

Mission Springs Water District

Strategic Planning Services

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS / JULY 14, 2023





Making our world better

The Raftelis Charitable Gift Fund allocates profits, encourages employee contributions, and recognizes time to charitable organizations that support:

- Access to clean water and conservation
- Affordability
- Science, technology, and leadership

Raftelis is investing in improved telecommunication technologies to reduce the firm's number one source of carbon emissions—travel.



Diversity and inclusion are an integral part of Raftelis' core values.

We are committed to doing our part to fight prejudice, racism, and discrimination by becoming more informed, disengaging with business partners that do not share this commitment, and encouraging our employees to use their skills to work toward a more just society that has no barriers to opportunity.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Experience and Qualifications of the Individual Firm	3
Key Personnel/Staffing	9
Service Delivery Approach	16
Work Plan / Scope of Work.....	17
Cost Proposal & Acceptance of Proposed Agreement	22
Appendix: Work Samples	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

July 14, 2023

Mr. Brian Macy, PE
Assistant General Manager
Mission Springs Water District
66575 Second Street
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240

Subject: Statement of Qualifications for Strategic Planning Services

Dear Mr. Macy:

Raftelis is pleased to submit this proposal to provide the Mission Springs Water District (MSWD or District) with strategic planning services. Our firm's focus is to help local government and utility clients solve their financial, management, and technology challenges, and we have extensive experience with strategic planning facilitation for utilities and special districts. We appreciate the opportunity to submit our proposal, which has been developed to provide MSWD with concise, yet thorough, information that introduces our approach to strategic planning.

We believe our firm offers MSWD some distinct advantages for this work:

- **A workable and insightful approach:** Our team's approach specifically addresses the MSWD's needs and will help develop a best practice-level strategic planning process and updated five-year strategic plan. Our proven methods of engagement and facilitation lead to a sustainable plan, which will provide the District with a vision, mission, and measurable goals appropriate to its unique operating context. Our process includes engagement and input from MSWD staff and Board members, stakeholders, and the public.

Our project approach, detailed later in this proposal, is comprised of five project activities: 1) project kick-off, 2) stakeholder engagement, 3) strategic planning retreat, 4) strategies and metrics, and 5) draft and finalize deliverables. This scope is offered to MSWD at a total fixed-fee cost of \$74,575, including all fees and expenses.

- **Use of unique and innovative tools and techniques:** We are passionate about strategic planning, which drives us to use innovation and creativity throughout the project, from engagement to preparation of the final plan. We encourage future-focused discussions and action-oriented approaches to building the District's plan. Our deliverables are useful and engaging, and unique and creative graphics are used to keep documents concise with a focus on internal and external communication. Our visual facilitator will transform conversations into graphic form live, before participants even leave the room or log off.
- **Personal service from senior-level consultants:** You appreciate it when deadlines are met, phone calls are returned, and your challenges are given in-depth, out-of-the-box thinking. While some firms may assign your business to junior-level people, we offer exceptional service from senior-level consultants. Because we

possess the in-house qualifications, no subconsultants will be used. Our staff work regularly in utilities and special districts, and we speak your language.

Raftelis was incorporated 30 years ago in 1993. Our headquarters information is provided here:

Raftelis
227 W. Trade Street, Suite 1400
Charlotte, NC 28202
P: 704.373.1199

This project will be served by staff in both our Cincinnati and Los Angeles offices:

19 Garfield Place, Suite 500
Cincinnati, OH 45202
P: 513.221.0500

445 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 1925
Los Angeles, CA 90071
P: 213.262.9300

Our proposal is firm for a 90-day period from submission. Raftelis will provide insurance and indemnification required per the professional services agreement.

We are proud of the resources that we can offer and welcome the opportunity to assist MSWD with this engagement. We have had significant success working with community members, elected officials, department leadership teams, and staff to identify priorities for an organization or community and achieve consensus.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Organizational Assessment Practice Lead, who is authorized to bind the firm, using the following contact information:

Michelle Ferguson, Vice President – Organizational Assessment
Phone: 828.777.6588 / Email: mferguson@raftelis.com

Sincerely,



Julia Novak
Executive Vice President

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL FIRM

Who We Are

Local government and utility leaders partner with Raftelis to transform their organizations by enhancing performance, planning for the future, identifying top talent, improving their financial condition, and telling their story. We've helped more than 600 organizations in the last year alone. We provide trusted advice, and our experts include former municipal and utility leaders with decades of hands-on experience running successful organizations. People who lead local governments and utilities are innovators—constantly seeking ways to provide better service to the communities that rely on them. Raftelis provides management consulting expertise and insights that help bring about the change that our clients seek.

We believe that Raftelis is the *right fit* for this project. We provide several key factors that will benefit MSWD and help to make this project a success.

RESOURCES & EXPERTISE: Our project team is passionate about strategic planning. Each member of our team specializes in strategic planning and has devoted their careers to the industry and assisting with strategic and organizational challenges in particular. This passion is exemplified in several ways:

- Our experience with very successful public utilities of all sizes.
- Our book entitled, *Water and Wastewater Finance and Pricing: The Changing Landscape*, which includes chapters on public utility management and a chapter on strategic planning.
- The development of comprehensive materials that have been helpful to the industry related to different elements of the strategic planning process. For example, we have developed and delivered an innovative workshop that addresses stakeholder engagement and setting community values, which has been presented for several years at various conferences.

DECADES OF COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE: We have the best team in the industry. Our consultants and subject matter experts have decades of experience in strengthening local municipalities and utilities. They've served in a wide range of positions, from city manager to utility director, and they have led dozens of strategic planning initiatives for organizations like yours across the country.

PERSONAL SERVICE FROM SENIOR-LEVEL CONSULTANTS: You appreciate it when deadlines are met, phone calls are returned, and your challenges are given in-depth, out-of-the-box thinking. While other firms may assign your business to junior-level people, our approach provides exceptional service from senior-level consultants.

PROVEN PROCESS: We will implement a proven and unique facilitation process that engages internal and external stakeholders, links strategy to performance, and sets the organization up for effective implementation. We will use several techniques, some of which are innovative and others that are more classic approaches. The end result will be a high-quality five-year strategic plan that includes vision, goals, and strategies for MSWD over the next five years.

30 years
serving local
governments
and utilities

How we stack up

OUR TEAM INCLUDES

160+ consultants focused on
finance/management/communication/
technology for local governments and utilities

RAFTELIS HAS PROVIDED ASSISTANCE FOR

1,200+ local governments
and utilities

that serve more than

25% of the
U.S. population

including the agencies serving

38 of the nation's
50 largest cities

in the past year alone, we worked on

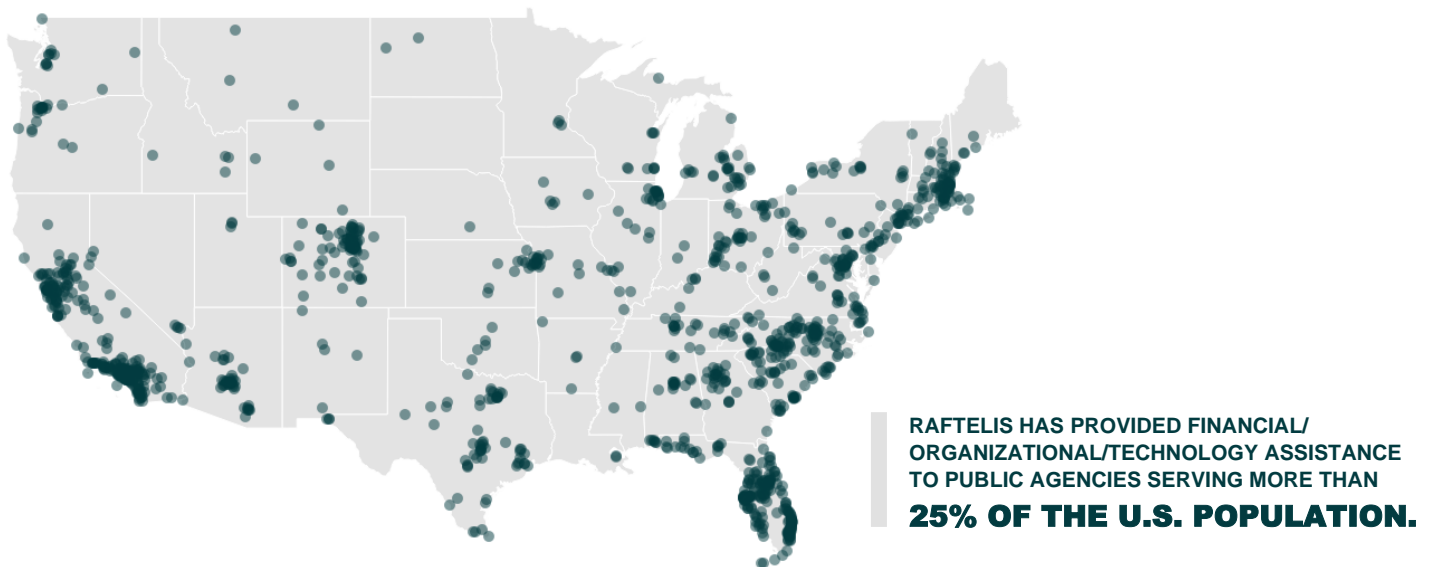
1,000+ projects for **600+** agencies in **46** states

Experience and References

RAFTELIS HAS THE MOST EXPERIENCED UTILITY FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT CONSULTING PRACTICE IN THE NATION.

