



MUNICIPAL FINANCE
OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
OF ONTARIO



A guide to asset
management for
municipalities in
Ontario

ASSET MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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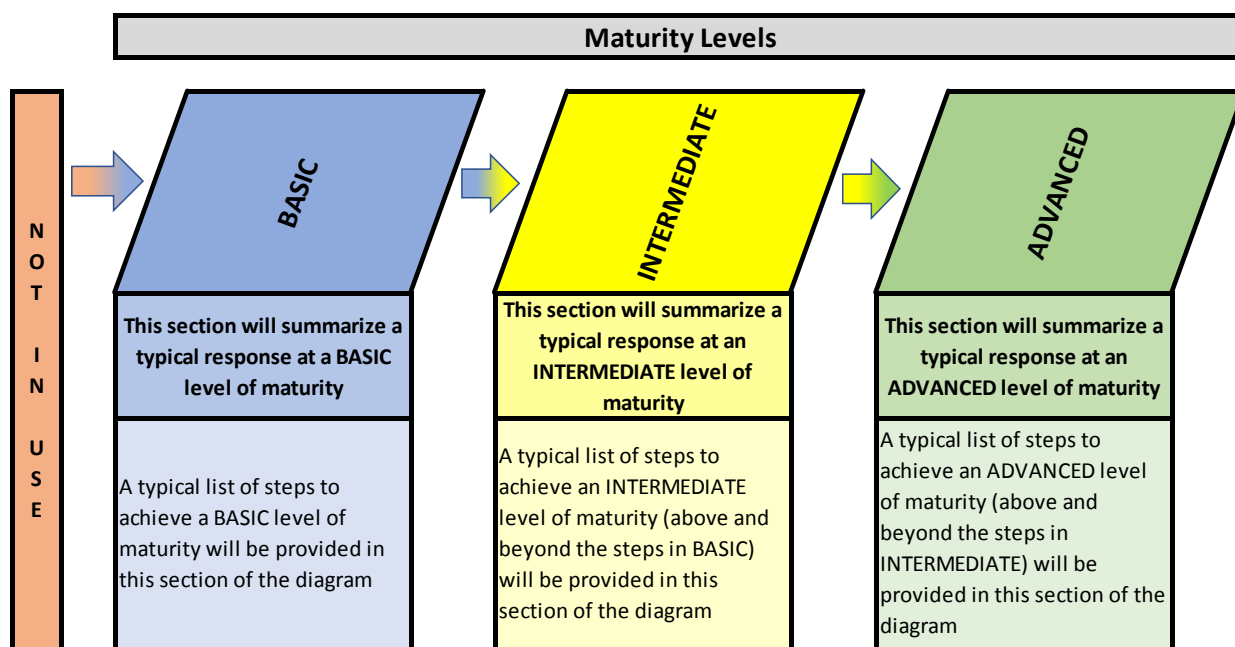
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12 Public Engagement

12.1 Using this Framework

This framework is intended for municipalities of all sizes and maturity levels. The use of the maturity diagrams within this framework can help municipalities identify their current levels of maturity for each AM area. In addition, the diagrams provide possible approaches for municipalities to undertake to move to a higher level of maturity over time. Adaptations of the following diagram are used throughout this document to summarize maturity levels according to the themes and questions explored in each chapter:



This document is intended to help municipalities make progress on their asset management planning. By enhancing the readers' understanding of asset management maturity, they can more accurately determine their current, and work toward achieving the desired or appropriate, level of maturity for their municipality.

The asset management framework can be likened to a continuum, whereby municipalities should aim to implement the components described in a subsequent maturity level. For example, municipalities that are not practicing asset management

should strive to meet components at the *basic level*, and likewise, municipalities that currently meet the *basic* or *intermediate* levels should strive to advance their practices to meet the components of the next level. However, it should be noted that during this self-assessment process a municipality may decide to skip over maturity levels (i.e. move from basic to advanced, skipping intermediate). This is perfectly acceptable. Further, not every municipality will need to strive for the highest level of maturity in every area. For example, it may not make sense for a small municipality to meet certain advanced level components.

Readers can use the following descriptions of the maturity levels to guide their assessment throughout the various sections of this framework:

Municipalities that are not undertaking the components described in a particular section of this framework should focus on meeting the *basic level* requirements outlined in the maturity level diagram.

