



**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024
5:00 PM**

Location

Board Room
District Headquarters
555 Main Street, Hartford

Dial In #: (415)-655-0001
Access Code: 2302 389 8956#

[Meeting Video Link](#)

Commissioners:

Adil	Hoffman
Anderson	Holloway
Avedisian	Johnson
Bush	Lewis
Clarke	Lester
Currey (Ex-Officio)	Mandyck
DiBella	Patel
Gale	Salemi
Gentile (C)	Steuber (VC)
Healy	Taylor

Quorum: 10

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATIVE TO AGENDA ITEMS
3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2024
4. DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL ACTION RE: SCOPE OF SELF ASSESSMENT
5. UPDATE ON MEMBER TOWN MEETINGS
6. OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS
7. COMMISSIONER REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
8. ADJOURNMENT

Section 5. Where to Begin: A Self-Assessment Tool

There are many ways to successfully apply the EUM Framework for improving utility performance and each utility is unique. Some utilities may choose to start small and make improvements step by step, perhaps by working on a few key initiatives that will yield early successes. Other utilities may choose to take on several improvement initiatives simultaneously. Some may prefer to further enhance their strengths, while others will prefer to focus on improvement areas. Each utility should determine for itself the most important issue to address, based on its own strategic objectives, priorities, and the needs of the community it serves.

A thorough assessment of current performance based on the Attributes is a useful first step in identifying options for improvement. It also establishes a quantifiable baseline from which to measure progress. As conditions change, future reassessments will reveal new opportunities and new priorities.

The following Self-Assessment tool can help utility managers use the EUM Attributes to evaluate their utility's current performance against internal goals or specific needs and determine where to focus improvement efforts. While it can be completed initially by an individual manager, it is more effective when used as a vehicle for conversation and consensus building among the utility's management team and key staff. As appropriate, other stakeholders might be invited to participate in the assessment, including oversight bodies, community and watershed interests, and regulatory authorities.

A blank copy of the Self-Assessment worksheet is available in **Appendix B** that can be copied and shared among staff. It is recommended that multiple employees from your utility take the utility Self-Assessment when you start your EUM implementation process. Having a variety of voices representing all levels and divisions within your utility will provide a more holistic assessment of the status of your utility.

The EUM Self-Assessment has four steps:

- 1) **Assess** current level of achievement for each Attribute.
- 2) **Rank** the importance of each Attribute for your utility.
- 3) **Chart** the results.
- 4) **Choose** one or more high-priority Attributes to focus on.

Following completion of the Self-Assessment, a guide for taking action on the results is included in the next section, "Getting to Work: Implementation of Effective Utility Management." Here is an explanation of each step.