Our staff has assisted more than 1,200 utility and local government organizations across the U.S., including some of the largest and most complex agencies in the nation. In the past year alone, Raftelis worked on more than 1,200 strategic planning, financial, management, and/or technology consulting projects for over 600 local government agencies in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. Our team has extensive experience with strategic planning throughout the country. Our clients tell us we are more than just consultants—we are trusted advisors.

We point to a strong repeat customer base as part of the evidence, as well as the many clients who have hired us numerous times to do vital work for their organizations. Other clients have told us that our contacts are “enthusiastic” when providing a reference to potential clients, and they point to actionable and practical solutions. In the Appendix, we have included a list of clients across the U.S. who we have helped with strategic planning projects.



Stockton East Water District CA

Reference: Justin Hopkins, General Manager

6767 E. Main Street, Stockton, CA 95215 / P: 209.948.0333 / E: jhopkins@sewd.net

Project Dates: January 2023 – May 2023

In early 2023, the firm was engaged to provide strategic planning services to the Stockton East Water District (SEWD). The firm held a kick-off meeting with the General Manager and key staff to identify project goals and desired outcomes, as well as to review the process and timeline. Our team interviewed each member of the SEWD Board of Directors, as well as the management team, to learn their perspectives about the process and to develop and understanding of SEWD strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats. Given the many partnerships and

external impacts to the agency, Raftelis also interviewed some key partners such as staff in the City of Stockton, for whom SEWD provides water and with whom they partner on regional legislative and other efforts.

In March, our team facilitated a retreat with the Board of Directors and key staff to develop the new strategic planning framework and to review SEWD's mission, vision, and key goal areas. Large and small group activities ensured dialog and conversation between Directors and staff. Following the retreat, SEWD staff further outlined specific strategies to achieve the Board's goals. Raftelis is currently finalizing the resulting strategic planning document with SEWD staff.

City of Roseville CA

Reference: Sean Bigley, Assistant Environmental Utilities Director
2005 Hilltop Circle, Roseville, CA 95747 / P: 916.774.5513 / E: sbigley@roseville.ca.us

Project Dates: August 2020 – July 2021

In 2020, the City of Roseville's Water Utility (Water Utility) initiated a process to conduct an organizational assessment based on the Effective Utility Management (EUM) framework, and to use the results of the assessment to inform and develop a new strategic business plan for the Water Utility. This process was facilitated by Raftelis and driven by members of the Water Utility's leadership team. Stakeholder engagement and employee involvement are at the core of both phases of this project and includes involving subject matter experts on the Attribute and Goal Teams, soliciting employee feedback through an online survey, and conducting interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders.

The organizational assessment was designed to evaluate the presence of best practices at the Water Utility using the framework in the EPA's EUM initiative. Current performance as well as the Water Utility's organizational targets were identified for each of the EUM's attributes of an effectively managed utility. The assessment also reviewed the Water Utility's performance relative to industry benchmarks and other organizations that have undergone similar exercise. The strategic business planning process was designed to ensure a shared vision for the future of the Water Utility and a collective understanding of the resource needs to make progress towards the vision. Based on the results of the organizational assessment and the strategic planning work, the Water Utility will identify a set of goals and a desired future state for the organization. The strategic business plan will drive the Water Utility towards this vision over the course of the next five years.

City of Oceanside CA

Reference: John McKelvey, Senior Management Analyst
300 North Coast Highway, Oceanside, CA 92054 / P: 760.435.5832 / E: jmckelvey@oceansideca.org

Project Dates: September 2019 – July 2020

The services delivered to the community by the Oceanside Water Utility Department (Department) are vitally important—they support a thriving downtown, a vibrant agricultural area as well as meet the needs of the many residents and businesses that call Oceanside home. With that in mind, the Department engaged Raftelis to initiate a strategic planning process in September 2019 for updating its organizational vision and developing a framework for guiding the organization into the future. Using techniques from appreciative inquiry, Raftelis worked with a core team of employees to review feedback from stakeholders and evaluate organizational strengths, identify opportunities, discuss compelling aspirations, and agree on results and measures of strategic progress.

The Department's strategic planning process was designed to ensure:

- A shared vision of the Department's ultimate goals. Organizations driven by clear purposes and shared values have a greater capacity to succeed than those that are not.
- A collective understanding of the available resources, the environment, and the principles upon which strategies will be based.
- Acceptance of the direction and urgency of the strategic and operating plans, which will be integrated into the way the Department is operated on a day-to-day basis.

To achieve these conditions for success, the Department's strategic planning process involved input from a broad group of internal and external stakeholders and consistent communications of the Department's vision, mission, and overall strategic plan, both internally and externally. Major elements of the process included:

- **Stakeholder Input:** Input was obtained from the Department's leadership team, employees, and external stakeholders through a combination of interviews, an online employee survey with more than 75 responses, and focus groups.
- **Foundation Workshop:** A Core Strategic Planning Team (Core Team), consisting of members of the Department's senior management, met to consider the stakeholder input and to draft the organization's vision, values, mission, and goals.
- **Strategy Workshop:** The Core Team reviewed the strategy and measure input from the stakeholder engagement exercises and then made preliminary decisions concerning the content to be included in the final plan.
- **Core Team Review:** After documentation of the Strategy Workshop results, the Goal Teams and the Core Team reviewed and revised, as necessary, the elements of the Department's strategic plan.

Based on this process, the Department has elected to focus on workforce, finance, communication and outreach, infrastructure, sustainable resource management, and technology in its updated strategic plan. The strategic framework developed will help guide investment, allocate resources, and provide a structure for annual strategy reviews to ensure that long-term goals and objectives are achieved.

I wanted to thank you and your team for the very positive experience in developing the plan – this is my second go-around with developing a Strategic Plan for the Department and this was easy and engaging from my perspective (and most importantly, it was fun!)

*John McKelvey,
Senior Management Analyst*

Metro Water Services of Nashville and Davidson County TN

Reference: Scott Potter, Director

1700 3rd Avenue N, Nashville, TN 37208 / P: 615.862.4505 / E: scott.potter@nashville.gov

Project Dates: January 2016 – Present

Developing priorities and strategies during a strategic planning process is relatively easy; everyone has ideas about what needs to be improved and how the organization can be made better. Holding people accountable for making progress toward achieving those priorities and strategies, however, is considerably more difficult. Several reasons exist for this difficulty, some of which include an absence of the right data at the right point in the strategic planning process, unrealistic targets for the given timeframe, organizational cultural barriers, and a lack of meaningful outcome measures. Metro Water Services of Nashville and Davidson County (MWS) addressed these challenges in part by conducting a two-part strategic planning process. MWS began an organizational assessment prior to initiating its strategic planning process. The assessment results helped to ensure that the organization's leadership had a strong strategic and informational baseline for its future activity.

MWS initiated its organizational assessment and strategic planning process in 2016 with the overarching goal of assessing the utility's current performance, creating an organizational vision, and developing a framework for guiding the utility toward achieving that vision. The resulting strategic plan was designed to assure:

- A shared vision of MWS' ultimate goals. Organizations driven by clear purposes and shared values have a greater capacity to succeed.
- A common understanding of the available resources, the environment, and the principles upon which strategies will be based.
- Acceptance of the direction and urgency of the strategic and operating plans, which will be integrated into the way MWS is operated on a day-to-day basis.

Prior to initiating its strategic planning process, Raftelis conducted an organizational assessment for MWS based on EUM, which provided a strong strategic and informational baseline for its future activity.

The MWS strategic planning process involved input from a broad group of internal and external stakeholders, deep involvement of more than 60 employees in the assessment process and as participants on Priority Teams, and consistent communications both internally and externally.

The strategic plan now serves as a blueprint for future MWS decision making. Furthermore, the plan provides a structure by which annual reviews can be accomplished to assure that goals and objectives retain their relevance over time.

Upon completion of the strategic plan, MWS extended the engagement to include implementation assistance and an organizational culture assessment.