At the **basic level of maturity**, a municipality is undertaking the components of asset management shown in blue and will take steps to advance their asset management by implementing the components described under the *intermediate level* heading.

At the **intermediate level of maturity**, a municipality is currently meeting the requirements shown in yellow and to advance their asset management will take steps to implement the components described under the *advanced level* heading.

At the **advanced level of maturity**, a municipality is currently meeting the requirements shown in green.

These maturity framework visuals are found throughout this document. Preceding all maturity level diagrams is a self-assessment question for the reader to consider to help determine where their municipality best fits within the framework.

12.2 Overview

Municipalities can benefit from seeking the public's involvement in developing, reviewing, and approving various aspects of the asset management process. The public's input may be directly sought as part of asset management plan discussions concerning levels of service, lifecycle management strategy scenarios, various financing strategy options, and/or other elements of the asset management process. In addition, feedback related to asset management plan issues can be indirectly derived from other

public processes such as budget approvals or master plan approvals. Overall, ensuring some level of public engagement throughout the asset management process not only assists in gaining a level of public acceptance on asset management, but also a level of public ownership in the process.

Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act (IJPA) and O. Reg 588/17 requirements

O.Reg 588/17 outlines the following requirements with respect to AM Public Engagement:

A Strategic Asset Management Policy (SAMP) must be developed and adopted by *July 1, 2019* and reviewed and updated at least every 5 years. The SAMP outlines a requirement to include a commitment to provide opportunities for municipal residents and other interested parties to provide input into AM planning

Municipalities will be required to post their SAMP and asset management plan on the municipality's website, if one exists, and make copies of these documents available to the public, if requested.

12.3 Benefits of Public Engagement

Facilitating public engagements within the AM process ensures consideration is given to stakeholder expectations.

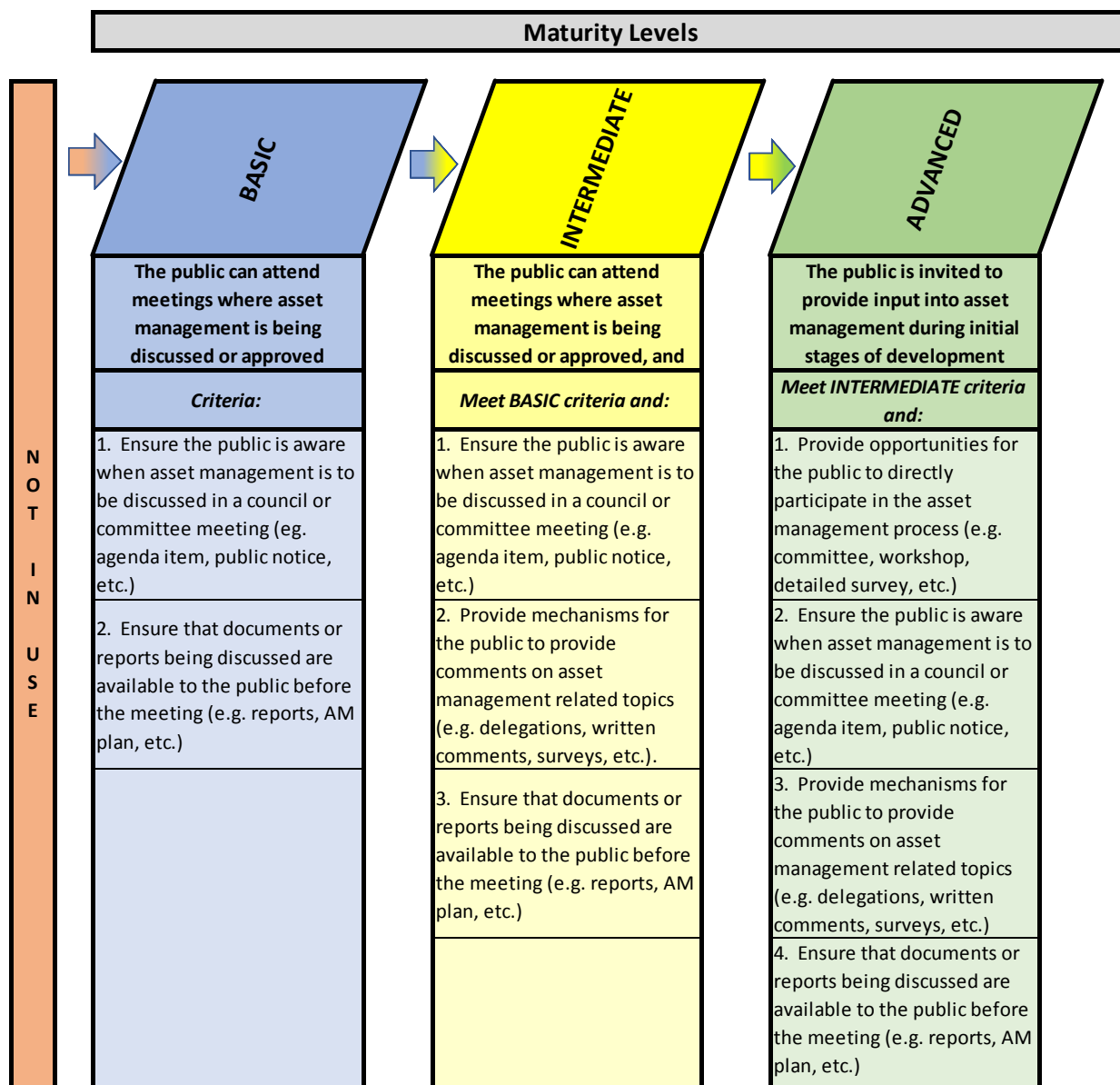
To what extent is the public involved in the asset management process?