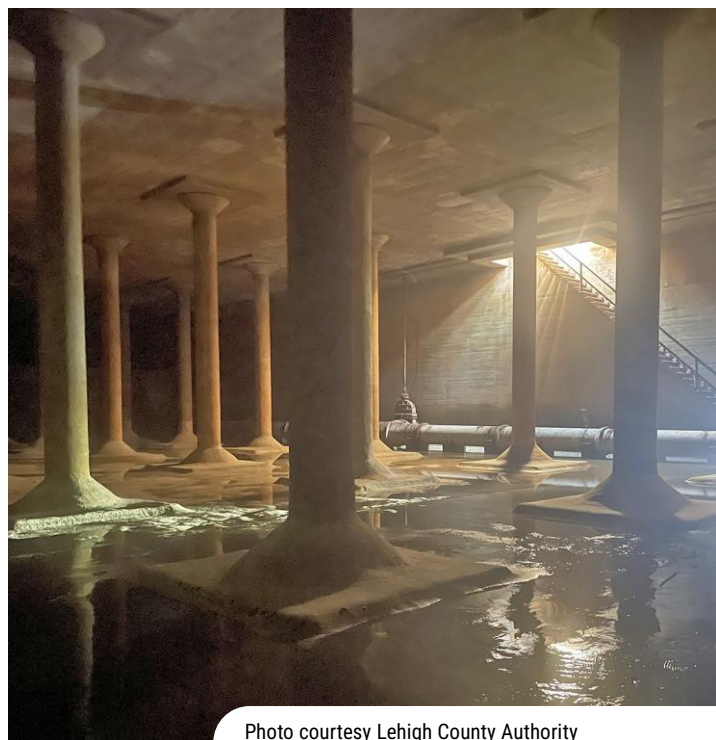


Photo courtesy Lehigh County Authority

Step 1: Assess Current Level of Achievement

Using the blank worksheet in **Appendix B**, assess current conditions by rating your utility's systems and approaches and current level of achievement for each Attribute, using a 1 (high achievement) to 5 (low achievement) scale. Consider the degree to which your current management systems effectively support each of the Attributes and their component parts. Consider all components of each Attribute and gauge your rating accordingly. Use these descriptions to guide your rating. You will note that each Attribute has several components represented by the bullet points listed for each.

Your rating can either reflect the lowest level of achievement of all of the bullet points for that Attribute (for example, if you believe that your achievement in one of the bullet points for that Attribute was "5," but another bullet point you rated as "2," your rating for achievement under that Attribute would be "5"), or an average across all of the bullet points for that Attribute. Whichever approach you choose to use when rating, make sure to be consistent in this approach across all Attributes.

Rating	Description
1.	Effective, systematic approach and implementation; consistently achieve goals.
2.	Workable systems in place; mostly achieve goals.
3.	Partial systems in place with moderate achievement but could improve.
4.	Occasionally address this when specific need arises.
5.	No system for addressing this.

Step 2: Rank Importance of Attributes

Rank the importance of each Attribute to your utility, based on your utility's vision, goals, and specific needs. The ranking should reflect the interests and considerations of all stakeholders (managers, staff, customers, regulators, elected officials, community and watershed interests, and others).

Of the Ten Attributes, consider long-term importance to your utility, and rank the most important Attribute 1, the second most important 2, and so on. The least important Attribute would be ranked 10. Your ranking of each Attribute's importance may be influenced by current or expected challenges in that particular area, recent accomplishments in addressing these issues, or other factors. Importance ranking is likely to change over time as internal and external conditions change.

As you fill in numbers on the worksheet in **Appendix B**, please note that your analysis for Step 1 (rating achievement) should be separate and independent from your analysis for Step 2 (ranking importance).

Step 3: Chart Results

Graph each Attribute based on your rating and ranking. For example, if you rated Regulatory and Reliability Performance (RR) 4 for achievement and ranked it 3 for importance, you would place it on the graph as illustrated below. Similarly, if you rated Customer Experience & Satisfaction (CS) 3 for achievement and ranked it 5 for importance, you would place it on the graph as illustrated below. A blank graph is provided in **Appendix B**.

Rating	Lower Achievement	5											
		4			RR								
		3					CS						
	Higher Achievement	2											
		1											
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
			More Important					Less Important					
Ranking													

Step 4: Determine High-Priority EUM Attributes

The goal of EUM is to establish high-achieving systems and approaches for each Attribute. Ultimately, utilities should strive to improve performance for all Attributes until each can be charted in the lower half of the table (high achieving). Utility managers may wish to focus on one or a few Attributes at a time, aiming to eventually ensure that all Attributes have been addressed and improved upon over time.

Examining the results of the charting exercise in Step 3 can help identify Attributes for focused attention. Attributes that graph into the dark orange shaded quadrant are both very important (ranked 1-4), and have low achievement (rated 4-5), and would typically be selected as the highest priority Attribute areas for moving forward with improvement actions. Attributes that graph into the light orange shaded area indicate medium importance, and a moderate level of current achievement; these would typically be selected as additional strong candidates for improvement efforts.

