

Opening Remarks:

- Carl Yates, President, Yates Water Management Inc., Chair, Canadian Water Network
- Bernadette Conant, CEO, Canadian Water Network

Achieving Multiple Benefits by Investing in Water

Monday, June 1 from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm EDT

There are many routes to achieving vibrant, resilient and sustainable cities, and water management is central to the journey. Governments and other investors are seeing better dividends when their investments target shared cross-sector goals and priorities. Especially in times of uncertainty, water, wastewater and stormwater projects have the potential to achieve multiple benefits, including better resiliency, energy efficiency and GHG reduction. Connecting the goals and drivers facing various groups is the key to integrated solutions. The opening plenary panel will share powerful insights from some of the major investors, regulators, partners and project managers who drive resiliency across Canada.

Speakers:

- Bev Yee, Deputy Minister, Alberta Environment and Parks (moderator)
- John Cuddihy, Director, Infrastructure and Environment, Infrastructure Canada
- Cheryl Nelms, General Manager, Project Delivery, Metro Vancouver
- Craig Stewart, Vice President, Federal Affairs, Insurance Bureau of Canada

Balancing Revenue Impacts and Level of Service Demands

Tuesday, June 2 from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm EDT

As utilities continue to adapt to recent impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic — as well as changes in climate, technology and customer expectations — one of the key challenges is balancing revenue constraints while striving to attain level of service expectations. The recent crisis has highlighted how utilities prioritize investments, including considerations such as equity and societal values. Panelists will explore lessons learned on how the pandemic has tested municipal level of service targets, which financing tools (such as reserve funds or debt financing) may be leveraged to bridge to better times and opportunities to take a new approach to developing level of service targets.

Speakers:

- Cathie O'Toole, General Manager, Halifax Water (moderator)
- Susan Ancel, Director, One Water Planning, EPCOR Water Services
- Michael Fenn, Senior Advisor, Strategy Corp
- Monica Silva, Acting Manager, Engineering & Transportation Services, Corporate Asset & Project Management, City of Guelph

Bringing New Competencies to an Evolving Utility Workplace

Tuesday, June 2 from 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm EDT

As public expectations and the role of water utilities continue to expand in response to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, and as new approaches and technologies are introduced, it's clear that utilities will require a number of new competencies to operate effectively. The future workforce of water may include specialists in communication, data management and analytics, land-use planning, watershed management and low impact design. Utilities will also require a deeper understanding of the range of skills staff possess and how to support staff and staffing needs in times of uncertainty. An expert panel will discuss lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and opportunities for proactive change management, including harvesting internal talent and sourcing new talent from cross-sector partners.

Speakers:

- Indra Maharjan, Director, Innovation, Technology and Alternate Delivery, Ontario Clean Water Agency (moderator)
- Shannon Abbott, Water Utility Manager, City of Calgary
- Gini Peters, Labour Market Information Manager, ECO Canada
- David Szeptycki, Director, Strategy and Innovation, Environmental Services Department, York Region

Empowering Actions on Private Property with Utility Support

Wednesday, June 3 from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm EDT

Crossing the public-private divide has dominated the discussion on lead in drinking water, and will continue to influence conversations on Legionella, flood protection and stormwater management. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified awareness of utility actions that cross the public-private divide through the need to ensure physical distancing. As utility operations return to normal, water quality issues related to stagnant water in commercial and institutional buildings will be top of mind. In this session, the panelists will consider how discussion about the public-private divide is evolving during the pandemic, how it will impact utility actions on private property in the future and the role of community partners.

Speakers:

- Andrew Grice, Director, Hamilton Water, Public Works Department, City of Hamilton (moderator)
- Cathy Bernardino Bailey, Director, Greater Cincinnati Water Works
- Hervé Logé, Manager, Sustainable Water Management, Water Services, City of Montreal
- Michèle Prévost, Professor, Civil, Geological & Mining Engineering, Polytechnique Montréal

Engaging with Customers in an Age of Open Data

Wednesday, June 3 from 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm EDT

Just as utilities collect more data than ever before, customers expect more information more rapidly than ever before. Municipal transparency builds customer trust and prevents others within the community from filling the void. This reality is even more prevalent as we continue to navigate the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Working within the important confines of security and privacy, utilities are now grappling with what data to share with customers and when, and how to contextualize data for meaningful interpretation. How can data be used to facilitate customer engagement and action? What tools can utilities establish to better understand their customers' needs? Expert panelists will discuss the inherent challenges and opportunities involved.

Speakers:

- Carl Yates, President, Yates Water Management Inc., Chair, Canadian Water Network (moderator)
- Christine Boyle, Director of Metering Insights, Xylem
- Jim Miller, Chief Operating Officer, Utilities Kingston
- Thomas Kuczynski, Vice President of Information Technology, DC Water; Interim President, Blue Drop

Moving Forward in the New Reality

Thursday, June 4 from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm EDT

Water remains central to public, environmental and economic health. The end goals for water and wastewater management have not changed, but the realities of Canada's social and economic landscape have changed. A paradigm shift in the long-established systems of water management and delivery has been a topic of debate in recent years. For the post-peak pandemic era, this shift is no longer an option — it is an imperative. The Blue Cities Discussions closing panel will discuss what the way forward looks like for water and the opportunities for agile leadership in a space where the sector's needs are clear, but the realities and climate within which we must succeed are changing.

Speakers:

- Bernadette Conant, CEO, Canadian Water Network (moderator)
- Albert Cho, Vice President and General Manager, Xylem
- George Hawkins, Founder and President, Moonshot Missions
- Usha Rao-Monari, Senior Advisor, Blackstone Infrastructure Group

Closing Remarks:

- Bernadette Conant, CEO, Canadian Water Network
- Carl Yates, President, Yates Water Management Inc; Chair, Canadian Water Network
- Sandra Cooke, Director, Municipal Consortium, Canadian Water Network