



Aligning Asset Management Programs and State of Good Repair (SGR) Planning

Delivering resiliency and equity outcomes that align strategic goals and stakeholder needs

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State and local transportation and public works agencies are taking advantage of available federal funding through The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to address State of Good Repair (SGR) needs while looking to enhance capital projects and programs through an equity and resiliency lens. Rather than just replace “like for like” agencies are looking for transformational projects that improve the functionality and climate resiliency of their aging assets. At the same time, they are employing integrated planning and asset management strategies that embrace a multi-modal system or corridor approach to achieve multiple triple bottom line (TBL) social, financial, and environmental outcomes.

Achieving multi-modal outcomes requires extensive internal and external stakeholder collaboration and is driving organizations to better communicate with stakeholders, solicit outside input, and think out of the box – to better connect the public across infrastructure systems from highways and transit to bike and pedestrian with a focus on addressing historically underserved and underinvested communities and populations. The goal is to deliver transformational projects that improve quality of

life for everyone who utilizes public infrastructure to live, work, and play. Many of these investments are being targeted toward improved connectivity, amenities, and quality of life.

At the same time, this updated view towards a more interconnected system of roadways, bike lanes, sidewalks, green infrastructure, and parks is adding additional maintenance complexities - and requires an effective asset management approach. Collaboration between planners, engineers, maintainers, and asset managers across departments and asset classes is key to establishing lifecycle plans that can support a complex network of diverse classes and disciplines that must now all work together.

Most importantly, agencies need to consider not just the initial capital costs for these transformational projects, but the long-term maintenance requirements that are likely to be significantly higher than they have been in the past. This also requires transparent and long-term thinking from our public and elected officials to establish dedicated funding sources and commitments well into the future when federal funds may be less generous. Asset managers and planners need to continue to advocate for greater SGR funding commitments for both the existing assets we have and the new asset we are building to ensure they remain in good condition after the ribbon cutting – ensuring that the desired social and environmental outcomes are measured and sustained.

This brings a highlighted importance to establishing maintenance and funding strategies that consider how these systems will operate

together and serve future generations in 10, 20, or even 50 years. Maintenance strategies need to look beyond individual asset classes and move, like planning, towards a network or corridor-based approach. Work planning and scheduling should be aligned, and periodic renewal activities (such as paving, line striping, vegetation maintenance, and facility renewals) should be performed in a coordinated way to ensure that the overall functionality and aesthetics are maintained consistently.

Starting with Strategy

To elevate the importance of long-term SGR needs along with system equity, resiliency, and sustainability outcomes, both must be embedded within an Agency's strategic goals. From there, service level targets, maintenance plans, and future renewal requirements can be incorporated into business processes and funding plans – having established them as clear organizational priorities. This can help transcend any future changes in leadership or public opinion and ensure consistent focus, awareness, and funding. Across the US, Agencies are continuing to align their strategic plans with their asset management plans and lifecycle maintenance plans to make this a reality. In addition, larger transformational projects can embed service level goals and targets into their project charters along with long-term maintenance requirements to ensure future accountability.

Focusing on Implementation Outcomes (For the Long Term)

Agencies have also been adopting tactical approaches that incorporate sustainability, resiliency, and equity into lifecycle decision making through:

- A focus on funding **preventive maintenance and inspection**

programs to extend asset life and ensure asset reliability, while also delivering energy efficiencies, reduced emissions, and sustained functionality and public benefit.

- Building **lifecycle management plans** to ensure that critical sustainability and resiliency related systems have proactive investment strategies and funding including solar power systems, stormwater and flood mitigation, and green infrastructure.
- Explicitly **linking equity outcomes to maintenance strategies with a focus on workforce development** including multi-modal accessibility and local training and workforce education opportunities.

WSP Advisory Services and our Asset Management team have worked to deliver collaborative projects across the US that align asset management strategies with broader planning goals. Some highlights from our recent efforts include:

- A SAMP (Strategic Asset Management Plan) for a large multi-modal agency in the Rocky Mountain region that aligned asset management goals to objectives across asset resiliency, corridor planning, and neighborhood equity – *ensuring that asset level performance targets align with larger Citywide strategies.*
- A SAMP and implementation plan for one of the largest Departments of Transportation (DOTs) on the East Coast that highlights the need and business case for sustained and dedicated SGR funding – *while aligning with equity outcomes and cross-modal corridor-based planning.*

- A SAMP and implementation plan for a large transportation and public work agency in the Southeast where establishing proactive funding for preventive maintenance programs is critical – *while also prioritizing investments that deliver on service level goals and have a positive impact on equity and resiliency.*

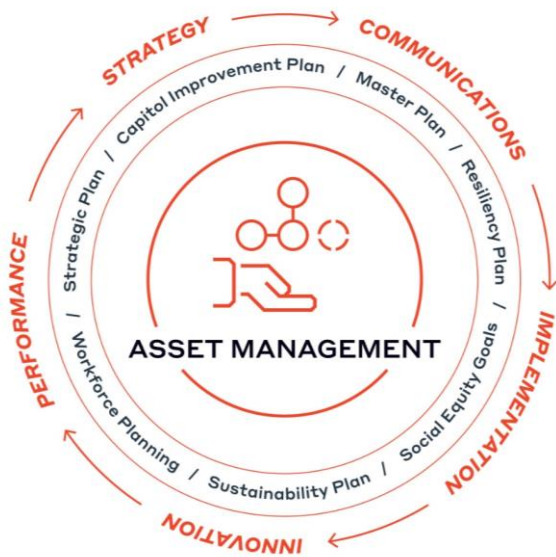
terminology, concepts, and tools including lifecycle planning, preventive maintenance, and the importance of asset tracking and data management.

About the author



David Sklar is a WSP Senior Vice President and the National Lead for Asset Management Strategy, Planning, and Transformation. He has worked with some of the largest infrastructure agencies in the US to help advance asset management programs across the aviation, transit, highway, public works, and water sectors.

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How Have Approaches to Asset Management Strategy and Planning Changed?

Asset management is now viewed less as a siloed discipline and is becoming more directly embedded within an Agency’s overarching planning and program delivery processes.

There are more constant touchpoints and collaboration between planning, engineering, construction, maintenance, finance and technology. As part of a Future Ready® approach, asset management strategies are more frequently developed during initial project planning phases, and staff within all departments are well versed in asset management

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