

2015 CRC Recommendations/Responses

Public Works	
Recommendations	Department Response/Action Taken
<p>The PW Department should conduct a campaign to inform the public about the services it provides and its activities associated with operating and maintaining the City's infrastructure. For example, information could be provided monthly or quarterly in a manner similar to Idaho Falls Power's current information campaign.</p>	<p>Agree, plan to pursue. Improvements on informing the public regarding the services Public Works provides should be pursued. Utility billing mailings are one such avenue that could be utilized as a means of better inform the public. Public Works will work in concert with the City Public Information Officer to address other methods that may also accomplish this goal.</p>
<p>There seems to be a need for a more effective "advertising" effort regarding city services and for obtaining citizen input/interaction concerning basic infrastructure maintenance, improvements, and safety. The CRC recommends that the City consider expanding such efforts through the City utility billing and flyers regularly sent to their customers. Providing the PW Department more visibility at public functions may also help. Educating the community about the PW Department's mission and activities is difficult. Therefore, the City might consider a public relations or advertising consultant for suggestions on ways to do this effectively and efficiently.</p>	<p>Agree, plan to pursue. Expanding efforts to better inform residents through various forms of communication regarding Public Works services and needs would be beneficial to the Department. Public Works will work in concert with the City Public Information Officer to address other methods that may also better inform the public.</p>
<p>The CRC recommends that the GIS Division implement a citizen hot-line for reporting and locating issues that need to be addressed by the various City Departments (e.g., pot holes, downed signs, broken and out of service lighting).</p>	<p>Existing service that could be improved. The City has an online portal for residents on the City website. The portal is referred to under the <i>Citizen Request</i> heading. Questions posed by the public are routed to the applicable Department to address the issue in question. There is also a portion of the city website entitled "<i>I want to :</i>" that contains commonly asked question in a drop down box, one of which is to report a street problem. The functionality of this service should be reviewed as part of an overall revamp of the City website.</p>
<p>The CRC recommends that the PW Department utilize the City's GIS system to develop a life cycle management system for planning, managing and tracking the maintenance, upgrade and replacement of all critical and high-cost infrastructure and equipment owned and managed by the Department.</p>	<p>Agree, asset management software should be implemented. While the City GIS could perform this function with enough time and effort, the City may be better served looking into asset management software specifically designed to perform these functions. The Cayenta software currently being implemented has asset management capabilities that may be a better match for long term asset management.</p>
<p>The CRC recommends that the Divisions implement life cycle upgrade/replacement plans, updated and presented annually to the City Council.</p>	<p>Agree, plan to pursue. The Public Works Department recognizes the need to develop life cycle costing analysis across all Divisions. Currently the Water and Sewer Divisions have good working documents in their facility plans that address needs for future capital upgrades and rehabilitation. Similar plans can and should be developed for remaining Divisions.</p>
<p>The CRC recommends that the City consider adding additional full time staff to the Engineering Division and leveraging City employees in other divisions to be cross-trained as backups or support for the Division during peak times/seasons (e.g., during spring street painting and summer construction seasons). Doing so is critical for the continued success and maintenance of the quality level of service currently provided by the Division.</p>	<p>Plan to evaluate further. While additional staff is needed and justified, expanding the Division under the current economic/budgetary realities the City is dealing with is not likely to happen in the near future. The Division's retiring IT specialist is being replaced with an additional designer and the design staff will be cross-trained to assist with construction inspection. (IT functions are being shifted to the main city IT staff in the Municipal Services Department.) This decision to utilize other City resources for IT needs and replace that position in a manner that helps address both design and inspection needs is an important part of dealing with the staffing shortage. Cross-training of personnel in the Street Division to assist with signing and striping has also occurred. Engineering will work to more effectively utilize that cross-training and look for additional opportunities to develop position backups and more effectively utilize existing resources.</p>
<p>The CRC suggests that hiring a small number of full-time employees could offset the need for hiring a larger number of temporary employees each year. The CRC believes that this would possibly be a wash budget-wise. By doing so, annual training time may be reduced and the ability to cross-training employees to support/backup other personnel in the Division could be increased; this is an option that is typically not available with temporary employees. The CRC believes that addressing this personnel issue will position the Division to address many of the other observations made by the CRC.</p>	<p>Plan to evaluate further. The Division will look in-depth at a cost comparison and the operational impacts of hiring additional full-time employees instead of a larger number of temporary employees and then utilize the results of that analysis in deriving the next round of budget requests.</p>
<p>The CRC recommends that it would be prudent to hire additional inspection personnel to keep up with planned and emergent construction projects as Idaho Falls continues to grow.</p>	<p>Plan to evaluate further. The Engineering Division recognizes the need for additional inspection resources. Ideally, an additional full-time inspector would be added and it is hoped that such will be possible in a future budget year. In the meantime, the Division will work to find additional efficiencies within the inspection section, cross-train members of the design section to assist, and seek out qualified individuals who are willing to work in part-time or temporary capacities.</p>

