



# **Applying the New Effective Utility Management Framework at Your Water Utility**

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**West Slope Water District**

**PNWS-AWWA Annual Conference**

**Boise, Idaho**

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# A Quick Introduction for Mike

- West Slope WD General Manager since 2015
  - 39-year AWWA Individual Member
  - 6 years as an engineering consultant
  - 6 years as water utility senior engineer
  - 18 years as a water quality & engineering manager
  - Vice Chair of the AWWA Water Utility Council beginning June 2025
  - Active on Association, Section, and Subsection Councils and committees



## Documents We Will Be Discussing – Get Your Copy Today!

- **Effective Utility Management – A Primer for Water Sector Utilities**
- <https://www.awwa.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-2024-EUM-PRIMER.pdf>



## Documents We Will Be Discussing – Get Your Copy Today!

- **Moving Toward Sustainability: Sustainable and Effective Practices for Creating Your Water Utility Roadmap (aka. “The Roadmap”)**
- [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/documents/eum\\_practices\\_roadmap\\_final\\_508-10-2018.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/documents/eum_practices_roadmap_final_508-10-2018.pdf)



# What is EUM?

- 10 Attributes of Effectively Managed Utilities
- 5 Keys to Management Success
  - Proactively Plan for the Future
  - Protect Infrastructure Investments
  - Save Money & Increase Resiliency
  - Help Recruit and Retain a Trained and Motivated Workforce
  - Ensure Safe, Reliable Future Water Supply