KEY PERSONNEL/STAFFING

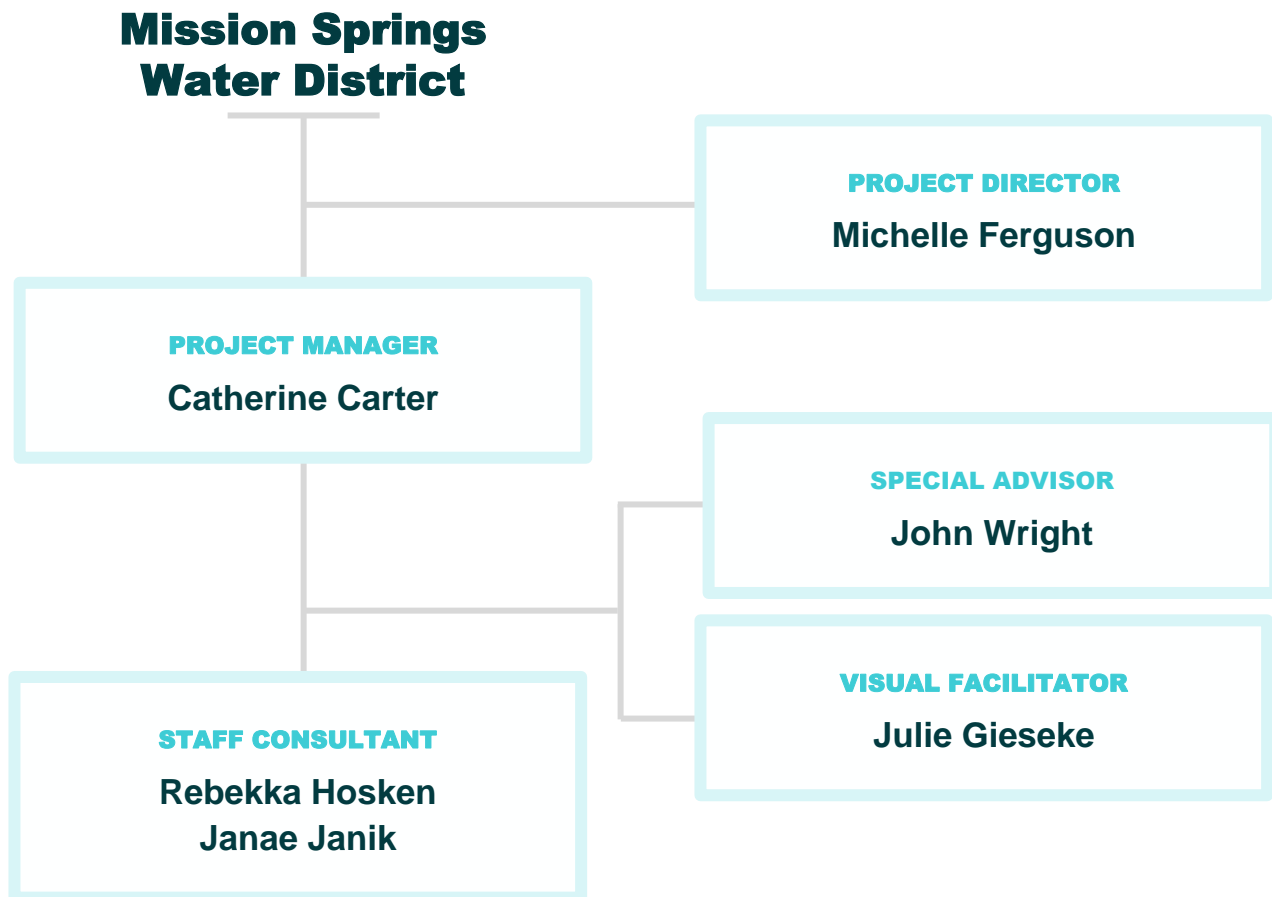
Key Personnel/Staffing

WE HAVE DEVELOPED A TEAM OF CONSULTANTS WHO SPECIALIZE IN THE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS THAT WILL BE CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF MSWD’S PROJECT.

Our project team is made up of senior-level consultants with direct utility and local government experience. What sets our project team apart is our ability to explore and relate to local community values while at the same time, investigating realistic approaches for cost-effective solutions.

An organizational chart of our project team is shown here. Detailed resumes for each of our project team members, including roles, can be found on the following pages.

Raftelis will not be including any subconsultants on our team for this engagement. Based on our extensive experience and current availability, we are fully confident in our ability to complete this project with in-house staff to the satisfaction of the MSWD.



Michelle Ferguson

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Vice President



ROLE

Michelle will be responsible for overall project accountability and will be available to provide quality assurance and control, industry perspective, and insights into the project.

PROFILE

Michelle has nearly 25 years of management experience with and for local governments across the country. As organizational assessment practice leader for The Novak Consulting Group, Michelle spearheaded the work of nearly 200 local government reviews in some of the foremost governments across the country. Michelle has completed detailed organizational reviews of entire jurisdictions and recommended improvements to the structure, staffing, and processes within departments of all sizes. Specific department reviews have included development review, parks and recreation, public works, human services, human resources, capital budgeting, and finance.

As a Lean certified professional, Michelle excels at helping local governments continuously improve and rely on data to make informed choices about services to the public. Additionally, she has provided customized training in the development and use of performance measures to assist numerous organizations continuously improve service delivery.

Michelle is also a skilled facilitator, able to bring diverse groups of people together to articulate shared visions and priorities. She has led strategic planning engagements at the community, organizational, and department levels, and she has facilitated numerous staff and governing body retreats.

Michelle began her consulting career in 2005 following ten years of direct experience in local government management, which included serving as assistant county manager in Arlington County, Virginia. During her tenure with Arlington County, Michelle oversaw the daily management and implementation of the County's capital program. She also led the organization-wide performance measurement initiative establishing their Balanced Scorecard. Before Arlington County, Michelle served as assistant city manager in Overland Park, Kansas.

Michelle earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Loyola University-Chicago and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Kansas. She is a member of the International City/County Management Association. She also served as the president of the Metropolitan Association of Local Government Assistants in Washington, D.C, and has presented at state and national conferences on topics such as strategic planning, effective governing bodies, and council-staff relations.

Specialties

- Organizational assessment
- Staffing analysis
- Process improvement
- Performance management
- Capital planning
- Strategic planning
- Facilitation
- Community engagement

Professional History

- Raftelis: Vice President (2021-present), Senior Manager (2020-2021); Organizational Assessment Practice Leader, The Novak Consulting Group (2009-2020)
- Management Partners: Senior Management Advisor (2005-2009)
- Arlington County, Virginia: Assistant County Manager (2002-2005)
- City of Overland Park, Kansas: Assistant City Manager (1996-2002)

Education

- Master of Public Administration - University of Kansas (1998)
- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science - Loyola University, Chicago (1996)

Certifications

- Lean Certified

Professional Memberships

- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)

Catherine Carter

PROJECT MANAGER

Senior Manager



ROLE

Catherine will manage the day-to-day aspects of the project ensuring it is within budget, on schedule, and effectively meets MSWD objectives. She will also lead the consulting staff in conducting analyses and preparing deliverables for the project. Catherine will serve as the District's main point of contact for the project.

PROFILE

Catherine has a background in public administration and environmental management and possesses extensive research and analytical skills. Her expertise lies in the areas of strategic planning, conducting assessments of organizational effectiveness practices, facilitation and engagement, compiling and analyzing data, and benchmarking.

Catherine has participated in numerous strategic planning engagements, including those outlined below:

- City of Aurora (CO) - City-wide strategic plan
- City of Avondale (AZ) - City-wide strategic plan
- City of Bend (OR) – Strategic planning retreat
- City of Bellevue (WA) – Strategic planning and governance retreat
- Central Arizona Project (AZ) – Strategic plan
- Town of Hilton Head (SC) – Strategic planning and governance retreat
- Jefferson County (CO) – County-wide strategic plan
- City of Lafayette (CO) - Strategic planning and governance retreat, Management team retreat, Planning Commission retreat
- League City (TX) – Strategic planning retreat
- City of Lowell (NC) - Strategic planning retreat
- Town of Nantucket (MA) - Strategic planning retreat, Facilities master planning support
- The Port (OH) – Organization-wide strategic plan
- Town of Timnath (CO) - Strategic planning retreat

Catherine has also worked on numerous financial and management studies for water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities and other public sector organizations across the country. Catherine is active in the water and wastewater utility industry, having presented at several conferences and co-authored two recent articles on long-term rate increases in *Journal AWWA*. Catherine also co-authored a chapter entitled “Public Outreach and Gaining Stakeholder Commitment” for the Fourth Edition of the industry guidebook, *Water and Wastewater Finance and Pricing: The Changing Landscape*. Prior to working at Raftelis, Catherine was a senior fellow at the Institute for Sustainable Development.

