

Environmental and Water Resources Engineering Seminar Series Presents:

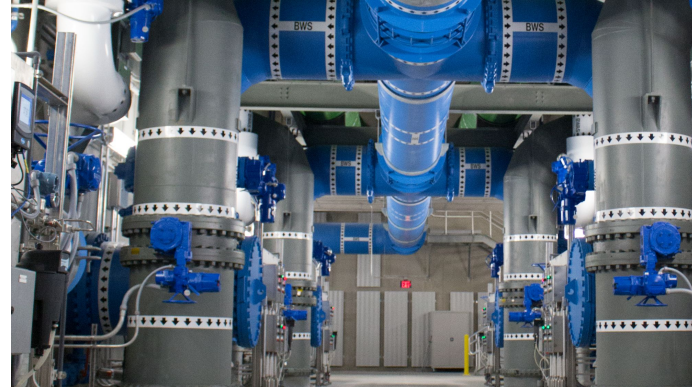
Thursday, October 15, 2026 from 3:30-4:30 pm in ECJ 1.324

Zoom Link: <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/84804724445>

Balancing Affordability and Infrastructure Risks at Austin Water

Abstract

How can utilities balance affordability with the growing need to renew aging infrastructure? This presentation explores how Austin Water's Maintenance Excellence Program operationalizes asset management by establishing risk standards, cross-divisional collaboration, and a consistent framework across a complex utility. Over time, investments guided by the Maintenance Excellence Program have enabled Austin Water to realize tangible benefits by prioritizing capital investments toward the utility's highest-risk assets, therefore improving system reliability and resilience.



Background

Nikita Gupta

*M.S. Environmental & Water Resources Engineering, UT (2021)
Austin Water's Infrastructure Management Department*

Nikita (Niki) Gupta, P.E. has worked in Austin Water's Infrastructure Management Department for five years. She holds a BS in Biology (2019) and an MS in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering (2021) from the University of Texas



at Austin. Niki has presented at Texas Water 2025 on asset management practices and program implementation. Her leadership roles include serving as co-chair for TAWWA Capital Area Chapter Education Division, neonatal kitten foster at Austin Pets Alive, and participating in the 2025 Leadership, Education, and Public Service (LEAPS) Academy.

Martin Tower

*M.S. Civil Engineering, UT (2001)
Division Manager, Austin Water's Infrastructure Management Department*

Martin Tower has dedicated his career to improving the management of public water systems currently, serving as Austin Water's Infrastructure Management Division Manager. This role includes oversight of prioritization and funding allocation for AW's \$3.2B 5-year capital improvements program as well as



enterprise asset management strategy development. Prior to this role, Mr. Tower provided engineering consulting to water sector clients in the U.S., U.K., Middle East and Australia. Mr. Tower is a licensed professional engineer and holds civil engineering degrees from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Texas at Austin.

EWRE Seminar Committee Members: Alexandra Stephens, Diego Castellano, Ella Junker, Tyler Trimble

Supervising Faculty: Blair Johnson



The University of Texas at Austin
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