## Revised EUM Attribute and Keys Names

Regulatory and Reliability  
Performance had been

Product Quality

Workforce Development had  
been

Employee and Leadership Development

Customer Experience and  
Satisfaction had been

Customer Satisfaction

Strategic Business Planning  
and Management had been

Strategic Business Planning

# EUM Steering Group

**Angela Akridge**

*Louisville & Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District*

**Anna Bryan-Borja**

*Austin Water*

**Shellie Chard**

*Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality*

**Allison Deines**

*Alexandria Renew Enterprises*

**Mike Grimm**

*West Slope Water District*

**Liesel Gross**

*Lehigh County Authority*

**Jackie Jerrell**

*Raftelis (formerly with Charlotte Water)*

**Donna Mancuso**

*Suffolk County Water Authority*

# EUM Collaborating Organizations

American Water Works Association

***Adam Carpenter***

Association of Clean Water Administrators

***Julia Anastasio***

Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies

***Antoinette Barber/Tom Dobbins***

Association of State Drinking Water Administrators

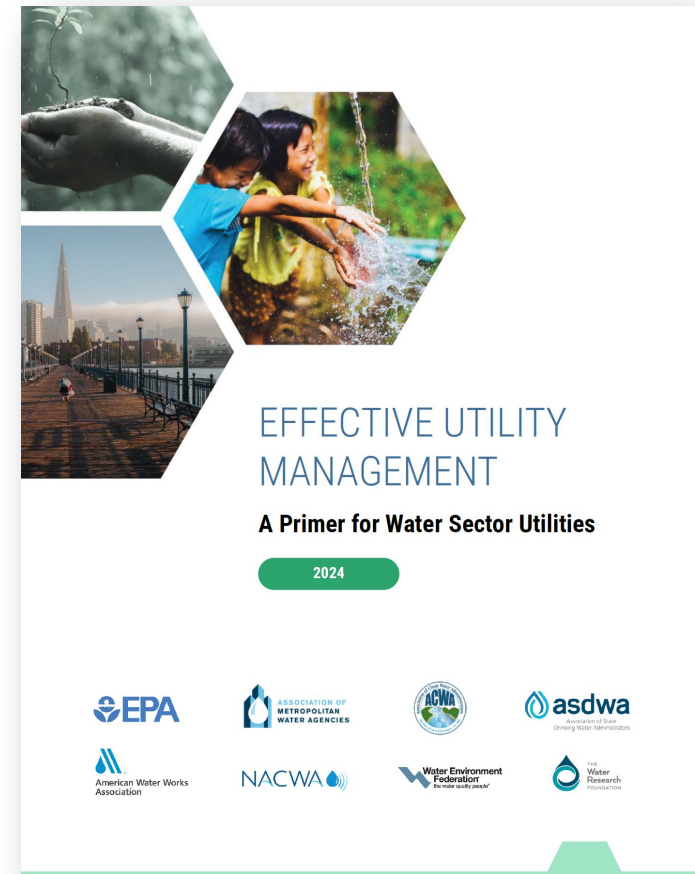
***Shellie Chard***

National Association of Clean Water Agencies

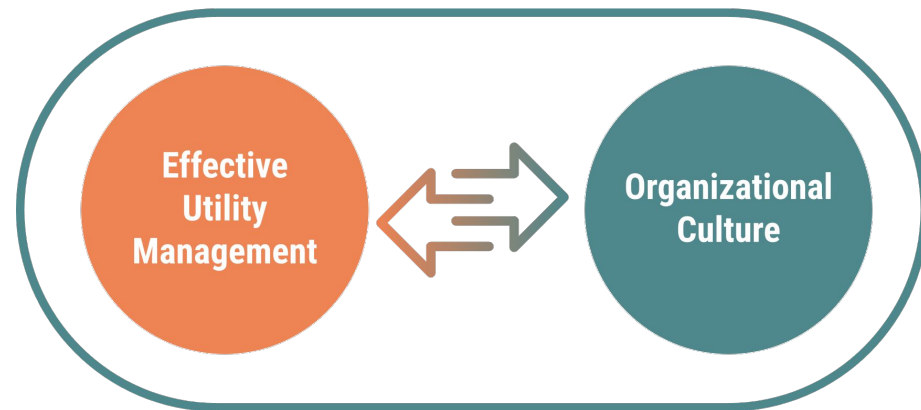
## Main Updates to the EUM Primer

- Revised Names for some EUM Attributes and Keys