Specialties

- Strategic planning
- Facilitation
- Organizational assessment
- Staffing analysis
- Strategy monitoring and implementation
- Risk and resiliency assessment
- Business process improvement
- Comparative industry analyses

Professional History

- Raftelis: Senior Manager (2022-present); Manager (2019-2021); Senior Consultant (2016-2018); Consultant (2013-2015); Associate Consultant (2011-2012)
- Mecklenburg County Waste Management Advisory Board (appointed term: 2019-2021)
- The Institute for Sustainable Development (2009-2011)

Education

- Master of Public Administration - University of North Carolina Charlotte (2017)
- Master of Environmental Management - Duke University (2011)
- Bachelor of Science in Business/Economics, Biology, Environmental Studies - Randolph-Macon College (2009)

Certifications

- Change Management & Leadership Certification - Cornell University (2019)
- American Water Works Association Risk & Resiliency Certification (2019)

Professional Memberships

- AWWA
- Solid Waste Association of North America

John Wright CPA

SPECIAL ADVISOR

Senior Manager



ROLE

John is already familiar with MSWD through his recent rate work and will provide advice and input from his project work to assist the strategic planning team.

PROFILE

John has more than 25 years of utility industry financial management and economic analysis experience. He has provided consulting services to numerous complex utility clients including the City of San Diego, Austin Water, the Portland Water Bureau, Milwaukee Water Works, the City of Calgary, and the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority.

Prior to joining Raftelis in 2010, John was the Manager of Rate Administration at Denver Water where he was responsible for the annual financial planning, cost-of-service, and capacity fee studies. He also served as a Senior Economist for the City of Portland Oregon’s Bureau of Environmental Services where he was responsible for the annual wastewater and stormwater cost-of-service and capacity fee studies.

In addition to his direct utility experience, John was a Senior Analyst at the both the Colorado and Oregon Public Utility Commissions. His work at the Colorado PUC included testifying as an expert witness in electric power and natural gas utility rate cases. At the Oregon PUC, John specialized in telecommunications utility issues and served as an expert witness in regulatory proceedings.

REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF PROJECT CLIENTS

- City of Long Beach Water Department (CA)
- San Bernardino Municipal Water Department (CA)
- City of San Diego (CA)
- Irvine Ranch Water District (CA)
- Eastern Municipal Water District (CA)
- City of Coronado (CA)
- City of Pico Rivera (CA)
- City of Solana Beach (CA)
- Rancho California Water District (CA)
- Santa Clara County Water District (CA)
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (CA)
- Portland Water Bureau (OR)

Specialties

- Cost-of-service studies
- Capacity fee studies
- Financial & economic analysis
- Public speaking and presentations
- Expert witness testimony
- Litigation support

Professional History

- Raftelis: Senior Manager (2020-present); Manager (2017-2019); Senior Consultant (2010-2016)
- Denver Water: Manager of Rate Administration (2006-2009)
- Portland Bureau of Environmental Services: Senior Economist (2004-2006)
- Public Utility Commission of Oregon: Senior Utility Analyst (2002-2004)
- Positions in the Competitive Telecommunications Industry (1997-2002)
- Colorado Public Utilities Commission: Senior Financial Analyst (1991-1997)

Education

- Master of Science in Finance - University of Colorado, Denver
- Bachelor of Science in Accounting - Metropolitan State University of Denver

Certifications

- Certified Public Accountant, State of Colorado #11959
- Series 50 Municipal Advisor Representative

Professional Memberships

- AWWA - Rates & Charges Committee, Finance Accounting & Management Controls Committee, Asset Management Committee
- WEF Utility Management Committee

Rebekka G. Hosken

STAFF CONSULTANT

Senior Manager

ROLE

Rebekka will work at the direction of Catherine in conducting interviews, directing research and analysis, preparing recommendations, and drafting deliverables.

PROFILE

Rebekka joined Raftelis in 2020 with 16 years of direct service to local governments and 10 years of management consulting experience. As an experienced consultant, Rebekka has led organizational assessments for a broad range of operating departments and offices in cities, counties, universities, and special districts, including community development, public works, police, administration, and city attorney departments. With direct operational experience in municipal administration, public works, and finance departments, Rebekka's breadth of knowledge makes her skillful in quickly identifying organizational strengths and opportunities, analyzing operations through creation of process maps and workflows, preparing actionable recommendations for improvement, and communicating findings to a wide variety of audiences. She has consulted for over 125 clients throughout the United States and Canada.

Rebekka served as finance director for the City of La Cañada Flintridge, California, a contract city north of Los Angeles, responsible for accounts payable, receivable, budget, audit, and payroll. She automated several previously manual operations, including business licensing and payroll processing, coordinated acceptance of credit cards from customers for the first time, and implemented a new financial software system. During her tenure, she identified and successfully obtained a State loan for the financing of the City's new city hall and played a key leadership role in successfully moving all operations and staff, as well as communicating all financial impacts of the project to management and City Council.

Previously, Rebekka was the budget officer for the City of Simi Valley, California, a full-service community in the Los Angeles region. She prepared the City's \$196 million annual budget and \$160 million capital improvement program, as well as the City's cost allocation plan. She managed the budget and capital projects module training and setup for a comprehensive citywide enterprise resource planning (ERP) system implementation across nine operating departments.

Rebekka earned a master's degree in Business Administration with a Certificate in Local Government and Non-Profit Management from Boston University, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. She has published articles in Public Management magazine and served as a trainer in sessions at International City/County Management Association (ICMA) conferences.



Specialties

- Organizational assessment
- Budgeting and financial analysis
- Business process improvement
- Strategic planning
- Staffing analysis

Professional History

- Raftelis: Senior Manager (2023-present); Manager (2020-2022)
- City of La Cañada Flintridge, California; Finance Director (2017-2020)
- City of Simi Valley, California; Budget Officer (2012-2017)
- City of Burbank, California; Senior Management Analyst (2010-2012)
- Management Partners; Senior Consultant (1999-2010)
- Village of La Grange Park, Illinois; Assistant Village Manager (1996-1999)
- City of Appleton, Wisconsin; Assistant to the Mayor (1994-1996)
- Town of Lexington, Massachusetts; Management Intern (1992-1993)

Education

- Master of Business Administration – Boston University (1993)
- Certificate in Local Government and Non-Profit Management – Boston University (1993)
- Bachelor of Arts in Russian Studies – University of Michigan (1989)

Professional Memberships

- Government Finance Officers Association
- California Society of Municipal Finance Officers

Janae Janik

STAFF CONSULTANT

Consultant

ROLE

Janae will work at the direction of Catherine in conducting interviews, directing research and analysis, preparing recommendations, and drafting deliverables.

PROFILE

Janae began her consulting career following 12 years of service with the City of San Diego Superior Court. Her expertise lies in the areas of process improvement, strategic planning, program implementation, and workforce planning and support. She is an innovative problem solver who maximizes the usage of technological solutions.

As a Budget and Finance Analyst with the City of San Diego, Janae assisted in the development of a \$200-million-dollar annual budget, developed forecasting models for future revenue and expenditures, and conducted financial trend analysis of payroll and benefit costs for over 1,200 employees.

Janae is well-versed in the creation of strategic plans and managing high visibility projects with cross-functional impacts. During her tenure as a Court Operations Supervisor, she managed the transition to virtual court proceedings during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow remote access to justice for community members. Other notable projects included re-allocating available resources to maintain services following staffing reductions, authoring standard operating procedures to share best practices throughout the organization, and developing a new electronic system for filing documents to reduce case processing times and improve customer experience. Janae was instrumental in identifying continuous process improvement opportunities that drove operational efficiencies and reduced costs.

Janae began her career at the Superior Court working in various customer service and administrative roles aimed at improving case processing times and providing quality service to members of the San Diego community.

Janae earned a master's degree in business administration and strategic management from Western Governors University and a bachelor's degree in television and film from San Diego State University.



Specialties

- Organizational assessment
- Process improvement
- Strategic planning
- Program implementation
- Performance management
- Forecasting
- Data analysis

Professional History

- Raftelis: Consultant (2022-present)
- Wells Fargo: Senior Technology Business Systems Consultant -- Contractor (2022)
- San Diego Superior Court: Budget & Finance Analyst (2021-2022); Court Operations Supervisor (2018-2021); Courtroom Clerk (2016-2018); Court Administrative Clerk (2013-2016); Court Operations Clerk (2010-2013)

Education

- Master of Business Administration – Western Governors University (2015)
- Bachelor of Science in Television, Film & New Media – San Diego State University (2010)

Professional Memberships

- Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)

Julie Gieseke

VISUAL FACILITATOR

Visual Facilitator

ROLE

Julie will use visual facilitation to capture participants' dialogue, discussion, and ideation by drawing large visual maps in real time, which helps connect ideas, track content, and synthesize their work.

PROFILE

Julie Gieseke is a visual facilitator, working in the realm of group facilitation, strategic planning and strategic communications for over fifteen years. She creates visuals that bring ideas and people together through image and story.

Julie collaborates on projects utilizing the tools of group process and design, such as visual facilitation, creative engagement, and storytelling, to bring strategy and tactics into clear focus. She also incorporates change methodologies such as Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Psychology, StrengthsFinder, and Neurolinguistics.