The CRC recommends that the Division utilize the City's GIS system to develop a life cycle management system for planning, managing and tracking the maintenance, upgrade and replacement of all critical and high-cost infrastructure and equipment owned and/or managed by the Division. The current approach to managing public works infrastructure varies substantially from one infrastructure type to another. The Engineering Division works with the Water, Sewer, and Street Divisions in planning improvements and replacement of elements of their systems. GIS plays a role in the asset management function for each, but Division should assess and update the GIS data/ information associated with its use is not consistent between each system, nor is GIS being utilized to its full capacity. There would certainly be benefits to utilizing GIS as a key element of a unified, systematic infrastructure and equipment on a regular basis. It should develop a consistent approach to managing all of the infrastructure types. The Engineering Division will work toward developing a unified approach and identifying the system data needs. Those data and systematic schema for estimating the cost and benefits, establishing priorities and risks, and for weighting the various attributes. Each of the effort and time. attributes that are necessary for conducting life cycle planning within the Division should be updated at least annually or more frequently if necessary.

The CRC recommends that the City Council consider making tax/fee adjustments on a more regular basis such that it does not periodically "shock" the taxpayers. More "real time" adjustments will allow the PW Department to better keep up with maintenance, repairs, upgrades, and replacements in a more sustainable manner. **Agree, plan to pursue.** More frequent fee or tax adjustments should be conducted on a more regular basis, allowing revenues to more closely match needed expenditures.

Because the State Legislature has been reluctant to increase fuel taxes, the CRC recommends that the City consider other approaches to diversify the City's sources of income to support funding increases as needed. Although the State Legislature appears to be unwilling to supply adequate funding for meeting critical City services, infrastructure, and equipment needs, it will probably be loath to release the political power that comes letting the cities raise their own funding take care of their own needs. Therefore, the CRC recommends that the City consider negotiating alternative approaches such as a Local Option Tax, following the example of Utah. A change of this magnitude will require close collaboration by City officials and the State Legislature. However, it is recommended that the City pursue such options to obtain adequate funding to properly fund the City's essential services and infrastructure. **Agree, plan to pursue with Policy Makers.** Public Works is in support of any such efforts that would better allow the City to secure funding sources for various needs. Local option tax could help provide funding for a number of current and future projects.

There is only one employee that performs the function of managing the GIS system for the entire city. While there are employees in other divisions who use the GIS database, they do not have the overall knowledge and experience to administer the entire system. The CRC recommends that the city consider methods to correct this potential "single point failure". It would be very difficult, expensive and time consuming to replace the current GIS coordinator. Therefore, the CRC recommends hiring a second employee to work with and train to back-up the GIS coordinator. The CRC believes that hiring a second employee would position the GIS Division to address numerous other observations/recommendations provided in this report. **Agree, plan to pursue with Policy Makers.** GIS is one of our most valuable resources. Existing staffing experiences difficulties in meeting everyday needs without addressing long term projects that need to be added to our GIS. Public Works will evaluate potential opportunities to address this "single point failure" such as cross training existing GIS technicians and further discuss the need to fund an additional position with other Departments that contribute GIS funding.

If hiring a second employee is not feasible due to budget constraints or other issues, then the CRC recommends that the City cross-train one of the GIS users in another division to act as a back-up. **Agree, will pursue as staffing allows.** Cross training is a valuable means to provide reassurance that the GIS could continue to meet City needs should the existing coordinator leave city service. Currently, with the implementation of Citywide financial software little time is available to devote to cross training, but this may change once the new software has been brought online. The challenge would be finding time for the employee to take on additional responsibilities when their work load is already full.

The CRC recommends that the Division modify the City's GIS system to accommodate and automate a life cycle management system for planning, managing and tracking the maintenance, upgrade and replacement of all critical and high-cost infrastructures and equipment owned and/or managed by each Division within the PW Department, as determined to be appropriate. The Division should assist other Divisions in developing a consistent, holistic and systematic schema for estimating the cost and benefits, for establishing priorities and risks, and for weighting the various attributes. The Division should develop the code necessary for automating the life cycle assessment schema and to easily input the data/information and develop status reports on an annual or more frequent basis.