Attributes that fall in the lower left-hand quadrant are both important and high-achieving areas for the utility. Some utilities may choose to focus on these areas to continue further improving upon important and high-achieving areas, due to their long-term importance (e.g., Water Resource Sustainability). Specifically examining these areas may also help a utility identify success factors which would be helpful in addressing areas needing improvement. Others may choose to focus on Attributes that would lead to early successes to build confidence in effecting change, Attributes that maximize benefit relative to the utility's key goals, or Attributes that minimize risks. The choice to embark on improvements in one or more areas is up to the judgment of utility managers, and may also involve consideration of resources (staff and financial), leadership support, and other competing activities.

Appendix B. Self-Assessment

Applying the description and instructions in **Section 5** of the *Primer*, use this Self-Assessment to being choose your high priority EUM Attributes and begin EUM Implementation.

Step 1: Assess Current Level of Achievement

Step 2: Rank Importance of EUM Attributes

Step 3: Chart Results

Step 4: Determine High-Priority EUM Attributes

Step 1: Assess Current Level of Achievement

Assess current conditions by rating your utility's systems and approaches and *current level of achievement* for each Attribute, using a 1 (high achievement) to 5 (low achievement) scale. Consider the degree to which your current management systems effectively support each of the Attributes and their component parts. Consider all components of each Attribute and gauge your rating accordingly. Use these descriptions to guide your rating. You will note that each Attribute has several components represented by the bullet points listed for each.

Your rating can either reflect the lowest level of achievement of all of the bullet points for that Attribute (for example, if you believe that your achievement in one of the bullet points for that Attribute was "5," but another bullet point you rated as "2," your rating for achievement under that Attribute would be "5"), or an average across all of the bullet points for that Attribute. For whatever approach you choose to use when rating, make sure to be consistent in this approach across all Attributes. Mark your answers in the Step 1 column of the table on the next page.

Rating	Description
1.	Effective, systematic approach and implementation; consistently achieve goals.
2.	Workable systems in place; mostly achieve goals.
3.	Partial systems in place with moderate achievement but could improve.
4.	Occasionally address this when specific need arises.
5.	No system for addressing this.

Step 2: Rank Importance of EUM Attributes

Rank the importance of each Attribute to your utility, based on your utility's vision, goals, and specific needs. The ranking should reflect the interests and considerations of all stakeholders (managers, staff, customers, regulators, elected officials, community and watershed interests, and others). Of the Ten Attributes, consider long-term importance to your utility, and rank the most important Attribute 1, the second most important 2, and so on. The least important Attribute would be ranked 10. Your ranking of each Attribute's importance may be influenced by current or expected challenges in that particular area, recent accomplishments in addressing these issues, or other factors. Importance ranking is likely to change over time as internal and external conditions change.

Mark your answers in the Step 2 column of the table on the next page. As you fill in numbers, please note that your analysis for Step 1 (rating achievement) should be separate and independent from your analysis for Step 2 (ranking importance).

Attribute	Attribute Components	Step 1: Rate Achievement (1-5)	Step 2: Rank Importance (1-10)
Community Sustainability (SU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively leads in promoting and organizing community sustainability improvements through collaboration with local partners. • Uses operations to enhance natural environment. • Efficiently uses water and energy resources, promotes economic vitality, and engenders overall community improvement. • Maintains and enhances ecological and community sustainability including pollution prevention, watershed and source water protection. • Identifies and implements programs such as community benefits and workforce development initiatives to increase investments in people and the community for improved economic inclusion. 		
Customer Experience and Satisfaction (CS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides reliable and responsive services. • Receives timely customer feedback. • Encourages all utility personnel to be aware of and responsive to customer needs and emergencies. • Provides tailored customer service and outreach to a range of customer groups (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, and newly emerging groups such as high-strength waste producers or power companies). 		
Enterprise Resiliency (ER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages risk to ensure enterprise continuity in collaboration with internal and external partners. • Identifies, evaluates, and establishes tolerance levels and effectively manages risks (including legal, regulatory, financial, social, environmental, safety, physical and cybersecurity, knowledge, talent loss, and natural disaster-related). • Understands relevant trends and forecasts to anticipate, respond to, adapt, and recover from disruption. 		

