



Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-26

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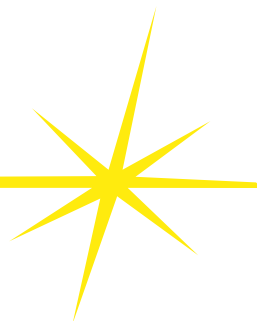


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WHO WE ARE

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, storm 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.



Scott Grabe
*MMUA Board President 2024-25
City of Staples*



Pete Moulton
*MMUA Board President 2025-26
Saint Peter Municipal Utilities*



Karleen Kos
MMUA CEO

MMUA's strategic plan is shaped by extensive engagement with members, ongoing input from staff, careful review of industry trends, and analysis of both internal and external data—including information about probable future developments affecting municipal utilities.

Throughout the planning process, the MMUA Board of Directors and staff have prioritized broad participation and due diligence. We have:

- Conducted surveys of members and staff
- Reviewed data from member and nonmember utilities
- Met extensively with members
- Referred to notes from previous member meetings
- Examined strategic plans and processes from peer organizations
- Studied information on forces affecting the utility sector overall and municipal utilities specifically

Informed by these inputs, the Board and staff have convened for multi-day planning sessions to shape a strategy that best supports our members and strengthens the association. The Board of Directors adopted the current plan in June 2022 and has reviewed and updated it annually ever since.

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 and services 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 municipalities elsewhere. To that end, our plan is intended to achieve the following:

- MMUA is a trusted resource for helping utilities navigate the process of change that is currently underway related to the evolution of energy sources, water supply and contamination issues, population shifts, and the ever-evolving regulatory environment.
- 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, storm sewer, broadband, and related public works 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.
- MMUA is fiscally sound with an adequate operating reserve and is positioned to seize opportunities for growth without threatening operational stability.

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 aim to maximize positive outcomes and minimize setbacks for all utility services at the legislative and regulatory levels, guided by priorities developed annually with members that reflect ongoing and emerging concerns and that consider the practical realities of the polarized policymaking environment.
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 maintain and improve its library of tools, references, and data to support municipal utility leaders in successfully navigating evolving regulations and maximizing resources that may be available to their communities.
4. MMUA will prioritize personal connections with commissions and councils, offering a series of regional meetings and disseminating informational videos, position documents, best practice guidance, and action alerts aimed at engaging local leaders in active participation in the public policy process.
5. MMUA will develop and execute a comprehensive communications strategy aimed at educating elected leaders and the public regarding the value of municipal utilities, encouraging them to take actions which strengthen these important public assets.



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 municipal model and the three pillars of future municipal utility success: reliability, affordability, and sustainability, clearly defining these terms and their value for legislators and ratepayers.
2. MMUA will develop and deploy a comprehensive communications strategy to engage members and, when appropriate, directly interact in 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 resources aimed at helping communities—especially small systems—value their assets and sustain local control when that is the will of the majority of ratepayers, while assisting utilities in developing their workforces, improving customer connections and loyalty, and addressing challenges that could negatively impact viability or local control.
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 emphasize and foster member-to-member networking, including creating and facilitating peer and interest-specific virtual communities, and providing additional tools to simplify member engagement with one another.
3. MMUA will encourage and measure member engagement with the Association 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 explore means of providing added value to allied members.
5. MMUA will devise offerings such as data collection/comparison/dissemination, council/commission education, and offerings for ratepayers/general public that extend MMUA value to members' stakeholders.
6. MMUA will 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 continuously evolve its successful safety, job training, apprenticeship, and related programs and facilities to ensure they are of consistently high quality, meet the ever-evolving needs of members and clients, 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 offerings—using a variety of formats and delivery methods—in the areas of on site/on demand services, leadership, and organizational development consulting, ensuring that these offerings are affordable and sustainable for members.
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 implement its organization-level and individual 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 and succession planning is adequate to address future needs.
2. 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.
3. MMUA will continually 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.
4. MMUA will leverage partnerships with allies and service organizations to meet the needs of members and operate the organization efficiently and cost-effectively.
5. MMUA will seek grant funding to enhance its own mission delivery and to assist members in receiving these funds when appropriate for their communities' needs.



OPERATIONAL PLANNING, REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

PLANNING



Each year the Board and CEO will review the organization's SWOT, strategic, and operational progress in June. At that time the strategic plan will be updated. In August, the coming year's operating priorities will be set, and a provisional dues plan will be proposed to the membership for approval at the annual membership meeting. Open comment from the membership will be encouraged in an annual Board listening session prior to the vote on the provisional dues.

Following the vote and direction from the Board, the CEO will create an annual operating plan. This plan will include specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely goals based on the operating priorities and strategic intent of the Board. 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 for a vote in December. If the provisional dues rate proves untenable because of changing circumstances, another membership meeting will be called in the last quarter of the year for the purpose of approving dues.

REPORTING



The CEO will report on the status of each approved goal/deliverable in a document prepared for the Board quarterly (April, July, October, January). Items requiring Board action will be placed on the agenda of the next Board meeting.

STAFF ACCOUNTABILITY



A success sharing structure incentivizes high performance and accountability from the staff to achieve the objectives in this plan. Each member of the staff will have professional development plans that are tied to the success sharing structure. Success sharing rewards both individual performance and organizational attainment of the operational/financial goals as approved by the Board as part of the budgeting process.

VOLUNTEER ACCOUNTABILITY



It is important to recognize that some of the goals/objectives in this plan require assistance from Board members and other volunteers. The president and the committee chairs must 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.



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Hometown solutions.*