- Further refinement of Attributes and Keys
- Updated EUM Wheel Graphic
- New Section on Organizational Culture
- More alignment of Primer and Roadmap
- Simplified EUM Implementation Process
- Updated Resources

# EUM Primer Modernization Timeline



# Organizational Culture



## Section 4. Organizational Culture

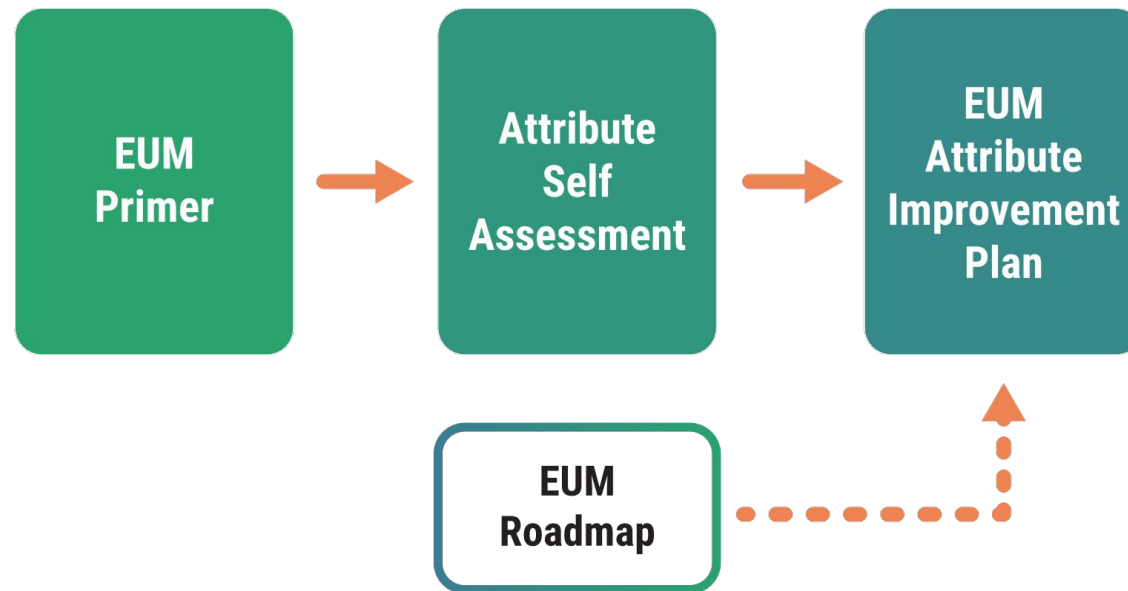
Organizational Culture in utility management is the embodiment of your organizational values, beliefs, and ethical behaviors that shape interactions within the organization and with the community. An effectively managed utility fosters a culture in which everyone is committed to continuous improvement of skills and services. It is about fostering an environment that encourages innovation, integrity, collaboration, flexibility in the workforce and workplace, sustainability, and customer-centric approaches in line with the utility's vision. Leadership must understand, reflect, and cultivate not only the explicitly stated values and norms preferred by the organization, but also the unspoken basic underlying assumptions of their culture. These include the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, morale levels, and values that form the essence of their Organizational Culture. Employees are respected and supported by leadership, while also supporting leadership, leading to robust engagement at all levels.