Julie's unique skill set combines facilitation, active listening, and visual facilitation to bring sense-making, consensus, energy, and vibrancy to each engagement. As a consultant with The Novak Consulting Group and now Raftelis, Julie has worked on a variety of strategic planning and facilitation projects.

Julie developed her group process design through a broad range of experience. She received her master's degree in Organizational Development and Management from Fielding Graduate University, is certified as a professional coach through The Coaches Training Institute, and is a certified Master Practitioner of Neurolinguistics. Julie also received professional training through The Grove Consultants International and has been mentored by leaders in the fields of visual facilitation, facilitation, organizational development, coaching, storytelling, and performance. The result is a wide range of exposure to various approaches that culminates in a unique style that is customizable for each engagement.



Specialties

- Visual Facilitation
- Strategic Visioning/Planning
- Executive Coaching
- Facilitation
- Team Development

Professional History

- Raftelis: Visual Facilitator (2020-present); Visual Facilitator, The Novak Consulting Group (2011-2020)
- Map the Mind: Principal (2008-present) Visual Facilitation, Coaching, Consulting, Teaching

Education

- Master of Arts in Organizational Development and Management - Fielding Graduate University (2008)
- Professional Coaching Certification - Coaches Training Institute (2008)
- Bachelor of Arts in Film and Video Production/Theater Arts - University of California, Santa Cruz (1988)

Certifications

- Master Practitioner of Neurolinguistics
- Certified Professional Co-Active Coach

Professional Memberships

- International Forum of Visual Practitioners

SERVICE DELIVERY APPROACH

Service Delivery Approach

At its best, strategic planning engages individuals and strengthens a sense of community that undergirds strong civic engagement. Tapping individuals who are content and engaging them to think about the future energizes people in a positive way. We believe that organizations function best when there is engagement during *good* times, not just when there is conflict or opposition. By creating constructive dialogue and by focusing together on shared goals, an organization is much more likely to be successful and productive.

Raftelis is passionate about strategic planning for local governments and special districts like MSWD. We encourage future-forward and innovative conversations and understand the unique roles of each stakeholder. Each participant in this process comes with a different perspective and, perhaps, conflicting priorities. Each of these viewpoints is important and valuable. It is our responsibility to work in partnership with MSWD to synthesize this information and facilitate a process that does the following:

- Honors and respects the diversity of opinions of participants
- Honors and respects work undertaken as part of the prior 2017-2021 strategic planning process
- Promotes group communication and collaboration through inclusivity and community building
- Provides useful information and direction for decision making and priority setting

We are leaders in utilities and local government management and would be honored to assist the MSWD in updating its strategic plan. Effective and efficient project management will be critical for ensuring the successful completion of this engagement. Therefore, our approach is to work collaboratively with MSWD to ensure all expectations are articulated from the start. We remain in close contact with our clients throughout all phases of each engagement to ensure these expectations are met. This also allows us to quickly address any contingencies that may arise. Our experience with similar work enables us to hit the ground running.

Our graphic facilitator is able to convert conversations into graphic form, live, as the discussion occurs and before participants leave the room. Her work adds excitement to our engagements and is included in our deliverables.

A strategic planning process involves several steps:

- Articulating a clear vision and mission for the organization
- Preparing a “Sense of Stakeholders” that identifies the factors affecting the community and organization
- Establishing goals
- Identifying priority strategies
- Creating implementation plans that become the focus of activity and engagement long after the process itself has finished

Raftelis is confident we can provide an innovative, creative process and updated strategic plan for the MSWD that accomplishes its objectives.

WORK PLAN / SCOPE OF WORK

Work Plan / Scope of Work

THE FOLLOWING OUTLINES OUR PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK FOR DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN WITH MSWD.

Activity 1: Project Kick-off

A successful process will benefit from a collaborative relationship between the consulting team and MSWD from the very beginning of the process. This task is intended to begin building that relationship, and to gather the stakeholder input necessary to ensure a successful strategic planning process.

At the start of this engagement, we will request and review all background information, including all other planning documents, resource materials, and other relevant data. During this stage, we will kick off the project with the Board of Directors (Board) and meet with MSWD’s Management Team to gain a clear picture of what implementation of the District’s previous strategic plan looked like, and what the District hopes to accomplish over the next five-year cycle. We will develop a project charter with the management team and discuss communication and engagement strategies for the project. Ultimately, we want to ensure that we have a shared understanding of how to develop the plan and successfully integrate the learnings from the District’s previous planning efforts. We will review the project plan, and we will finalize the timelines and schedule. We will provide at least monthly project updates to the District’s project team.

DELIVERABLES:

- Kick-off meeting agenda
- Data/document request
- Draft and final project schedule



A sample of the work of our graphic facilitator, who will transform conversations into graphic form live, as the conversation occurs.

Activity 2: Stakeholder Engagement

The strategic plan is best when touched by as many people as possible. We will work collaboratively with MSWD to engage internal and external stakeholders and build a collective understanding of the District's strengths, opportunities, and aspirations. The District's existing strategic plan was created with considerable thought and engagement, and we want to honor the work of previous employees and Board members, and maintain forward momentum through this iteration.

As part of this process, we will:

- Conduct individual meetings with each member of the District's Board of Directors and Management Team to hear their perspective about the strategic plan and to develop an understanding of the District's processes and operations. We're also interested in learning about the process and results of prior implementation efforts – what work is still ongoing? What priorities shifted? How was progress monitored and reported?
- Engage employees through an online survey to ensure involvement in the planning effort and, ultimately, support for the plan's implementation.
- Engage external customers and stakeholders through either an online survey or short interviews to better understand their needs for the future and how MSWD can support shared goals.
- Engage external customers and stakeholders through an online stakeholder forum, facilitated by Raftelis, to provide an interactive discussion about their thoughts on the District's five-year strategic plan and their service level expectations.

We will summarize everything learned in a comprehensive "Sense of Stakeholder" document for review with the District.

DELIVERABLES:

- Draft and final employee and stakeholder surveys, as appropriate
- Sense of Stakeholders document

Activity 3: Strategic Planning Retreat

Once the stakeholder information has been gathered and analyzed in a Sense of Stakeholders document, Raftelis will structure a one-day retreat for the Board of Directors and Management Team. The retreat agenda will be developed based on conversations with the MSWD project team, and we will share a draft agenda and preparation packet to be reviewed by the District prior to the retreat.

We will then facilitate a strategic planning retreat with the Board of Directors and key staff to review and, as necessary, update the existing strategic framework of mission, vision, values, and areas of focus (goals) for the desired future for the MSWD. The Sense of Stakeholders document will be reviewed to provide context for the update to the MSWD's vision, mission, and values, and for the development of five-year strategic areas of focus.

The session will include activities with the entire group, as well as small group breakout sessions that will allow everyone to actively participate and engage in the process. During the session, the primary role of the facilitator is to ensure that the environment is respectful and conducive to open and constructive dialogue so that the established objectives are ultimately met. While the agenda provides the structure to accomplish the tasks, we also know how important it is to pay attention to the group and make sure that conversations that need to happen actually happen, so we are flexible and in tune with the group during the process. Our visual facilitator will summarize the discussions in graphic form to provide excitement and a shared understanding.

DELIVERABLES:

- Draft and final retreat agenda
- Draft strategic plan framework

Activity 4: Defining Strategies and Metrics

While the high-level strategic framework will be drafted during the retreat, it is staff’s role to determine how each strategic area of focus will be achieved and implemented. Therefore, we will host a half-day session with key District staff to identify appropriate strategies (projects, programs, and/or initiatives that support achievement of the District’s strategic areas of focus) and key performance metrics in each strategic area of focus. Agreement on these activities and metrics will allow the organization, the Board of Directors, and the District’s customers to track forward progress.

DELIVERABLES:

- Draft strategies and performance metrics for each focus area

Activity 5: Draft and Finalize Deliverables

After developing appropriate strategies and metrics in Activity 4, Raftelis will meet once more with the Board of Directors and Management Team to review and finalize the new strategic plan framework.

Once finalized, Raftelis will prepare an engaging and graphics-oriented strategic plan document that includes the full strategic framework and the results of the planning and engagement processes. We will review the draft deliverables with the District and make any necessary changes or modifications before finalization.

Upon plan finalization, Raftelis will provide customized implementation templates to assist the District in aligning their activities with the strategic areas of focus and strategies included in the strategic plan.

