CASE STUDY

# City of Asheville relies on Asset Essentials and Predictor to manage facility maintenance and make predictions for long-term planning and budgeting

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**The City of Asheville's facilities division began using Asset Essentials in 2018 to manage work orders and stay on top of preventive maintenance and repairs. As Asheville continues to experience growth and aging municipal buildings deteriorate, city engineers needed a way to demonstrate the need to increase the budget for maintenance, repairs, and replacements. In 2023, the capital projects division engaged our team to implement Predictor and undergo a comprehensive facilities condition assessment to help make the case for increased capital requests.**

CHALLENGE

## Understanding the status quo

The City of Asheville currently budgets $1 million per year to maintain its almost 1 million square feet of city-owned buildings. With more than 70% of buildings more than 50 years old, city engineers knew they needed more money to properly maintain facilities—but they needed data to communicate those needs.

SOLUTION

Because the city's facilities maintenance staff was already successfully using Asset Essentials to manage work orders, it made sense to work with Predictor to make predictions about the future of those assets. The first step was to work with our team to undertake a comprehensive facilities condition assessment (FCA) to evaluate the condition of all the city's buildings.

"I chose Predictor because it allowed us to use our existing assets that were already in Asset Essentials; we didn't have to build the data twice," says Walter Ear, P.E., division manager, public facilities management. "We were able to take the existing asset information as a basis to feed into Predictor to do the modeling, and we could easily inventory everything. Using another [asset management software] product allowed us to get a comprehensive FCA within our limited budget."

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

**Customer:** City of Asheville
**Walter Ear**, P.E., Division Manager, Public Facilities Management

**Vitals:** Asheville is a growing city with:

- Population of 94,500 in 2020, projected to grow to 130,000 by 2040
- 71 municipal buildings covering 984,000 square feet
- 1,340 city employees with projected growth of 22%

**Results:** By using Asset Management Software, the City of Asheville has been able to:

- Highlight the need for additional funding outside of the allotted $1 million for facilities maintenance through data collected and analyzed through the software
- Support staff recommendations to increase their preventative maintenance budget to $3.5 million annually to increase the lifespan of the city's buildings.

## Making the Case for Increased Funding

In October 2023, Ear presented to the Asheville City Council findings from the facilities assessment. The FCA gave the city's infrastructure a grade of C, but using Predictor, Ear and his team were able to show how the current $1 million annually for facilities maintenance would not be enough to even maintain the C grade. Without additional funding over the next two decades, the data showed that many of the city's existing buildings would reach a "failed state," Ear says.

The software program also provided data showing how increased funding for preventive maintenance could increase the lifespan of many of the buildings. Ear's data helped establish a strong case for City Council members to approve an annual increase of the maintenance budget, to $3.5 million, just to maintain the status quo of municipal buildings, reported the Asheville Citizen-Times.

The facilities assessment will form the basis for long-range capital planning and mapping a future plan while prioritizing and sequencing maintenance. In addition to the FCA, City of Asheville leaders are also relying on staff priorities and space needs to make decisions and set priorities for capital funding, Ear says.

For example, of the city's 13 fire stations, only three were built in the 21st century. To determine which fire stations need to be replaced or renovated, facilities leaders talked to fire department leaders about their priorities and which stations are the busiest. They analyzed data together to determine whether to keep stations in their current locations or relocate for better response times, Ear says. As a result of all the data and study, at least one aging fire station will be replaced and relocated to a planned new public safety complex, which will be one of the city's first construction projects (identified by the recently completed facilities analysis).

## Moving Forward

Looking to the future, Asheville plans to expand its use of Predictor into other asset classes. "It's CMMS-agnostic, so it has the potential for the city to take assets out of another program and use Predictor to develop a capital plan for that asset class," Ear says.

While Asheville has much work to do to get facilities in grade-A shape, the facilities assessment and predictions made possible with Asset Essentials and Predictor "puts us lightyears ahead of where we were," Ear says. "Systems require people, so we need to continue to maintain, observe and learn to get the best use out of it."

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