Agree, plan to pursue. A life cycle management system is an excellent means to plan for future needs within all City Departments. Evaluation will be made to see if GIS is the best tool to implement this goal or if there are other stand alone asset management programs that have already been established for this particular purpose for the various types of infrastructure that Public Works is charged with maintaining.

The CRC recommends that metadata be developed and maintained for all long-life, critical, large-capital-cost infrastructure and equipment owned and/or operated by the City. The Division should develop a consistent approach and a prioritization scheme for developing and maintain the appropriate metadata. It may be possible to use interns to help input metadata.

Agree, ongoing process. Developing better GIS metadata has long been identified as a need for the GIS Division, but has never been the highest priority need. Other priorities have always pushed this item further into the future. Interns could be hired to enter metadata, but it would come at the expense of other prioritized needs.

The CRC recommends that the GIS program expand its current collaboration efforts and take advantage of the expertise and the data/information available from other sources that have strong GIS programs, such as the INL and the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR).

Agree, ongoing process. Current collaboration efforts have focused on other agencies more similar to the City of Idaho Falls. These efforts have primarily been focused on Bonneville County and the City of Ammon. In the past we have collaborated with the INL, but they perform very different functions than the City. Their expertise could be a great benefit as the City develops greater online capabilities in the future, an area where they have much more experience.

The CRC recommends incorporating street-sweeping within the Sanitation Fee structure thereby making general funds available for higher-priority Street Division maintenance needs. The CRC believes residential street-sweeping should be a function of the Sanitation Division because it is a cleaning and removal process.

Agree, alternate funding sources need to be identified. The Sanitation Division recognizes the difficulties associated with fully funding Street Division activities and agrees that street sweeping could become a Sanitation Division function. The timing of this potential change should be further considered as the Division is currently in a three-year implementation process of renovating residential garbage pickup from handload to autoload. Increasing fees now may be difficult to fully explain to the public as moving to an autoload system was intended as a cost saving measure.

The CRC recommends incorporating snow removal within the Sanitation Fee structure thereby making general funds available for higher-priority Street Division maintenance needs. The CRC believes snow removal should be a function of the Sanitation Division because it is a cleaning and removal process.

Agree, alternate funding sources need to be identified. Snow removal has the potential every year to be an expensive public service that all Eastern Idaho Cities manage. Lack of sufficient Street Division funding is unlikely to change in the near future and all available means of finding new revenue sources to fully fund Street Division activities should be considered.

The CRC recommends that the Division consider options for increasing residential and commercial recycling in the city (including coordinating between the city and private recycling entities). The CRC believes that this service, if fully assessed relative to the cost of building, maintaining and operating an engineered land fill, is cost-effective and it provides tangible benefits to the environment (hence the citizens of Idaho Falls). Therefore, it is an important service to maintain and to expand to the extent feasible. However, the extent to which this service is expanded should be based on fiscal costs and benefits, general public views, and feasibility.

Agree, plan to pursue with Policy Makers. Recycling is a service that is currently offered by a combination of public and private providers. Large bins are placed throughout the City that are serviced by the Sanitation Division and curbside recycling is currently offered by two private providers. The Sanitation Division recognizes the benefit of recycling and will propose that this topic be included for consideration at a future Council Work Session.

The cost of maintaining city streets remains underfunded even with the recent increase in state fuel taxes. The CRC recommends that the Idaho Falls City Council, continue to push the Legislature for adequate funding to accommodate projected growth and for operating, maintaining, upgrading and replacing the City's streets. Other alternative sources of funding should also be considered to help make up for the cumulative shortfalls the City has been experiencing for many years.

Agree, alternate funding sources need to be identified. Lack of sufficient Street Division funding is unlikely to change in the near future and all available means of finding new revenue sources to fully fund Street Division activities should be considered.

The CRC recommends that the unpaved streets in longtime residential areas should be paved using City funding/resources. It is recommended that the drive path of these streets be paved, as a minimum, if full paving (e.g., including storm water sewer drainage, curbs, and sidewalks) is too expensive in some areas. In addition, the CRC recommends that recycled paving materials be considered for such uses, in addition to other appropriate areas/projects around the city.

Agree, plan to pursue with Policy Makers. Unpaved streets within the City of Idaho Falls have long been an issue of contention by a number of residents that live along those streets. Paving those streets with a full urban street section would likely prove cost prohibitive, but paving without underground storm line installations and full curb and gutter sections could solve a number of the concerns raised by residents and prove cost effective in that less street maintenance would be required on an annual basis. Approximately 4.5 miles of streets within the City are unpaved. A phased approach to paving these streets could be implemented so that all streets were paved within the next 5-years.