DELIVERABLES:

- Final strategic plan document
- Implementation templates





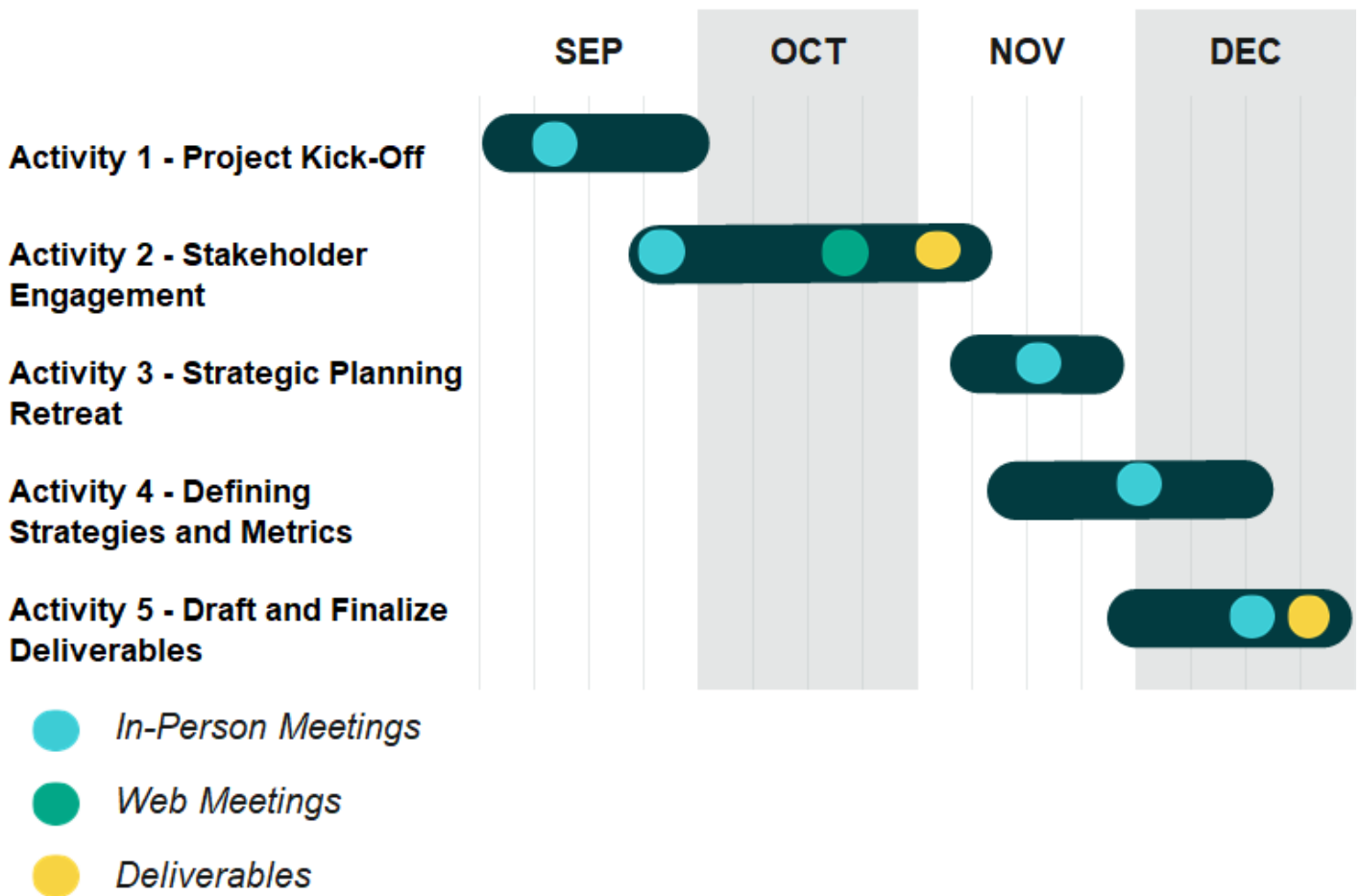
The strategic plan that we will develop for MSWD won't be just another report to sit on your shelf. Our team of strategic planning experts and graphic designers develop plans that serve as tools to graphically communicate the organization's vision to both internal and external stakeholders.

Shown here are the front covers of several strategic plans that Raftelis has recently developed and designed.

Project Schedule

A proposed schedule breakdown by project activity is provided in the table below. We expect to refine and finalize this with the MSWD during Activity 1.

In our experience, a process as described in the District’s RFP requires a minimum of four months to complete; however, we will work with MSWD to adjust and refine the schedule to ensure your timeline needs are met.



COST PROPOSAL & ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSED AGREEMENT

Cost Proposal

The total fee for completion of the proposed scope of work is \$74,575 including all professional fees and expenses.

A breakdown of costs by project activity is provided in the table below.

Activity	Description	Cost
1	Project Kick-Off	\$11,400
2	Stakeholder Engagement	\$21,025
3	Strategic Planning Retreat	\$15,175
4	Defining Strategies and Metrics	\$8,850
5	Draft and Finalize Deliverables	\$18,125
TOTAL		\$74,575

It is our practice to invoice clients monthly based on work completed.

A schedule of hourly rates by team member classification is provided below.

Title	Hourly Rate
Vice President	\$325
Senior Manager	\$285
Consultant	\$195
Visual Facilitator	\$175

Because Raftelis has the internal capabilities to perform this work, no subconsultants will be used; all team members are Raftelis employees.

We have reviewed PlanetBid and there was no addendum issued.

Exceptions

We request that the MSWD consider making the following modifications, shown in red below, to the Agreement for Professional Services. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about these modifications.

10. Ownership of Work Product. All ~~copy, writings, drawings, images, logos, artwork, design or other~~ work product of Consultant prepared pursuant to this Agreement constitute “Work Product.”

- a. All Work Product shall be delivered and assigned to Client upon completion of the services authorized hereunder, and shall become the property of Client, ~~and Client shall be the copyright holder thereof.~~ Client shall have the right to make and retain copies and use all Work Product; provided, however, the use shall be limited to the intended use for which the services and Work Products are provided under this Agreement. Client agrees to indemnify and hold Consultant harmless if Work Product is used for other than its original intended purpose.
- ~~b.—Consultant retains no independent rights to use the Work Product and agrees not to challenge the validity of Client’s rights or ownership in the Work Product. Consultant may retain copies of the Work Product for its files and internal use. Consultant’s publication or release of any information directly derived from work performed or data obtained in connection with services rendered under this Agreement must first be approved in writing by Client. Nothing contained here shall be deemed a transfer, assignment of divestiture by Consultant of its trade secrets, know-how or intellectual property.~~
- ~~c.—If any rights to the Work Product cannot be assigned to Client, (a) Consultant unconditionally and irrevocably waives the enforcement of such rights, including all claims and causes of action of any kind against Client with respect to such rights, and agrees, at Client’s request and expense, to consent to and join in any action to enforce such rights, and (b) Consultant unconditionally and irrevocably grants to Client during the term of such rights, an exclusive, irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide, fully paid and royalty free license, with rights to sublicense through multiple levels of sublicensees, to reproduce, create derivative works of, distribute, publicly perform, and publicly display by all means now known or later developed, such rights.~~

11. Indemnification. Consultant, by execution of this Agreement, specifically agrees to hold harmless, defend and indemnify District, its officers, agents, and employees from and against ~~any and all~~ actions, claims, loss, liability, damage and expense ~~arising out of, pertaining to, or relating to~~ proximately caused by the negligent, reckless, or willful misconduct of Consultant, Consultant’s employees or subconsultants engaged by Consultant in connection with the work of Consultant pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, excepting only such injury and harm as may be caused ~~solely and exclusively~~ by Client’s sole negligence, willful misconduct or active negligence. In no event shall the cost to defend charged to Consultant exceed Consultant’s professional’s proportionate percentage of fault. Such indemnity shall extend to claims, demands, or liabilities, of every kind or nature whatsoever including, but not limited to, personal injury, wrongful death, and property damage occurring during and/or after completion of the Work. ~~Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this paragraph, if Consultant is a design professional, as defined by Section 2782.8(b)(2) of The Civil Code of the State of California, or its successor, then such design professional shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, indemnify, and hold Client harmless from and against any and all~~

~~liabilities, losses or damages, arising out of or encountered in connection with this Agreement or the prosecution of work under it to the extent such, liabilities, losses or damages, are actually caused by the negligence of such design professional or its agents, employees, or subcontractors, or their agents or employees. Consultant's obligation to indemnify shall not be restricted to insurance proceeds, if any, received by Client, its directors, officers, employees, or authorized volunteers.~~

12. Insurance.

4. Subrogation. ~~Consultant shall~~ The parties shall waive all rights of subrogation against Client ~~the other party.~~

13. Confidentiality. Consultant shall not, either during or after the term of this Agreement, disclose to any third party, any confidential information relative to the work of Client without the prior written consent of Client ~~or as required by court order, subpoena, legal process or applicable law.~~

15. Financial Records. Consultant shall retain all financial records ~~relating to Consultant's billings under this Agreement, including, but not limited to, documents, reports, books and accounting records which pertain to any work or transaction performed pursuant to this Agreement~~ for four (4) years after the expiration of this Agreement. Either District or any duly authorized representative of Client shall, with reasonable notice, have access to and the right to examine, audit and copy such records.