Background

Citizens of a municipality are in the best position to develop an overarching vision of the type of community in which they want to live, work, and play. Undoubtedly, at the core of these visions are municipal services. The asset management process sets out long-term strategies in order to ensure the assets will perform sufficiently to meet service delivery objectives. By involving the public in developing this vision for the municipality, the public will become educated in the various pressures and impacts associated with asset management. The public has the opportunity to shape both the direction of the municipality, as well as to understand the underlying asset management implications.

Levels of Maturity Public Engagement

To what extent is the public involved in the asset management process?



At the **basic level of maturity** municipalities ensure the public has an opportunity to attend council or committee meetings where asset management is discussed or approved. This can be facilitated through public notices, making the agenda public before the meeting, and encouraging attendance. Any asset management documents or reports could also be made available to the public prior to the meeting, to promote understanding and preparation for the meetings.

At the **intermediate level of maturity**, the public is invited to participate in an additional step to provide feedback on asset management topics prior to the council/committee approval meetings. Various methods can accomplish this including providing surveys, accepting delegations, or requesting written feedback.

At the **advanced level of maturity**, the public is invited to provide input during the development stages of asset management planning. In this manner, the public will have the opportunity to shape the fundamental direction of asset management processes.

Increasing Levels of Maturity for Public Engagement

As a municipality moves from basic to intermediate to advanced maturity, the level of public engagement increases, which provides the community with increased awareness and education on the intended asset management process. Moreover, increased public engagement can lead to increased acceptance of the proposed asset management recommendations, such as rate increases.

Some of the forms of public engagement are as follows:

**Table 12-1
Sample Forms of Public Engagement**

Engagement Type	Level of Engagement	Maturity Level
Attendance at Council/Committee meetings	Public received information only	Basic
Newspaper ads, fact sheets, website postings, videos, etc.	Public received information only	Basic
Surveys, questionnaires, etc.	Public provides comments	Intermediate
Community meetings, information session with questions and answers, delegations, etc.	Public provides comments	Intermediate
Community working groups	Public included in meetings with departments	Advanced
Asset Management Committee (with public members)	Public included in AM Committee meetings	Advanced

The degree of public participation and consultation can vary based on specific components to the asset management process. For example, varying degrees of public participation may be determined for:

- Creating asset management policies and strategies;
- Levels of service (in defining community expectations);
- Deciding on the most effective Lifecycle Management Strategy (i.e. long-term forecast);
- Agreeing on optimal Financing Strategies; and
- Reviewing and approving an AM Plan.

A municipality may decide that simply informing the public is acceptable for most asset management components but may prefer more public engagement when it comes to setting policies, strategies and determining community expectations.

It is important to note that members of Council are elected to make decisions on behalf of the public. However, those decisions should also be informed by information gathered from the public on a variety of issues. Therefore, if a municipality is not ready to move towards full public engagement within the AM process, a potential intermediate step would be to engage Council actively during the AM process, and thereby incorporate the public's view indirectly.