

C. Comprehensive Planning Policies

The Water Utility System Plan shall be updated every ~~sixteen~~ years as required by state statute; the Wastewater and Storm & Surface Water System Plans shall be updated as required by changed conditions or ~~regulatory requirements~~~~state statute~~, between every six to ten years. All Utility system plans shall use a 20-year planning horizon or greater, and shall consider life cycle costs to identify funding needs. Studies to analyze specific geographic areas or issues, such as Storm & Surface Water sub-basin plans, Wastewater capacity and flow studies, or Water pressure zone studies and seismic impact will be completed as required using similar criteria for planning infrastructure needs.

Substantial portions of the City utility systems were constructed in the 1950's and 1960's. These systems are approaching the end of their useful life as illustrated on the following Exhibit 1 - Watermain Replacement Spending and Exhibit 2 - Sewermain Replacement Spending. The storm & surface water infrastructure is of similar age but has not ~~yet~~ been graphed. It most likely has a relatively shorter expected life span. Asset assessment for all utility systems is an ongoing work priority. The Utility is implementing an asset management strategy that results in an infrastructure ~~The object is to determine and follow a survivor curve~~ replacement schedule based upon age, condition, and the risk and consequence of failure, rather than ~~at~~ the replacement schedule based on age alone. Assumptions for survivor curves and useful lives are revisited periodically. These were assessed in 2004 and updated for the most recent engineering and financial findings. Significant changes include the adjustment of replacement costs to current price levels, categorization of pipe assets based on expected useful lives, and replacement of major non-pipe Utility assets such as pump stations and reservoirs. The Exhibits illustrate an example survival replacement curve based on preliminary estimates only. As real needs are determined, they will replace the estimated curves. Renewal and/or replacement will require substantial reinvestment in the future and have major rate impacts if large portions of the systems have to be replaced in relatively short periods of time. The actual useful life of underground utilities is difficult to determine and the best available data is needed to be able to plan for the orderly and timely renewal and/or replacement. For this purpose, the comprehensive plans need to have at least 20 year planning horizons and must address the aging of the Utility systems.

Long term system planning for the Utility systems is required in order to assure that future financial needs are anticipated and equitable funding plans can be developed. In order to keep funding plans current, utility system plans need to be updated between six and ten years. State law requires ~~tensix~~ years for water system plans. Wastewater system plans are not mandated to be updated on a ~~six-year~~prescribed cycle, however updating them between six and ten years is the common standard of practice. Stormwater system plans similarly have no state or federal mandate for updating, however with the implementation of the NPDES General Permit, it is reasonable to expect significant changes within two 5-year permit terms to warrant a system plan update. Depending on the significance of the changes, the Storm system plan may require updating sooner than after two 5-year permit cycles. These Financial Policies will be reviewed and updated as needed.