Attribute	Attribute Components	Step 1: Rate Achievement (1-5)	Step 2: Rank Importance (1-10)
Financial Viability (FV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes predictable and equitable rates consistent with community expectations that consider full life-cycle cost of utility operations and value of water resources. • Effectively balances long-term debt, capital, operations and maintenance expenditures with revenues and asset values. • Adequately recovers costs, provide reserves, invest for future needs, maintain optimal bond ratings, and address cost of service and the needs of disadvantaged households. • Understands opportunities for diversifying revenue and raising capital through adoption of new and innovative business and financing models. 		
Infrastructure Strategy and Performance (IS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the condition of and costs associated with critical infrastructure assets. • Maintains and enhances assets over the long-term at the lowest possible life-cycle cost and acceptable risk. • Coordinates repair efforts within the community to minimize disruptions. • Plans infrastructure investments consistent with community needs, anticipated growth, system reliability goals, and with a robust set of adaptation strategies. • Integrates service equity and environmental justice in the capital project planning process. • Develops and implements a strategic asset management plan that aligns to strategic business plan that is communicated, available, and visible to all stakeholders. 		

Attribute	Attribute Components	Step 1: Rate Achievement (1-5)	Step 2: Rank Importance (1-10)
Operational Optimization (OO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts ongoing performance improvements informed by performance and benchmarking monitoring. • Effectively utilizes technological approaches and tools to optimize data and resource management. • Continuously incorporates innovative solutions through ensuring ongoing, timely, cost-effective, reliable, and sustainable performance improvements in all facets of utility operations. 		
Regulatory and Reliability Performance (RR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets or exceeds regulatory and reliability requirements. • Ensures consistent and equitable outcomes for livable communities (municipal operations, institutional operations, industrial users, commercial users, residential end users). • Maintains consistency with customer, community, public health, safety, ecological, and economic priorities (applies to drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and recovered resources). 		
Stakeholder Understanding and Support (SS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables understanding and support from stakeholders (anyone who can affect or be affected by the utility including direct customers, oversight bodies, community and watershed interests, regulatory bodies, and consumers) for service levels, rate structures, operating budgets, capital improvement programs, and risk management decisions. • Actively considers the full spectrum of impacts at all stages of decision making to a diverse set of stakeholders to ensure the same level of service and quality to all communities served. • Actively promotes an appreciation of the true value of water and water services, and water's role in the social, economic, public, and environmental health of the community. 		

Attribute	Attribute Components	Step 1: Rate Achievement (1-5)	Step 2: Rank Importance (1-10)
Water Resource Sustainability (WS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the utility’s role in the complete water cycle including fit for purpose water reuse options, ensuring attainment of designated uses and maintenance of surface water quality, and integrating utility objectives and activities with other watershed managers and partners. • Manages operations to provide for long-term aquifer and surface water sustainability and replenishment. • Understands and plans for future water resource variability (e.g., changing weather patterns, including extreme events, such as drought and flooding). • Undertakes long-term integrated water resource planning, striving to equitably meet customer, community, and ecological water-related needs. 		
Workforce Development (WD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruits, develops, retains, and inspires a workforce that is inclusive, competent, motivated, adaptive, and reflective of the community they serve. • Maintains a participatory, collaborative organization dedicated to continual learning, technical proficiency, safety, and innovation where employees recognize themselves as valuable team members that belong and actively contribute to achieving utility goals. • Implements procedures for institutional knowledge retention, workplace safety, and continual learning (e.g., standard operating procedures). • Emphasizes and invests in opportunities for professional and leadership development, taking into account the differing needs and expectations of a diverse, multi-generational workforce. • Establishes a supportive, collaborative, and aligned senior leadership team. 		

Step 3: Chart Results

Chart each Attribute based on your ratings and rankings.

Rating	Lower Achievement	5												
		4												
		3												
	Higher Achievement	2												
		1												
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
			More Important					Less Important						
			Ranking											

Step 4: Determine High-Priority EUM Attributes

The goal of EUM is to establish high-achieving systems and approaches for each Attribute. Ultimately, utilities should strive to improve performance for all Attributes until each can be charted in the lower half of the table (high achieving). Utility managers may wish to focus on one or a few Attributes at a time, aiming to eventually ensure that all Attributes have been addressed and improved upon over time.

