

A Municipal Utility and City Up Their Resilience

A Case Study

*"We wanted to better protect
our city from natural disasters."*

- Beth, City Manager, Anytown



“How can we quickly prioritize ways of improving our resilience?”

The Challenge

Anytown is proud of its community. Citizens feel safe, and businesses are prospering. The city manager (Beth) and the city’s municipal electric utility director (Roy of Anytown Power) are forward thinkers. Supported by City Council, they’ve collaborated on ways to prepare for the unthinkable: a natural disaster hitting their city.

To improve the city’s resilience to extreme weather and wildfires, Beth and Roy have led several joint city/utility initiatives. These include beginning work on the city’s first microgrid, conducting citywide disaster evacuation drills, and hardening some of the local electric distribution system.

But Beth and Roy want to do more. They’ve brainstormed solutions, but each one takes time and costs money. How do they prioritize all the great ideas? Should they conduct a costly, time-consuming study?

“We decided to contact Informed Resilience and learn about their approach.”

The Solution

Beth had heard from one of her colleagues that a California company was developing a way to help cities and their utilities with this challenge. They called Informed Resilience.

In an initial meeting, the Informed Resilience team introduced them to their new software product: Streetlight™. Using this tool, Beth and Roy input responses to a few straightforward questions about Anytown and Anytown Power.

Based on these responses, the Streetlight™ proprietary algorithm accessed its database of proven resilience solutions and instantly generated a list of solutions tailored to Anytown and its utility. Beth and Roy had already implemented some of them, such as a microgrid. The tool listed other solutions they had considered, such as undergrounding power lines along city escape routes. The list also included new ideas, such as working with local hospitals and other critical facilities to enhance resilience.

“We moved from uncertainty to excitement in our first meeting.”

The Benefits

In only 30 minutes, Beth and Roy had identified several solutions that showed promise. The initial meeting to evaluate Informed Resilience and its Streetlight™ tool turned into an animated discussion of possible resilience solutions for the community.

Roy was particularly excited about validation of his idea to underground power lines along an evacuation route in the south part of town. Even though undergrounding is expensive, he felt that City Council would like the idea of selective undergrounding to ensure that downed power lines and poles wouldn't impede evacuation.

Beth liked the idea of working with local hospitals to improve resilience. Anytown has a robust healthcare industry with visionary leadership. She was sure that working with them would benefit their community by helping to protect human health in an extreme event.

Streetlight™ also recommended an “oasis” community microgrid. Beth used the tool's “best reference” feature to quickly learn more about this solution. Roy saw it as a natural extension of the microgrid idea they had already implemented.

The Anytown executives scheduled further meetings with Informed Resilience so the city and utility staff could provide further input and discuss other potential solutions. In just a single meeting, they were on an accelerated path to improved community resilience.

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