One of the benefits of a healthy Organizational Culture can be enhancing the organization's ability to attract, retain, and develop a talented and diverse workforce. Effective culture assures staff and customers are valued throughout the organization and feel a strong sense of belonging, with diversity and equity intentionally informing staffing, operational, and investment decisions. A people-centered culture focused on continuous improvement creates and maintains the connection between the utility's organizational values, performance objectives, employee coaching, and solidifying performance-based compensation parameters.

Photo courtesy Austin Water



# Refined EUM Implementation Process



## 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.

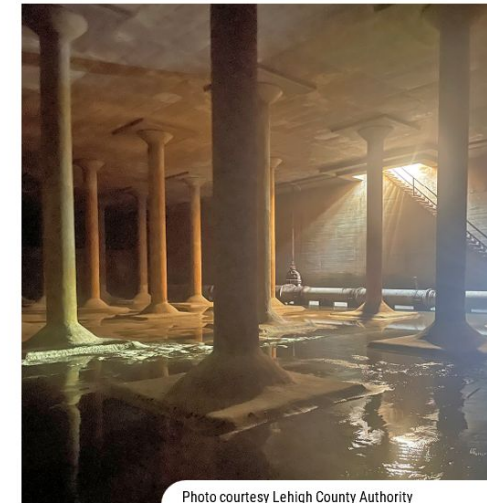
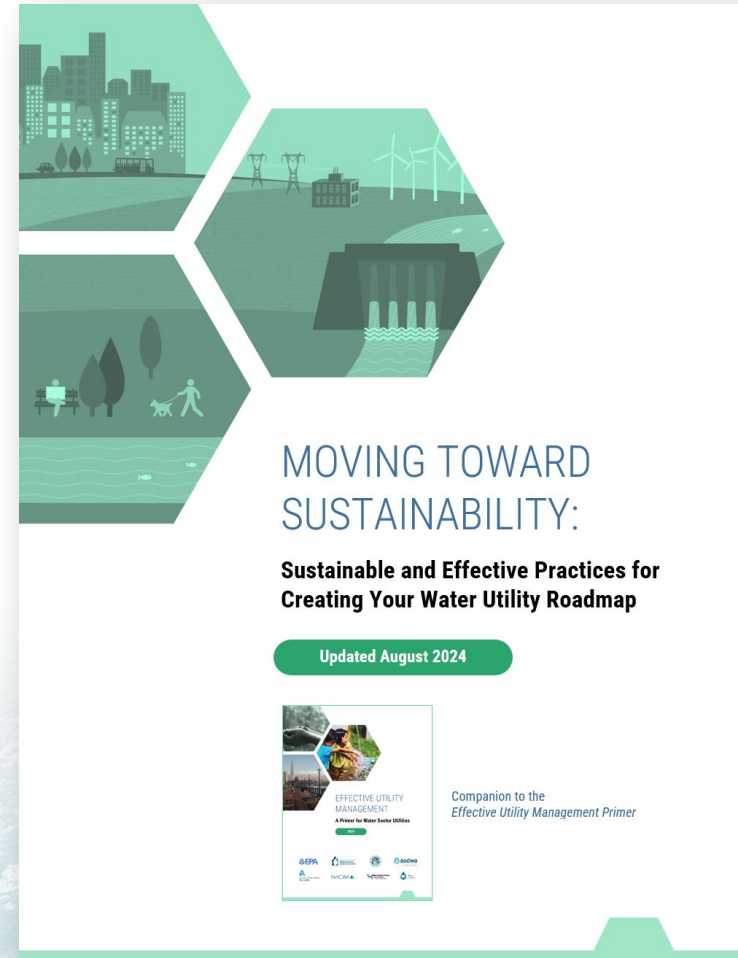
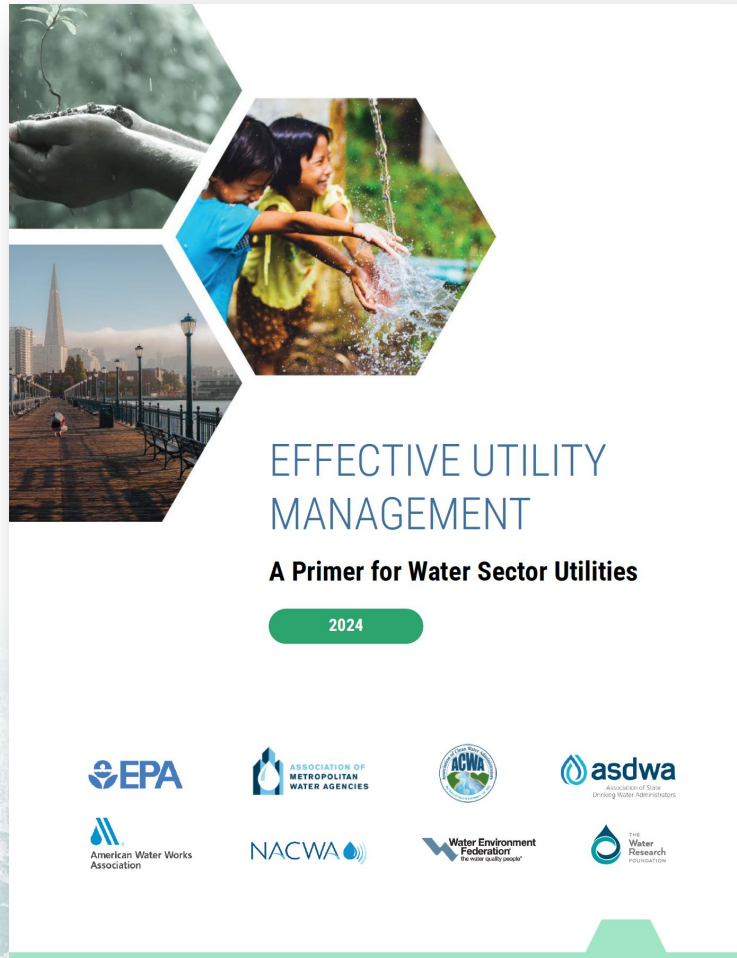


