

STRATEGIC PLAN

JUNE 2022



WHO WE ARE

MMUA is a nonprofit member-led trade association representing the interests of the state's municipal utility systems. Together with the thousands of community leaders and volunteers who are dedicating their lives to ensuring their neighbors and friends have reliable, affordable, and sustainable services, we work to promote the value of community ownership and to assist them in achieving excellence.



Our Vision

MMUA's vision is to be a nationally recognized leader in advocacy, bringing value to municipal utilities, and enhancing their position in the industry.



Our Mission

Our mission is to unify, support, and serve as a common voice for municipal utilities.



Our History

MMUA was founded in 1931 primarily as an organization representing municipal electrical utilities. Over time, its mission expanded to serving the communities which operate utilities of all types including electric, gas, water, wastewater, sewer, and more. The Association hired its first paid consultant in the 1960s and its first full time staff member in the 1970s. The organization provides services on which members depend, and it represents their interests in the many venues where laws and regulations are developed and enforced.



Our Values

People

We practice respect, demonstrate leadership, and encourage growth through education and training.

Safety

We are safety-driven at all times, and we work to instill a safety culture in all municipal operations.

Advocacy

We strive to be an articulate and powerful voice on the issues.

Teamwork

Working together, we accomplish what would be impossible alone.

Communication

We listen carefully, and we speak respectfully and truthfully.

Creativity

We find new solutions to meet new challenges.

Dedication

We do whatever it takes to help our members get the job done.

Integrity

We behave in a manner that is honest, trustworthy, reliable, and fiscally responsible.

Environment

We support the efficient use of resources and sustainable energy.

PLANNING PROCESS

For more than ninety years, MMUA has consistently evolved to meet the needs of its members. During that time MMUA has always benefitted from spirited input supplied by members, strong leadership at the Board level, and knowledgeable staff.

In late 2021 MMUA engaged a new staff leader, its first in nearly thirty years. During the search, many activities involved in clarifying the association's needs set the stage for the strategic planning process that followed. Once on board the new CEO, together with the Board of Directors and the entire MMUA staff, undertook a series of additional actions aimed at ensuring the relevant voices were represented and due diligence had occurred. We:

- Conducted surveys of all members and staff
- Reviewed data from member and nonmember municipal utilities
- Met extensively with members
- Consulted notes from previous meetings with members
- Referred to the strategic plans and processes from related organizations in the utilities space
- Surveyed available information related to the forces impacting utilities in general and municipal utilities in particular
- Conducted a thorough analysis of MMUA's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

With all this information in mind, the staff and Board have engaged in multi-day planning sessions to determine the path forward that will best serve our members and strengthen our association in the coming years. The Board of Directors approved this plan on June 9, 2022.



Jennifer Palmer, 2021-2022 President, MMUA Board of Directors



Karleen Kos, CEO

TO BE A LEADER

MMUA has been an association leader for municipal utilities for decades. Both within the state of Minnesota and on the national stage, we have served as a trusted source for answers and expertise, for products that meet the needs of municipal utilities, and for a spirit of collaboration and problem-solving.

This strategic plan is designed to enhance our leadership position and foster growth while focusing intently on the needs of municipal utilities, in Minnesota primarily, though we are willing to extend our reach beyond its borders where we can uniquely and cost-effectively bring value that is needed by municipals elsewhere. To that end, our plan is intended to achieve the following:

- Municipal utilities professionals, the communities they serve, and the policy makers who serve them all have MMUA as their top-of-mind resource in matters concerning the success of those utilities.
- MMUA programs and services extend beyond the familiar domains of electrical and gas services to address unmet needs in the water, wastewater, sewer, broadband, and related municipal utility domains.
- MMUA members are knowledgeable about the value for the investment of their dues and service dollars spent with MMUA.
- MMUA is known for delivering positive results programmatically, legislatively, and interpersonally.



STRATEGIC PILLARS



Effective Public Policy Advocacy (PPA)

MMUA's Strategic Plan sets the following goals for the next five years related to effective public policy advocacy.

1. MMUA's government relations and policy efforts will focus on maximizing results for all utility services at the state legislative and regulatory levels based on priorities developed annually considering both ongoing and emerging issues.
2. MMUA will work collaboratively with and through allied organizations to influence national and local policies and to solve problems of mutual concern.
3. MMUA will develop and maintain a library of tools and references to support municipal utility leaders in successfully navigating evolving regulations and maximizing resources that may be available to their communities.
4. MMUA will offer a series of regional meetings annually aimed at engaging local leaders in discussions related to their policy needs and pinch points, programmatic concerns, and ideas regarding MMUA's mission delivery.
5. MMUA will create a series of educational resources to assist local leaders in their understanding of key issues related to municipal utilities and emerging public policy issues.



Strategic Preservation of Local Control (LC)

MMUA's Strategic Plan sets the following goals for the next five years related to the strategic preservation of local control of utility services.

