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## Best Practices for Utility Management in the Public Right of Way

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### Abstract

As utility companies seek to expand and enhance the services they provide, more utility infrastructure is being crowded into public rights of way (ROW). These new facilities are often installed with minimal oversight and without consideration of other future utility space needs. When new utility facilities are installed to replace existing infrastructure, the existing utility facilities are seldom removed and become abandoned, further congesting the public right of way. To complicate this situation, utility permit and documentation requirements for utility installations vary considerably throughout the United States. Within Iowa, ROW management of construction and utility activities varies between cities, counties, and the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT). This variation has led to differing methodologies and unorganized coordination within public agencies on infrastructure projects containing utilities. There is a need for a broader utility management approach to control the planning and installation of utilities within public ROW, require documentation of utility as-built plans and location information, and manage this information so it can be useful to future construction efforts. Without such an approach, the accommodation of utility facilities will continue to be disorganized, inefficient, and cause increased costs and delays in construction projects. This study will provide benefit to public municipalities in managing the right of way. This will be achieved by preparing policies to enforce proper installation and documentation of utilities in the ROW.