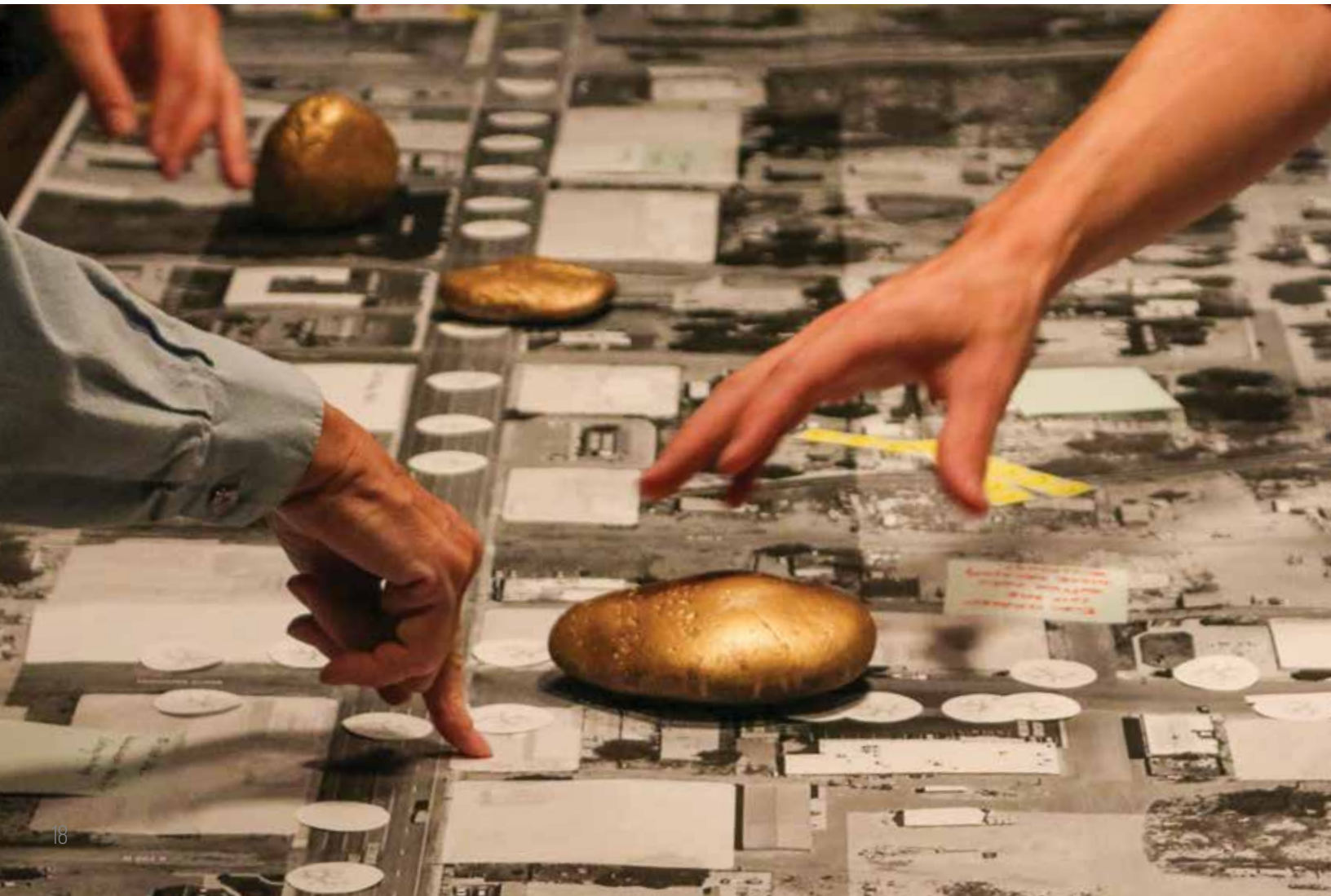
This flyer is a good demonstration of simply illustrating the costs and benefits of a specific project. More specific numbers could increase the value of the flyer, however the flyer's simplicity gets the point across. Including the next community meeting time could be valuable in this situation.



INFORMING LEADERSHIP

Two assumptions are almost always true for rural, elected leadership: (1) they have very limited time and (2) most are not professional municipal officials. This informs the type and scale of information that leadership is capable of processing (limited time) and the level of complexity that each review should take (level of expertise).