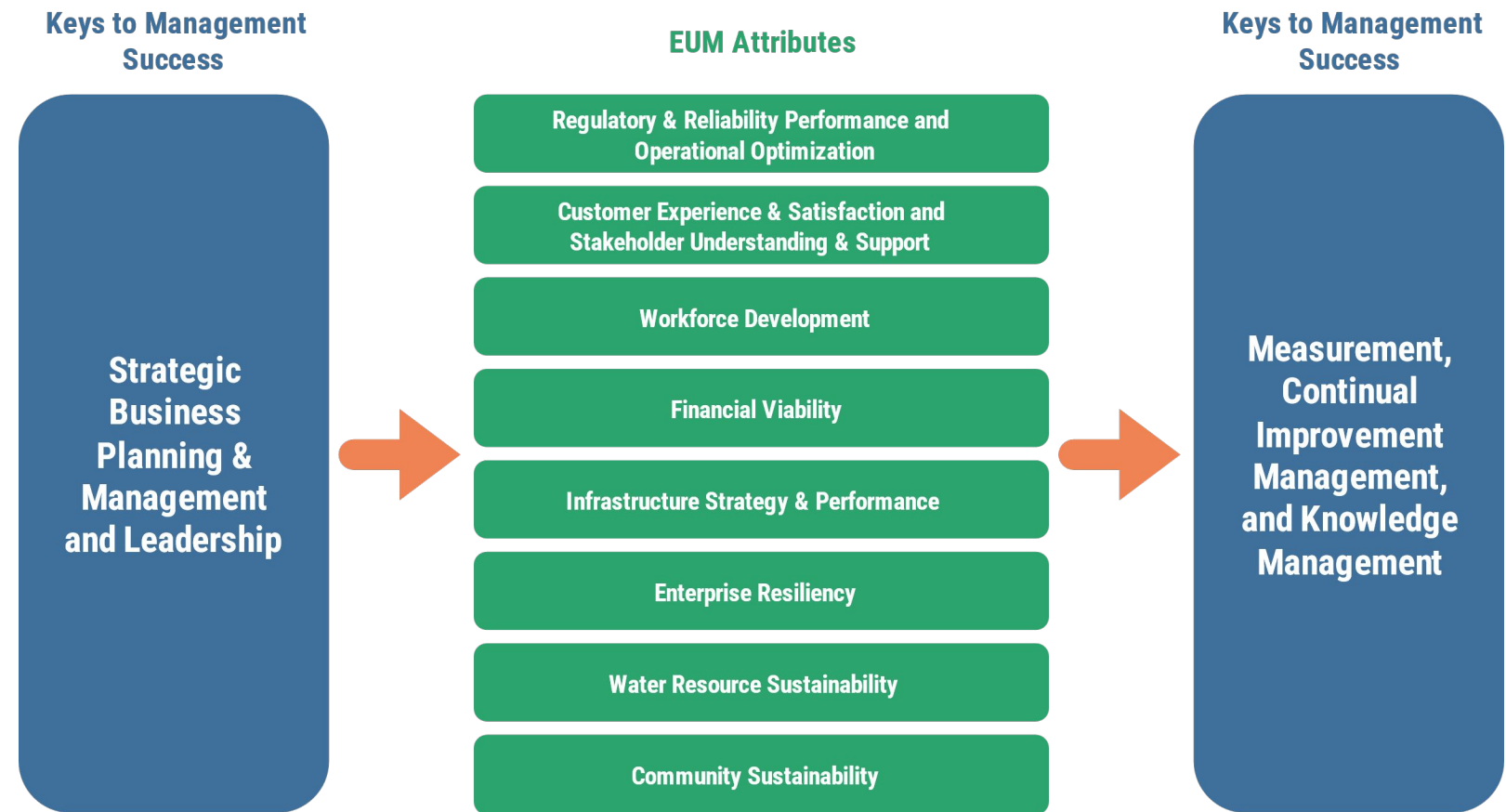
Photo courtesy Lehigh County Authority

# Aligning the EUM Roadmap to the Revised EUM Primer



# EUM ROADMAP REVISIONS

- Updated Attribute and Key names
- Revised formatting
- Revised and updated resources



# **EUM Implementation Demonstration**



# Effectively Managed Utility: Ten Attributes

1. Regulatory & Reliability Performance
2. Customer Experience & Satisfaction
3. Workforce Development
4. Operational Optimization
5. Financial Viability
6. Infrastructure Strategy and Performance
7. Enterprise Resiliency
8. Community Sustainability
9. Water Resource Sustainability
10. Stakeholder Understanding and Support

# Step 1: Assess Current Conditions

- 1) **RATE** current level of achievement
- 2) Consider current management systems
- 3) Reflect either: lowest level of achievement

- 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.

