

Questions to ask **BEFORE** your municipality considers asset management software

Ask yourself...

1. Do we need it?

Asset management is a business practice, not a software solution. Many communities find that a spreadsheet is all they need to get started.

2. Are we ready for it?

Software is only useful when it is populated with good data and supports sound business practices. Before buying software, collect and organize your data and put your asset management processes in place. It is also critical to allocate budget for keeping data current and maintaining the software system.

What is Asset Management Software?

While there is no official definition of “asset management software,” this document refers to applications designed to help you collect, manage, store, visualise and/or analyze your asset-related data. Options range significantly in price and functionality from inexpensive applications like programmed excel spreadsheets, to more costly and integrated software suites that can incorporate any mix of inventory, financial, maintenance, and asset life-cycle functions.

Asset management software CAN...	Asset management software CANNOT...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Store data in a central place ✓ Process large amounts of information ✓ Help link data across functional groups (e.g. finance and public works) ✓ Incorporate geo-spatial data into your analysis ✓ Facilitate the modeling of different scenarios ✓ Help conduct standard asset management analysis of your data (e.g. risk, life-cycle costs) ✓ Flag events to support decision-making ✓ Present data in a way that supports decision-making ✓ Support corporate memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Make decisions for you ✗ Define your asset management processes ✗ Collect data or keep your data up to date ✗ Ensure the quality of your data ✗ Develop an asset management plan ✗ Tell you what information is useful in your decision-making process ✗ Test the logic of your outcomes ✗ Innovate or improve your asset management practices ✗ Provide leadership on asset management in your organization

Important tips

- * **Make software a team decision.**
Asset management is cross-functional. The purchase of asset management software should include the same group of professionals from across your organization.
- * **Know the outputs you want to get from your software.**
What analysis do you want the software to do? What business processes will it feed? How do you want the information to be displayed or reported?

Hint: Try mapping your requirements using a spreadsheet first!
- * **Training and implementation support are essential to success.**
Have a plan for training staff and a succession plan in case key staff leave. It takes time and energy to adopt a new software system — budget for training and implementation support for staff across your organization.

Questions to ask suppliers

- How well does your solution align with my data and business processes?
- Is your solution compatible with my current information systems?
- Is the data structure open or proprietary?
- Can I add functionality later and how expensive might that be?
- What level of technical support is available and at what cost?
- How close is the nearest technical support?
- What training is included in the set up of the software? How much would each additional session cost?
- Will I own my data?
- Where is the data stored?
- What are the licensing and maintenance fees?
- Will I need to upgrade my hardware?
- What is your commitment to maintenance and updates?
- Have other municipalities used this solution and can I talk to them?

Special Thanks!

This content was developed by the Technical Working Group of FCM's Municipal Asset Management Program. The Technical Working Group is comprised of an exceptional group of municipal practitioners and experts from across Canada.