For these two reasons, our primary recommendation is to simplify and focus on primary decision factors. As noted on page 6, these factors can vary greatly by leader and by individual project. Once these criteria are decided on, the project manager can develop multiple options with multiple scenarios that could play out for each option. This can be extremely time consuming; RPG recommends limiting your investment of time to develop the most feasible options that fulfill criteria.



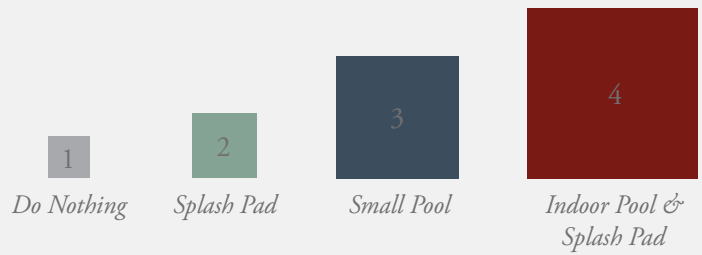
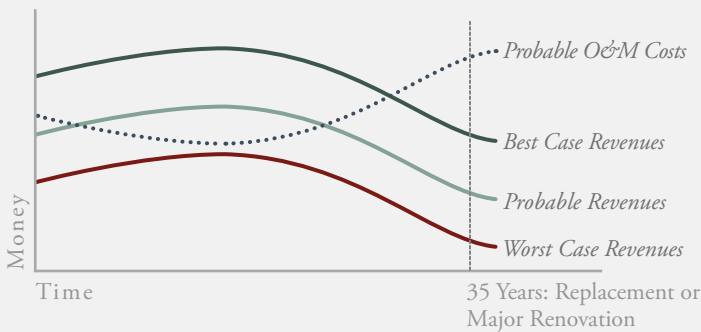
SCENARIOS & OPTIONS

OPTIONS

Just as there is not one probable outcome stemming from the decision to build an asset, there is typically not one, single option for the scale of a project in size or services. Developing multiple options can help leaders match an appropriate scale and scope with the community's finances, public desire for the asset, etc.

Generally, determining which option best fits the community first (through public outreach), then determining the likely scenarios for the preferred option will keep the process from taking too long.

SCENARIOS FOR SMALL POOL REVENUES VS OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE



SCENARIO PLANNING

Scenario planning lays-out possible future outcomes, based on multiple variables. The data collected in O&M analysis will not provide 100 percent accuracy and unique circumstances and events will create individual challenges. As a result, scenarios can account for the variables, providing a snapshot of the most probable events on a spectrum (see left).

This information is valuable to both leaders and residents. Both need to understand the potential outcomes of their decision to build (repair, etc.) or not build an asset. This will help limit emotional decision making by placing facts in front of residents and leadership.

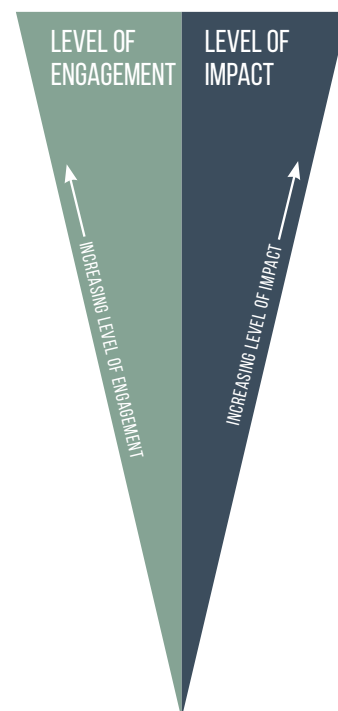
LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Because leaderships time is so limited, the same rule that applies for community members applies for engaging communities:

“Scale your level of engagement to the level of fiscal & other impacts that an assets development will have on your community.”

This is often easier than it sounds; after collecting significant amounts of data and information, the immediate reaction is to try and get all of that information across to leadership. This is ineffective because leaderships ability to spend time absorbing this information is limited.

As a result, communication with leadership about O&M should focus on core information, highlighting decision points that illustrate pros and cons for a project.





Special thanks to Jonah Humes for his efforts on this project

RURAL



PLANNING GROUP

*Working toward a rural Utah that is self-reliant,
self-determined, and prepared for the future.*

For more resources, visit ruralplanning.org/toolbox

*The Rural Planning Group is a program of the Housing and Community Development Division, part of the Utah Department of Workforce Services.
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