The CRC recommends that the classification of all primary and secondary roadways be reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis. For example, legacy snow routes, such as old INL bus routes, to be reclassified from primary to secondary, where appropriate.

Agree, plan to pursue. Snow removal activities need to be reviewed and updated based on current travel patterns. Snow removal mapping will be reviewed and potential changes will be discussed with the Mayor and City Council.

The CRC recommends that street sweeping be considered as a subset of the Sanitation Division with a concurrent increase in the sanitation fee to cover street sweeping costs.

Agree, alternate funding sources need to be identified. The Street Division recognizes the difficulties associated with fully funding Street Division activities and agrees that street sweeping could become a Sanitation Division function. The timing of this potential change should be further considered as the Division is currently in a three-year implementation process of renovating residential garbage pickup from handload to autoloading. Increasing fees now may be difficult to fully explain to the public as moving to an autoloading system was intended as a cost saving measure.

The CRC recommends that snow removal be considered a subset of the Sanitation Division with a concurrent increase in the sanitation fee to cover snow removal costs.

Agree, alternate funding sources need to be identified. Snow removal has the potential every year to be an expensive public service that all Eastern Idaho Cities manage. Lack of sufficient Street Division funding is unlikely to change in the near future and all available means of finding new revenue sources to fully fund Street Division activities should be considered.

The CRC recommends that the Sewer Division continuously perform and maintain impact analyses for all large entities (e.g. malting plants) that may significantly impact the volume and/or characteristics of waste water and subsequent treatment needs for the purpose of long-term planning, and for developing appropriate and sustainable service cost recovery rates and mechanisms.

Agree, ongoing. The Sewer Division currently monitors all Significant Industrial Users as mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency pretreatment program. All industries must report, in advance, all anticipated changes in loadings and flow volumes. Any other Industrial User that: discharges an average of 25,000 gallons per day or more of process wastewater to the Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW) (excluding sanitary, noncontact cooling and boiler blowdown wastewater); contributes a process wastestream which makes up 5 percent or more of the average dry weather hydraulic or organic capacity of the POTW Treatment plant; or is designated as such by the Control Authority on the basis that the Industrial User has a reasonable potential for adversely affecting the POTW's operation or for violating any Pretreatment Standard or requirement (in accordance with 40 CFR 403.8(f)(6)).

The CRC recommends that the Division assess the risks and liabilities associated with the discharge of untreated storm water to the Snake River and other "waters of the U.S." The Division should develop a long-term prioritization and remediation plan to begin proactively eliminating these discharges in accordance with current regulations. In addition, the CRC recommends that the City implement a project/a select number of projects each year to spread out the cost of implementing this program – i.e., using a phased approach.

Agree, ongoing. Idaho Falls currently operates under a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that was originally issued in 2007 by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Many of the CRC's concerns are covered within this particular permit. The City is cognizant of all discharges, but especially those that discharge directly to the river. There are currently projects underway that will help ensure that several river discharges are improved as part of greenbelt rejuvenation. Memorial Drive reconstruction is another example of a project that implemented ground infiltration as opposed to direct discharge to the river that existed previously. All new or reconstructed discharges to the river include facilities for grease and sediment removal and the Engineering Division is working to develop a more comprehensive plan for addressing existing storm water discharges.

The CRC recommends that the Division utilize the GIS system to develop a life cycle management system for planning, managing and tracking the maintenance, upgrade and replacement of all critical and high-cost infrastructure and equipment owned and/or managed by the Division. The Division should assess and update the GIS data/ information associated with its infrastructure and equipment on a regular basis. It should develop a consistent and systematic schema for estimating the cost and benefits, for establishing priorities and risks, and for weighting the various attributes. Each of the attributes that are necessary for conducting life cycle planning within the Division should be updated at least annually or more frequently if necessary.

Agree, ongoing but will be pursued to a greater extent. The Division uses a remote closed circuit video camera to video record underground infrastructures and the Engineering Division links this information into the GIS mapping system. Life cycles of these structures can vary according to the materials used when constructed and the care that was used during construction. Better asset management software will be reviewed to see if more appropriate programs are available to build upon what has already been created within GIS.

The CRC recommends that the City develop a Sustainability Sewer Infrastructure and Equipment Fund (analogous to the MERF for rolling equipment). It is recommended that the City set aside an adequate percentage of the Division's annual revenues in a rolling fund dedicated to the sustainable replacement of sewer lines, pump/lift stations, and other large, critical infrastructure and high-cost-capital equipment.

Agree, ongoing. The existing Sewer Facility Plan includes a thorough review of all existing wastewater system facilities and recommends a list of capital improvement projects to be implemented over the next 20 years. Although not established in the same manner as the MERF account, the facility plan ensures the sustainability of the Sewer Division.

