



Integrated Planning in Action

Getting Started

EPA's Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework helps municipalities meet clean water goals while prioritizing infrastructure investments with the greatest water quality improvements and community benefits. The Framework lays out a comprehensive yet flexible planning process based on a set of overarching principles. EPA created a series of fact sheets—including this one—to inform municipalities interested in integrated planning.

Johnson County, Kansas

“ We pursued integrated planning because we wanted a long-term strategic approach that included some regulatory certainty while allowing for continued reinvestment in all of our system. We felt that the integrated planning approach would allow us to prioritize investments with the greatest water quality benefit while also factoring in stakeholder priorities and customers' affordability. ”

—Tami Lorenzen, Assistant Chief Engineer

Plan ahead.

Because investing in reliable stormwater and wastewater infrastructure can be a complex and long-term undertaking, municipalities should lay the necessary groundwork to ensure success. Starting now on the actions described below can help ensure a cost-effective planning process. The outcome will be an integrated plan with broad stakeholder buy-in that sets a path for long-term infrastructure investments.

Get informed.

Learn how to create an integrated plan and how it can help your municipality meet your clean water goals. Integrated plans can be especially useful when planning for resilient infrastructure that can withstand the impacts of climate change.

EPA resources to help you get started with integrated planning:

- [Profiles that describe different municipalities' planning processes](#)
- [Examples of completed plans](#)
- [EPA's 2012 Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework](#)
- [“The Straight Scoop on Integrated Planning” webcast](#)
- [“Integrated Planning Peer-To-Peer Exchange for Municipalities” recording](#)

Define the planning scope.

Define the infrastructure to be included in the effort. Typically, clean water infrastructure includes collection systems, treatment plants, and stormwater systems. Determine if the infrastructure is owned and operated by different entities, such as regional utilities, different municipalities, or different departments within a municipality. If the integrated plan includes non–Clean Water Act priorities, identify additional entities to engage (e.g., the local drinking water utility).

Build your team.

Establish a planning team to develop and implement the plan. Determine the role each entity could play in the planning process (e.g., provide data, support the planning team, be the liaison with state permitting authority, research funding). Identify staff with appropriate expertise to participate on the planning team, such as public works staff, treatment plant engineers, public relations staff, city planners, and maintenance staff.



If you don't have adequate resources or expertise in-house, consider involving a consultant to help write the plan or undertake parts of the process (e.g., alternatives analysis, financial capability assessment). Begin talking about integrated planning in the community to identify a local champion who can help facilitate stakeholder engagement.

Identify internal integrated planning priorities.

The integrated plan should demonstrate how the proposed projects improve water quality while incorporating other community priorities. Identify the priorities that led you to consider an integrated planning approach, such as permit requirements or water quality objectives, asset vulnerability, human health threats, or minimizing ratepayer burden. Also identify stakeholders to inform the value of clean water and other municipal priorities specific to the community, such as water supply protection, open space planning, and quality of life (e.g., safe enjoyment of local waterways). Consider how future climate change impacts, such as more extreme weather events, may affect your system performance.



EPA's [Prioritizing Wastewater and Stormwater Projects Using Stakeholder Input](#)

(EPA 830-R-17-002), published in 2017, helps a municipality use stakeholder input to select and rank criteria and apply those criteria to prioritize stormwater and wastewater projects.

EPA's [Integrated Planning: Characterizing the Value of Water to Inform Decision-Making](#)

(EPA 830-R-17-001), also published in 2017, helps a municipality establish a value for water resources to inform integrated planning decisions.

Create a preliminary planning schedule and budget.

Sketch out a rough schedule and budget for the integrated planning process. Integrated planning typically takes about 18–24 months, and the cost of the plan itself usually ranges from 0.1 to 0.6 percent of the eventual plan budget. To ensure that you meet loan or grant application deadlines, it is also important to think about funding sources for implementation early in the process. For more information, see EPA's "Funding the Development of an Integrated Plan" fact sheet.

Now you are ready to get started on the six elements of the integrated planning process. For more information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/integrated-planning-municipal-stormwater-and-wastewater>.

Plan Ahead

Get Informed

Define Scope

Build
Your Team

Determine
Priorities

Create Schedule
and Budget

For more information, please visit EPA's [Integrated Planning website](#).

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