[illegible]

## Step 2: Establish Importance of Attributes

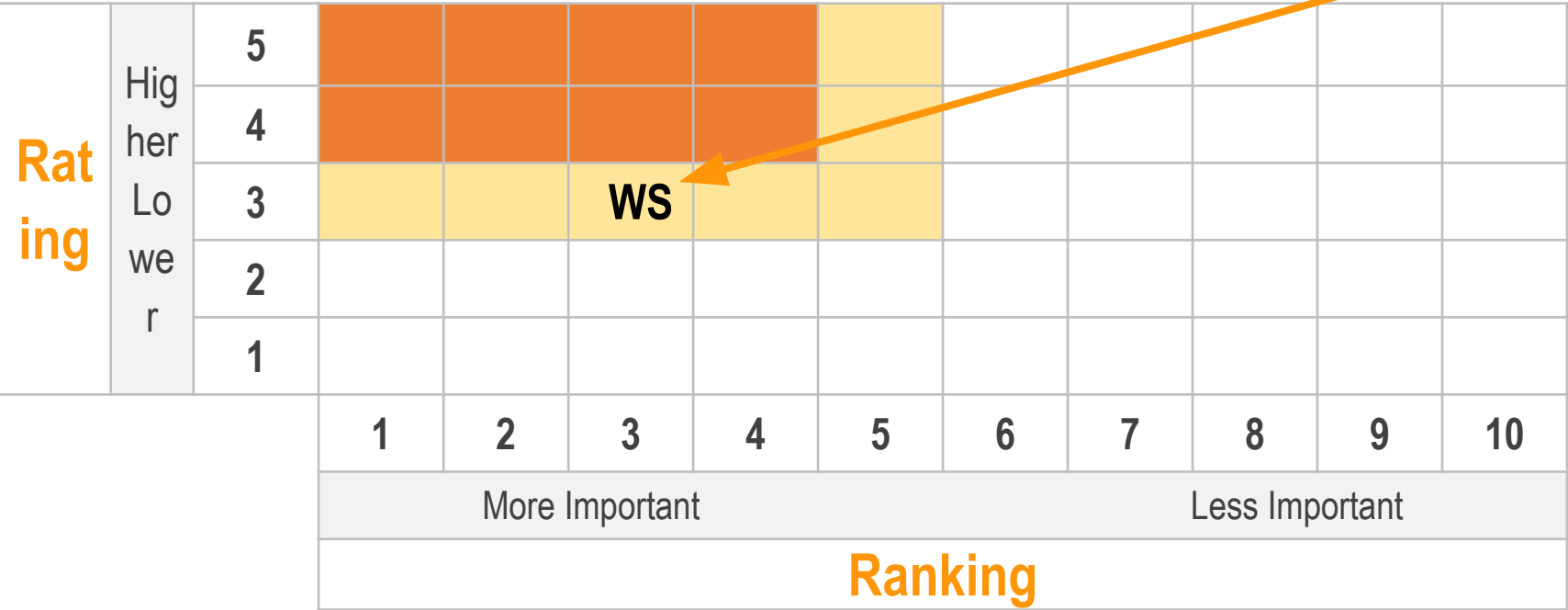
1. **RANK** the importance of each Attribute
2. Consider long-term importance
3. Account for current or expected challenges

1 Most Important to 10 Least Important

[illegible]