The CRC recommends that the Division utilize the GIS system to develop a life cycle management system for planning, managing and tracking the maintenance, upgrade and replacement of all critical and high-cost infrastructure and equipment owned and/or managed by the Division. The **Agree, ongoing.** The Water Division currently leverages GIS system information along with coordination with other divisions to prioritize water main replacement. Coordination Division should assess and update the GIS data/ information associated with its involves identifying locations with prioritized water mains where streets are also scheduled for resurfacing. This allows us to be efficient by focusing on neighborhoods with dual infrastructure and equipment on a regular basis. It should develop a consistent, needs. However, the process can be time-intensive as it is not automated. The recently adopted Water Facility Plan included a recommendation on page 1-8 suggesting that the holistic and systematic schema for estimating the cost and benefits, for Water Division implement an asset management software for automating the prioritization of water main replacement. establishing priorities and risks, and for weighting the various attributes. Each of the attributes that are necessary for conducting life cycle planning within the Division should be updated at least annually or more frequently if necessary.

The CRC recommends that the City develop a Sustainable Water Infrastructure and Equipment Fund (analogous to the MERF for rolling equipment). It is recommended that the City set aside an adequate percentage of the Division's annual revenues in a rolling fund dedicated to the sustainable replacement of water lines, tanks, pump/lift stations, and other large, critical infrastructure and high-cost-capital equipment. **Agree, ongoing.** The recently completed Water Facility Plan includes a thorough review of all existing water system facilities and recommends a list of capital improvement projects to be implemented over the next 20 years. The plan then establishes a series of rate adjustments to ensure identified projects are adequately funded. Although not established in the same manner as the MERF account, the facility plan ensures the sustainability of the Water Division.

Idaho Falls should develop a rolling 25-30 year planning cycle to ensure future water supply security and to develop and implement an equitable cost of service plan. **Agree, currently exists.** The recently adopted Water Facility Plan includes population growth and water use projections for 5, 20, and 40-year forecast periods. The facility plan is also intended to be a living document that will be revisited and amended once every 5 years to keep forecasts up to date. Accurate forecasts will allow for regular planning to keep water supplies secure and ensure that water rates keep pace with needed expenditures.

As an interim measure, the CRC recommends a user fee charge for water service based on lot size/actual water use. **Agree, currently being pursued.** An alternate billing structure for flat rate water accounts was recommended as part of the Water Facility Plan to keep rates more equitable. The proposed rate structure is dependent upon implementation of the City's new utility billing software that is currently being formatted to meet the City's needs and practices.

The CRC recommends that the City follow the City of Ammon's approach of installing water meters (Reference 9). This should include preparing a phased multi-year plan to install water meters. **Partial implementation ongoing.** The Water Facility Plan contains an evaluation of City-wide metering along with a feasibility analysis of how it can be paid for through debt issuances. Due to the exorbitant cost of full water meter implementation, the City has opted to dedicate \$250,000 per year for the installation of water meters on the City's largest, non-residential water users, focusing our conservation efforts where there is the largest potential for success.

The CRC recommends the City modify city code as necessary in order to require the installation of meter pits for all new structures receiving city water and all upgrades to service lines from city mains to residential customers. In addition, the City should consider modifying city code as necessary in order to require the installation of water meter for all new structures. **Partial implementation ongoing.** The Water Division complies with current state regulations which require the installation of meter pits on all new construction. All new commercial & industrial connections are also required to install water meters. The Water Division has also been installing meter pits with every water main or service line replacement projects. Additionally, implementation of the alternate billing structure proposed by the Water Facility Plan will necessitate revisions to the section of the city code regarding water service, allowing any necessary changes to the code to be completed.

The City of Idaho Falls should initiate a program of annexation of in-holder properties for tax and service reasons and consolidate the city boundaries. Prioritizing and selectively targeting a few properties annually may aid in the eventual annexation of all in-holder properties currently in the City. **Agree, plan to pursue with Policy Makers.** Public Works agrees that this recommendation should receive Council consideration and will work with various Departments as needed to assist in this effort.

The CRC suggests that gas company franchise monies be assigned directly to the Public Works Division for the benefit of street repair and maintenance. **Agree, plan to pursue with Policy Makers.** Public Works agrees that all utilities that operate within public alleys and rights-of-way have a direct financial impact to maintaining costs. Utilizing all or a portion of franchise fees to help fund the Street Department seems like a logical use for these funds. Public Works will forward this recommendation to the City Council as part of the next budget cycle.