

Metro Cities Survey

Transportation and Infrastructure

Summary (22 responses)

Is your city experiencing material supply issues related to infrastructure maintenance?

Most cities did not report any supply issues. If supply concerns were mentioned they related to PPE, gloves, masks, and cleaning supplies.

Will your city delay any street or other infrastructure improvements due to COVID-19?

Cities fell into three roughly even categories on this question. Some cities have not seen any delays in street or other infrastructure improvements. Many cities have not yet experienced delays in 2020 but anticipate delays in 2021 and beyond. Reasons for delays include reductions in Municipal Street Aid System (MSAS) revenue and other anticipated revenue losses. Most cities are in the process of reevaluating their project schedule for the next several years. Planning in this area is difficult with many financial unknowns related to the pandemic.

Some of the work that has been delayed already in 2020 includes parks and trails and street reconstruction.

Municipal State Aid for Streets (MSAS) is estimated to see a 15% or \$33 million reduction for the remainder of this biennium. How will a reduction affect your city's roads/streets budget?

Most cities expect to have to defer or delay projects and maintenance as a result of the cut. Cities also discussed the budget impacts this reduction will have. Several mentioned the need for offsetting cuts in order to continue basic maintenance on their streets.

Two responding cities do not receive MSAS.

Is your city seeing any changes in drinking water and/or wastewater demand?

Most cities reported minimal changes in drinking water and wastewater demand. Several respondents said it is too early to tell what the impacts on demand will be.

Many reported a decrease in commercial consumption and some cities are seeing reductions in revenue as a result. Similarly, cities noticed that even if the overall demand remained stable the usage pattern has changed with more individuals working from home. There are less defined peaks during the day and usage has instead become more consistent.

Is your city experiencing or expecting late utility payments or delinquencies as a result of COVID-19?

Most cities have not yet seen an increase in late utility payments or delinquencies. Some expect to see more late or delinquent payments as the economic impacts of this pandemic are realized in the months to come. Many made mention of their city's choice to waive penalties or suspend late fees for late

payments. Again, the unknown impacts of COVID-19 make it difficult to predict what the extent of these impacts will be.

Has your city experienced additional costs to remove non-flushable items from lift stations or other parts of your wastewater system?

About 50% of respondents reported increased costs associated with removal of non-flushable items from their wastewater system. Some reported that this was more of an issue earlier during the pandemic when residents were struggling to find toilet paper in stores.

Even if communities have not seen a COVID-19 related increase in non-flushable wipe removal they mentioned it as an ongoing problem.

A few cities highlighted communication strategies and messaging campaigns directed toward their residents on this issue. Most thought these campaigns were successful.

Are there other issues impacting your city's infrastructure needs due to COVID-19?

Budget shortfalls: Reduced revenues will mean budget cuts across city operations. Infrastructure projects and maintenance may well be impacted. Budget shortfalls also expected to impact the ability of cities to hire seasonal help.

In-home services: Water meter replacement programs and other on-site services for residents are impacted as a result of social distancing guidelines.

Splitting work crews to accommodate for social distancing. City employees doing less vehicle sharing has led to an increase in fuel costs.

Reopening parks and other public facilities will likely lead to more costs, mostly due to increased cleaning.

Finally, the "unknown" remains a pervasive challenge for city officials. The full extent of COVID-19 related impacts is still unclear.