Examining the results of the charting exercise in Step 3 can help identify Attributes for focused attention. Attributes that graph into the dark orange shaded quadrant are both very important (ranked 1-4), and have low achievement (rated 4-5), and would typically be selected as the highest priority Attribute areas for moving forward with improvement actions. Attributes that graph into the light orange shaded area indicate medium importance, and a moderate level of current achievement; these would typically be selected as additional strong candidates for improvement efforts.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
The Metropolitan District
Wednesday, October 2, 2024**

PRESENT: Commissioners Richard Bush, William DiBella, Joan Gale, Joan Gentile, Allen Hoffman, Jean Holloway, Jackie Mandyck, Bhupen Patel, Alvin Taylor and District Chairman Donald M. Currey (10)

REMOTE ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Andrew Adil, Gary Johnson, Pasquale Salemi and David Steuber (4)

ABSENT: Commissioners Kyle Anderson, John Avedisian, Esther Clarke, James Healy, Byron Lester and Diane Lewis (6)

ALSO PRESENT: Commissioner Dominic Pane
Scott W. Jellison, Chief Executive Officer
Christopher Stone, District Counsel
John S. Mirtle, District Clerk
Christopher Levesque, Chief Operating Officer (Remote Attendance)
Thomas Tyler, Director of Facilities
Carrie Blardo, Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer
Jacob Aviles, IT Consultant (Remote Attendance)
Matthew McAuliffe, IT Consultant (Remote Attendance)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gentile called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM

PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATIVE TO AGENDA ITEMS

Judy Allen, of West Hartford, stated that she read the Effective Utility Management document and thought it was wonderful that the MDC shined in certain areas and will maybe be challenged to work on some others.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion made by Commissioner Patel and duly seconded, the meeting minutes of July 17, 2024 were approved. Commissioner Holloway abstained.

PROPOSED VISION STATEMENTS

Chairperson Gentile led a discussion with the Committee regarding three proposed vision statements and the Committee discussed wording for a District vision statement.

District Chairman Currey made a motion to recommend adoption of the following vision statement:

“The Metropolitan District’s vision is to be a state-of-the-art regional drinking water and sewer public utility, ensuring the quality, reliability, and sustainability of our environment, drinking water, wastewater services and other appropriate regional public services for the benefit of customers and the economic vitality of our member towns.”

The motion was duly seconded and approved unanimously.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS: SELF ASSESSMENT

Chairwoman Gentile spoke about the recently updated 2024 Effective Utility Management Primer for Water Sector Utilities that was created by water sector leaders for the water industry.

UPDATE ON MEMBER TOWN MEETINGS

District Chairman Currey updated the Committee that he has not met with any other mayors since the last Strategic Planning meeting.

OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Judy Allen, of West Hartford, stated that in Sunday’s newspaper there was an insert for “best places to work” and she noted that CT Water was included on the list. She suggested the MDC consider in the future to give some kudos to the MDC and to help to attract a new workforce.

COMMISSIONER REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Gale stated that towns are required to create a 5-10 year plan of conservation and development. He would like to see what the MDC plans to be doing in 5-10 years. He spoke about greater use of permeable surfaces such as cobblestone roads in the District.

Commissioner Pane stated that a lot of towns have clay soils or other types of soils that limit permeability and water doesn’t go through. Many towns require developers to install open or underground storage to hold stormwater and delay its release.

Commissioner Mandyck stated that in the committee’s due diligence, they should be looking at the member towns’ plans of conservation and development which identifies the towns’ visions and the areas of the towns that are planned to be developed. CRCOG also has their own plan of conservation and development for the region, as well as the state. CEO Scott Jellison informed the Committee that the District is required by CT DEEP to review the town’s plans of conservation and development.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM

ATTEST:

John S. Mirtle, Esq.
District Clerk

Date of Approval