16. Compliance With Laws; Labor Code Provisions. It is the responsibility of the Consultant and any subconsultant to comply with all ~~applicable~~ federal, state and local laws and regulations applicable to Consultant and any subconsultant, including provisions of DIVISION 2, PART 7 of the California Labor Code, and those provisions governing the payment of prevailing wages, working hours, overtime, the employment of apprentices and record keeping requirements. Copies of the prevailing rate of per diem wages are available at District's principal office and will be made available to any interested party on request. The following sections of the California Labor Code are incorporated into and made a part of this Agreement and will be made available by District upon request: Section 1771 (prevailing wage requirement,) Section 1810 (eight hour workday,) Section 1813 (penalty for failure to pay overtime,) Section 1777.5 (apprenticeship requirements); Section 1776 (recordkeeping requirements) and Section 1771.4 (job site posting).

APPENDIX: WORK SAMPLES

Appendix: Work Samples





CITY OF ROSEVILLE WATER UTILITY

Sense of Stakeholders

MAY 11, 2021



Contents

Overview of Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Content Summaries

- Aspirations
- Strengths
- Opportunities

Stakeholder Input by Group

- Employee Survey
- Core Team
- Attribute Team Employees
- Elected Officials
- Municipal Stakeholders
- External Stakeholders

Overview of Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Employee Survey: 40 responses

Core Team Interviews: 11 total

Attribute Team Interviews: 10 total

External Stakeholder Interviews: 14 total

- Elected Officials
 - Mayor
 - City Council
 - Public Utilities Commission
- Municipal Stakeholders
 - City Manager
 - Assistant City Manager
 - Roseville Fire Department
 - Parks, Recreation, and Libraries Department
- External Stakeholders
 - Roseville Chamber of Commerce
 - Kaiser Roseville
 - Roseville Galleria
 - Placer County Water Agency



Content Summary:

Aspirations

What would make you proud of the Water Utility in the next 5 years?

What would you like the Water Utility to be known for?

EMPLOYEE SURVEY:

- Continuing to invest in its employees, recognize accomplishments, and provide opportunities for training and advancement
- Being considered an advanced water utility that enhances services through technology and innovation
- Maintaining high service levels and water quality through proactive programs and improvements
- Continuing to build a healthy work environment and promote division crossover and teamwork
- Becoming a leader in water efficiency strategies and decreasing water waste

CORE TEAM:

- Continuing to be good fiscal stewards, providing superior service quality, reliability, and excellent customer service
- Leading efforts to ensure regional water sustainability
- Being a highly resilient service provider that is well-prepared and positioned to handle future conditions
- Recognition as a top performing utility that values its motivated employees

ATTRIBUTE TEAM EMPLOYEES:

- Providing excellent customer service and the best quality water at a competitive rate
- Continuously improving and keeping up with new technology and innovations
- Operating proactively in all areas of the utility
- Being a role model for other utilities and communities

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

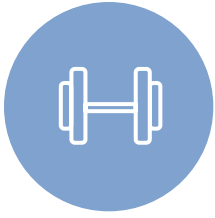
- Becoming a resource for the community to assist residents in reducing and optimizing water usage
- Recognized Statewide for excellence
- Staying as well-run, reliable, affordable, and forward-thinking as the Water Utility is now
- Positioned to continue providing the same service levels to all residents of Roseville in the future

MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Viewed as the best water utility in the State of California
- Striving for efficiency and effectiveness through continuous improvement
- Being the most affordable utility in the region
- Approaching future needs proactively, flexibly, and creatively

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Partnering with large customers to increase water conservation using smart practices and new technology
- Continuing to be a high-performing water utility providing excellent service
- Being more regionally connected and sharing supply sources through interconnected infrastructure



Content Summary:

Strengths

What is true today that you hope will still be true in five years? What are the greatest strengths?

EMPLOYEE SURVEY:

- Knowledgeable employees and strong leadership
- Customer service oriented
- Positive culture and work environment
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Strong finances

CORE TEAM:

- Professional, high-functioning, and passionate employees dedicated to public service
- Collaborative, unified, and inclusive environment
- Fiscally responsible and efficient operations, providing stable and cost-effective rates
- Customer service oriented and high customer satisfaction
- Forward-thinking utility focused on reliability and resiliency for the future

ATTRIBUTE TEAM EMPLOYEES:

- Very knowledgeable and hardworking staff and strong leadership throughout the organization
- Collaborative, supportive, and inclusive work environment
- Customer service-focused
- Provides high-quality water
- Operations are focused on planning for future needs

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- A forward-thinking utility focused on developing plans and capabilities for the future
- Affordable and dependable
- Strong leadership and management of the utility
- Good community perception and trust

MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Professional, knowledgeable, and forward-thinking employees
- Strong reputation in the community and with stakeholders
- Developed good regional partnerships
- Proactive long-term water supply planning

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Competent, professional, and visionary employees
- Ability to consistently deliver high-quality water and with reasonable rates
- Annual meter program and backflow programs are strong
- Public communications are best in class



Content Summary:

Opportunities

What are the Water Utility's greatest opportunities?

What is not true today that you hope will be true in five years?

EMPLOYEE SURVEY:

- Increase employee training and growth opportunities
- Implement technology improvements
- Ensure adequate resources for operations and growth
- Plan for future needs and improve future water supply resiliency
- Strengthen, maintain, and replace infrastructure to ensure reliability
- Encourage additional collaboration and teamwork
- Enhance recruitment efforts and strategies
- Improve processes and develop innovative approaches to providing service
- Proactively approach future water conservation guidelines

CORE TEAM:

- Enhance the Utility's capability to attract, develop, and retain its passionate and dedicated team of employees
- Provide sustainable and resilient services by planning for and responding to challenges and risks such as growth, climate change, water efficiency mandates, and regulations
- Increase proactive maintenance activities and continue rehabilitation of infrastructure
- Expand community and stakeholder engagement to maintain trust and increase understanding
- Develop data management and analytics capabilities to optimize operations and drive decision-making
- Continue fostering collaboration, teamwork, and open communication

ATTRIBUTE TEAM EMPLOYEES:

- Continue proactive water resource and infrastructure planning to address growth, climate change, and drought
- Monitor and prepare for regulations and continue government relations practices
- Expand employee growth opportunities within the organization and develop succession plans
- Optimize operations further by reviewing processes and considering technology improvements
- Increase water efficiency practices, mandates, and outreach

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- Continue diversifying the available water supply to prepare for future growth and droughts
- Expand outreach and education to increase community awareness of the Water Utility's efforts in water sustainability and conservation
- Enhance employee retention and succession planning
- Proactively address aging infrastructure
- Develop a strong advocacy team for rate changes to increase public knowledge, communication about the changes, and involvement of elected officials

MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Balance water scarcity with growth, considering the regional water availability
- Expand employee development and formalize succession planning
- Continue efforts to communicate with and educate the public, especially about water conservation
- Be well-prepared to replace aging infrastructure

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

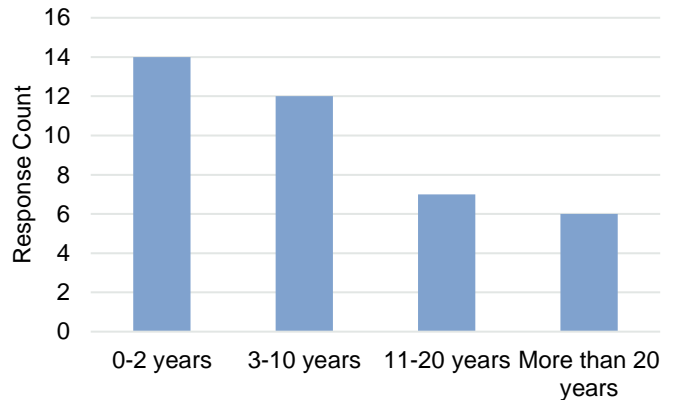
- Develop regular communication with major customers
- Partner with and provide proactive support for large customers to improve water efficiency and conservation measures
- Communicate and celebrate the water utility's successes and how well it has planned for growth
- Expand regional collaboration and consider consolidation of unincorporated areas
- Continue planning for future needs of the community, including diversifying the water supply and building the workforce
- Stay active in the regulatory environment

Stakeholder Input by Group: Employee Survey

Approximately 40 individuals from the Water Utility completed the employee survey. The figure to the right shows a breakdown of participation by tenure of respondents.

The survey included a series of questions about the strategic direction of the utility, summarized in this document, and the Ten Attributes of an Effectively Managed Utility (EUM), summarized within the EUM Assessment Report.