# Step 3: Graph Results

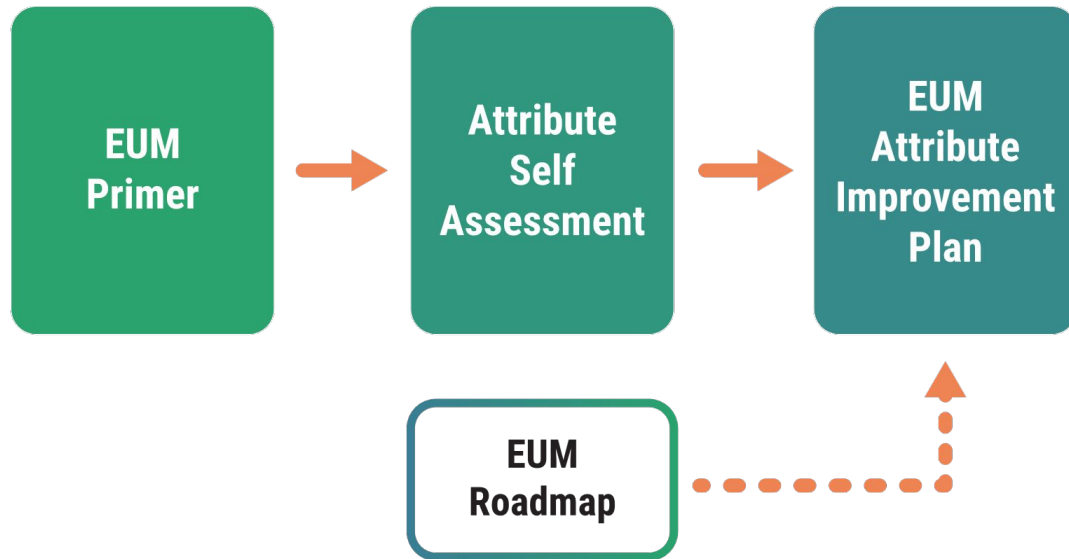
|                            |  |  |  |  | Operational Optimization | Financial Viability | Infrastructure Strategy & Performance | Enterprise Resiliency | Community Sustainability | Water Resource Sustainability | Stakeholder Understanding & Support |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                            |  |  |  |  | OO                       | FV                  | IS                                    | ER                    | SU                       | WS                            | SS                                  |
| Step 1 Achievement (1 – 5) |  |  |  |  |                          |                     |                                       |                       |                          | 3                             |                                     |
| Step 2 Importance (1 – 10) |  |  |  |  |                          |                     |                                       |                       |                          | 3                             |                                     |



## Attributes – Individual Score

|        |                 |                |    |    |    |    |                |    |    |    |    |
|--------|-----------------|----------------|----|----|----|----|----------------|----|----|----|----|
| Rating | Higher<br>Lower | 5              |    |    |    | FV |                |    |    |    |    |
|        |                 | 4              | RR |    |    |    | WD             |    |    |    |    |
|        |                 | 3              |    |    | WS |    |                | IS |    | ER | SU |
|        |                 | 2              |    | OO |    |    |                |    |    | SS |    |
|        |                 | 1              |    |    |    |    |                |    | CS |    |    |
|        |                 | 1              | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6              | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
|        |                 | More Important |    |    |    |    | Less Important |    |    |    |    |
|        |                 | Ranking        |    |    |    |    |                |    |    |    |    |

# EUM IMPLEMENTATION



# Linking Attributes to Measures

- For each attribute area, a selection of example measures are provided.
- Measures are drawn from established industry sources and utility manager practitioners.
- Provides a basic starting point for supporting developing a measurement framework in support of your attribute improvement efforts.

## Appendix C. Attribute-Related Water Utility Measures

Performance measurement is critical to effectively managing a utility. This section of the *Primer* provides detailed information on a range of measures that utilities can consider, including descriptions and example calculations and questions.