1. MMUA will champion the three pillars of future utility success: reliability, affordability, and sustainability, within the municipal model.
2. MMUA will develop and deploy a comprehensive communications strategy to engage members and their communities in articulating the value of local ownership and continuously evolving their utilities for the changing times.
3. MMUA will design and offer a series of educational workshops and tools to help municipal utilities staff improve customer connections and loyalty.
4. MMUA will prepare and implement one or more tools empowering local leaders to effectively evaluate and communicate regarding alternative ownership options if they are presented, remaining ever-mindful of the value of local municipal ownership and control.



Excellence in Member Benefits (MB)

MMUA's Strategic Plan sets the following goals for the next five years for the creation and maintenance of exemplary, cost-effective benefits for all members.

1. MMUA will explore and implement benefit programs that are valuable for members representing utilities of all types.
2. MMUA will offer the means for peer- and interest-specific networking groups to easily identify and connect with one another.
3. MMUA will encourage and measure member engagement through a variety of traditional and innovative offerings that result in increased perception of MMUA's relevance to utilities of all types.
4. MMUA will evaluate the current and evolving needs of members and the technology platforms capable of helping MMUA meet those needs over the next five to ten years, ultimately implementing a plan to update current software and introducing additional or alternative solutions that improve ROI on the membership investment.
5. MMUA will evaluate, modernize, and simplify its dues structure.
6. MMUA will devise offerings that provide associate members with opportunities to participate in the life of the organization in a manner that maximizes ROI for them and helps support MMUA programs.

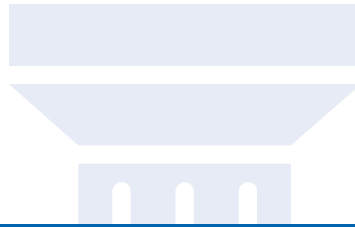


Best-in-Class Programs and Services (PS)

MMUA's Strategic Plan sets the following goals for the next five years with the intention of building and maintaining best-in-class services that promote excellence, safety, and ever-evolving proficiency for all municipal utilities employees.

1. MMUA will update its successful safety, job training, apprenticeship, and related programs to ensure they meet the ever-evolving needs of members, are flexible in changing circumstances, and are fiscally sustainable for all concerned.
2. MMUA will enhance current and future programming with more effective communication tools, transparency, and evaluation measurements, so that relevant programs are continuously improved and those no longer needed are sunsetted in a timely manner.
3. MMUA will develop new services tailored to the needs of municipal utilities of all types using traditional and nontraditional modes of delivery, ensuring that all offerings are affordable and sustainable for everyone.
4. MMUA will continue to work with and through partner organizations to collaboratively develop and deliver programming that enhances the Association's reach and relevance.
5. MMUA will implement a capital replacement and investment process to ensure its training and office facilities consistently align with the requirements for mission delivery.

FOUNDATIONAL PILLAR



Efficient Association Operations (AO)

MMUA's Strategic Plan sets the following goals for the next five years with the intent of creating efficient association operations staffed by increasingly competent and forward-looking professionals:

1. MMUA will develop and implement an ongoing strategic visioning, operational prioritization, and accountability process for the organization and its staff including a bonus structure aimed at ensuring MMUA's goals are attained.
2. MMUA will create individualized staff development plans to ensure our staff is competent as evidenced both by the attainment or maintenance of necessary credentials and by achieving key performance indicators each year.
3. MMUA will devise and implement a strategy for clarifying and marketing its brand to relevant audiences and positioning the organization as a leader in the relevant venues.
4. MMUA will update its governance and operating procedures to ensure they are relevant to the evolving organization and suitable for managing the risks inherent in delivering on our mission.
5. MMUA will leverage partnerships with allies and service organizations to meet the needs of members and operate the organization efficiently and cost-effectively.
6. MMUA will investigate and, where appropriate, seek grant funding that may be available to carry out its nonprofit purposes.
7. MMUA will update its operating reserve and investment policies to reflect the most prudent path forward in light of the Association's priorities and external exigencies.



OPERATIONAL PLANNING, REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

PLANNING



In quarter one of each calendar year the Board and CEO will review the organization's SWOT, strategic plan, and operational progress. At that time the strategic plan will be updated. In quarter two, the coming fiscal year's operating priorities will be set by the CEO with direction from the Board, and the operating plan will be developed. It will include specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals. The annual budget will be developed to support the successful realization of the operating plan, and the Audit and Finance Committee will review the budget prior to referral to the Board. Open comment from the membership will be encouraged prior to the annual member vote on the organization's plan at the Summer Conference.

REPORTING



The CEO will report on the status of each approved goal/deliverable in a document prepared for the Board in advance of each quarterly Board meeting (December, February/March, June, August). Items requiring Board action will be placed on the agenda.

ACCOUNTABILITY



Each member of the staff will have individual performance plans listing key performance indicators (KPIs) that are tied to a Board-approved compensation plan rewarding both individual performance and organizational attainment of the operational goals.

Some of the goals/objectives in this plan will require assistance from Board members and other volunteers. The President and the Committee Chairs will need to work closely with staff and the volunteer groups they lead to ensure goals are met. When goals are met, MMUA advances its mission and member utilities are strengthened. That is the definition of success.



CONTACT US



3131 Fernbrook Lane N, Suite 200
Plymouth, MN 55447-5337



763.551.1230
Toll Free 800.422.0119



kkos@mmua.org

MMUA
Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association