



MUNICIPAL DATAWORKS Update

Half Way There

When OGRA introduced Municipal DataWorks five years ago, it had two objectives.

The first objective was to provide municipalities with the tools they need to manage assets, guide investment decisions and bolster infrastructure funding.

The second objective was to develop a comprehensive province-wide database on the condition of municipal infrastructure that could be used to promote infrastructure funding.

According to Frank Hull, OGRA's manager of technical services, with more than 300 municipalities now signed up as MDW users, OGRA has already achieved its first objective.

"Over the past few years, MDW has been steadily evolving as we added new tools and developed more functionality, much of which came from suggestions from the people using MDW," he says. "We now have a comprehensive set of tools that cover virtually all aspects of asset management. MDW can handle 123 different asset types and is easily expandable for more. It also provides data for PSAB compliance, which will help municipalities with the new reporting requirements."

"MDW will continue to evolve as the need dictates. Last year, for example, we added an asset valuation module to assist municipalities with the new PSAB reporting requirements and the second version of our capital planning tool. But we have achieved what we said we would do – provide municipalities (especially smaller municipalities who otherwise couldn't afford to do this sort of planning) with a sophisticated tool to better manage their financial resources."

The goal for 2010, Hull says, is to meet the second objective – creating a province-wide municipal infrastructure database.

When the current recession hit, governments around the world used infrastructure spending as the mechanism to help

stimulate the economy. There is, in fact, global recognition that infrastructure investment and maintenance has been neglected for far too long and Ontario is no exception. But with municipalities now managing the majority of the province's infrastructure assets, neither the province nor municipalities have a comprehensive assessment of the condition of those assets with which to set priorities and to allocate funds.

Individually, municipalities need MDW to provide the tools to manage their assets, says Hull. Collectively, they need the information that MDW can provide to argue persuasively for additional funding for asset maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal.

It is an issue with ramifications that extend far beyond the specific needs and requirements of any one municipality, he adds, which is why the Ministries of Energy and Infrastructure and Transportation, both of which have a specific interest in provincial aggregate reporting, have provided OGRA with financial support for further MDW development.

"We have to create a comprehensive, rational, fact-based database that can be used to make province-wide funding decisions and that means we need information from all municipalities, not just those that are currently using MDW," Hull concludes. "We continue to urge smaller municipalities that are not yet MDW users to sign on not just because we need the data for aggregate purposes but also because we are convinced that MDW can help them improve their asset management. Our challenge is to persuade larger municipalities that are using other proprietary asset management tools that it is in their best interests to become part of the database as well."

OGRA is currently developing processes and tools that municipalities can use to transfer asset management data from proprietary systems to MDW. **M**

MDW Training

Training webinars are available for the following:

- Data capture for asset inventory and condition assessment
- Asset valuation for tangible capital asset for PSAB compliance
- Capital planning

Send an email to support@municipaldataworks.ca asking for training and specifying your needs.

New: CI³P Training

OGRA released its new capital planning tool, CI³P, in December. MDW

users wishing to use CI³P must attend the prerequisite training webinar before gaining access. For training users can contact MDW Support.

Registration is simple and it's free! Send an email to support@municipaldataworks.ca asking for training. You will be sent a reply email with the date and time including specifics on how to access the webinar.

Future training offerings will be posted on the MDW website: www.municipaldataworks.ca