For each of the Attributes, a variety of example calculations and questions are provided in this Appendix for use by water sector utilities. This is not meant to serve as an exhaustive list, but rather a starting point for utilities as they begin to think about how performance can be measured for each Attribute. In addition to the example measures described in this section, utilities can reference a variety of resources available to the sector which provide additional specific measures for a variety of practices. Resources available to utilities include:

- **Benchmarking Performance Indicators for Water and Wastewater Utilities** (American Water Works Association) AWWA Performance measures are noted as “*This is a Benchmarking Performance Indicator.*”
- **Effective Utility Management Benchmarking Tool** (Water Research Foundation).



Photo courtesy Gwinnett County Water Resources

### Attribute: Community Sustainability

#### 1. Watershed-based infrastructure planning

**Description:** This measure addresses utility efforts to consider watershed-based approaches when making management decisions affecting infrastructure planning and investment options. Watershed protection strategies can sometimes, for example, protect source water quality limiting the need for additional or enhanced water treatment capacity.

#### Example performance measure:

- Does the utility employ alternative, watershed-based approaches to align infrastructure decisions with overall watershed goals and potentially reduce future infrastructure costs (yes/no)? Watershed-based approaches include, for example: centralized management of decentralized systems; stormwater management; source water protection programs; and conjunctive use of groundwater, source water, and recycled water to optimize resource use at a basin scale. (See also “green infrastructure” below.)

# Developing an EUM Action Plan

| Priority Area:   |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| What are the strategies for this Priority Area?                      | Practice 1: | Practice 2: | Practice 3: |
| What actions will your Utility be taking to implement this Practice? |             |             |             |
| What is the Start Date/End Date?                                     |             |             |             |
| How will this strategy be measured?                                  |             |             |             |
| How often will you report?   |             |             |             |
| Who owns the measure?  |             |             |             |

Management Area Title

# 1. Strategic Business Planning and Management and Leadership

Management Area Scope

## SCOPE

This Management Area addresses various forms of planning including capital, long-range, and strategic planning, and the leadership required to implement these plans effectively. It incorporates building organizational and community needs and objectives into these processes. It includes collaborative relationships – guided by utility leaders – established with other water utilities, local government entities, private enterprises, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enhance the utility's performance, capacity, and capabilities.

Business Level

## Level 1: Providing Adequate, Fundamental Services

Practice Statement

## PRACTICE STATEMENT #1

**Planning:** Capital project needs identified and incorporated into annual budgets; technical, managerial, and financial capacity understood; and strategic needs and directions understood for the organization to document.

Example Practices

| EXAMPLE PRACTICES |   | ASSESSMENTS AND ACTIONS |                                     |                                      |                                   |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1.1.1.1           | Multiyear capital plan that prioritizes capital project needs and identifies high-priority and short-term needs and investments on a life-cycle cost basis.   | <b>Assessment:</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Have | <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |
|                   |   | <b>Actions:</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt      | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve     | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain |
| 1.1.1.2           | Reserve fund accounts, or ability to acquire debt, sufficient to provide for capital needs over the mid- to long- term.   | <b>Assessment:</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Have | <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |
|                   |   | <b>Actions:</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt      | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve     | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain |
| 1.1.1.3           | Policies and procedures in place for capital project monitoring and reporting.  | <b>Assessment:</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Have | <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |
|                   |   | <b>Actions:</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt      | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve     | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain |
| 1.1.1.4           | Capital planning and improvement program, which identifies how the capital plan fits into the utility's established policies, goals, and objectives and how the capital improvement process incorporates engineering and finance recommendations. | <b>Assessment:</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Have | <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |
|                   |   | <b>Actions:</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt      | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve     | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain |

West Slope WD

Our Awesome Staff!

Three Distribution System  
Operators

Operations Manager

Finance Manager

Customer Service Rep

General Manager



**And Now, the Q&A Session ...**



Thanks for attending  
today's session!  
Questions ?

## **Contact Information:**

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