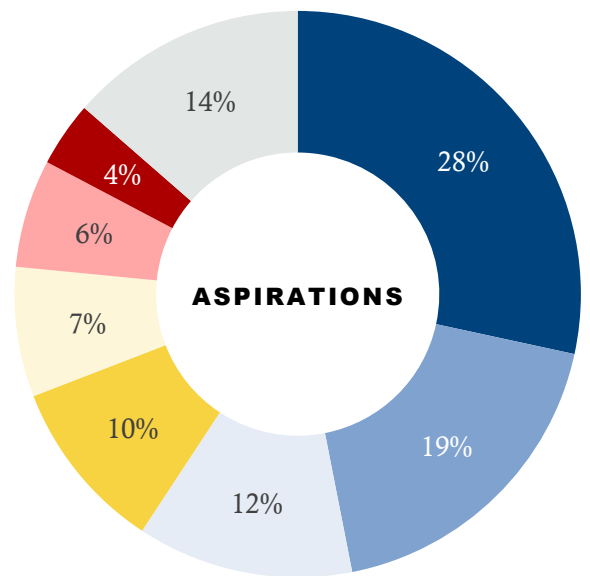
Tenure of Survey Respondents



ASPIRATIONS

Participants were asked to describe what elements of the Water Utility they would like to be proud of in five years as a way of determining priorities for organizational direction. Responses were grouped by theme, shown below.

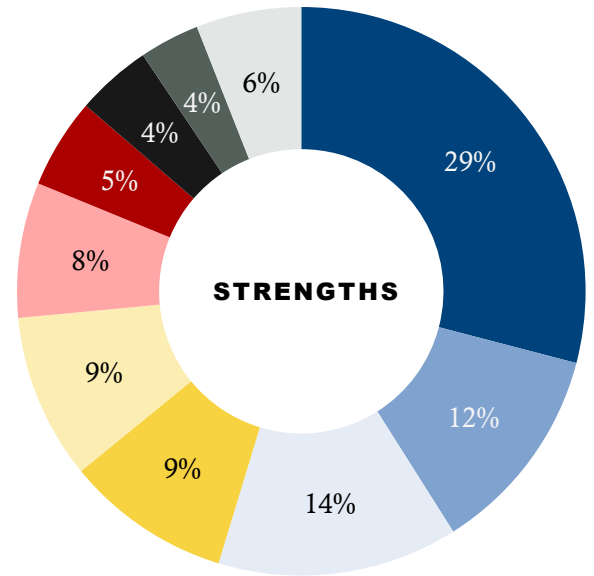
- Continues to invest in its employees, recognize accomplishments, and provide opportunities for training and advancement.
- Is considered an advanced water utility that enhances services through technology and innovation
- Maintains high service levels and water quality through proactive programs and improvements
- Continues to build a healthy work environment and promote division crossover and teamwork
- Becomes a leader in water efficiency strategies and decreases water waste
- Improves water source resiliency and sustainability
- Maintains a strong community relationship and trust in our water quality
- Other



STRENGTHS

Participants were asked to describe what they believed to be the greatest strengths of the Water Utility. Responses were grouped by theme, shown below.

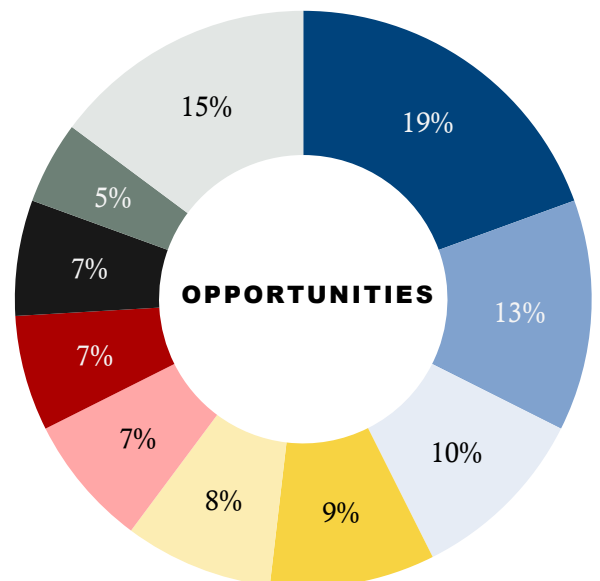
- Knowledgeable Employees and Strong Leadership
- Customer Service Oriented
- Positive Culture and Work Environment
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Strong Finances
- Training Opportunities and Support
- Communication
- Affordable and High-Quality Water
- Long-Term Planning
- Other



OPPORTUNITIES

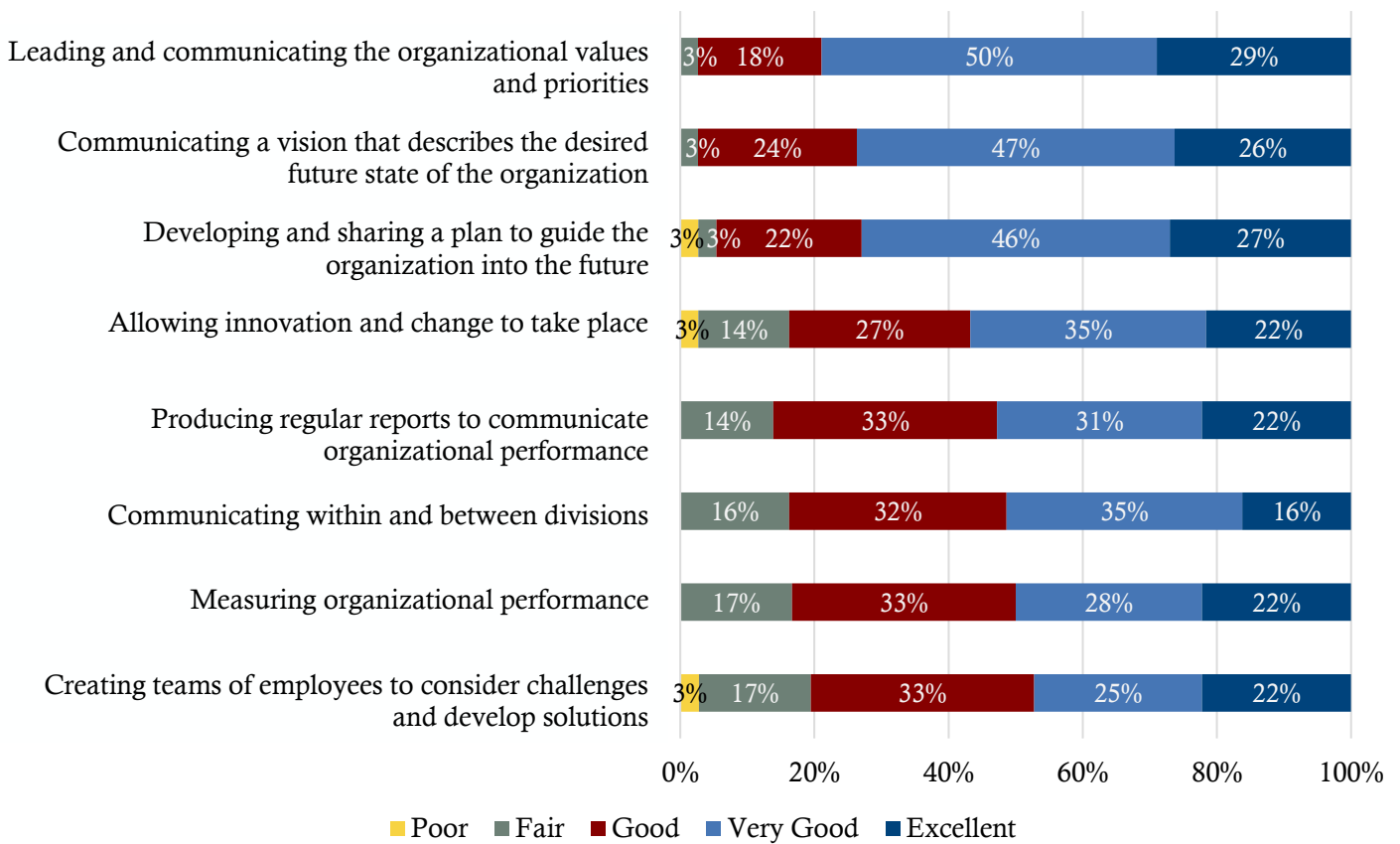
Participants were asked to describe what they believe to be the three most significant actions that the Water Utility can take to move forward in the next five years. Responses were grouped into broader themes to identify opportunities at a high level; below are the themes.

- Increase employee training and growth opportunities
- Implement technology improvements
- Ensure adequate resources for operations and growth
- Plan for future needs and improve future water supply resiliency
- Strengthen, maintain, and replace infrastructure to ensure reliability
- Encourage additional collaboration and teamwork
- Enhance recruitment efforts and strategies
- Improve processes and develop innovative approaches to providing service
- Proactively approach future water conservation guidelines
- Other



FIVE KEYS TO MANAGEMENT SUCCESS

Finally, employees were asked to rate the Water Utility’s performance in terms of several different management techniques, and their effectiveness for the organization. According to respondents, the Water Utility does well at leading and communicating the organizational values and priorities, communicating a vision that describes the desired future state of the organization, and developing and sharing a plan to guide the organization into the future. Areas where performance was rated at a lower level include creating teams of employees to consider challenges and develop solutions and measuring organizational performance. The following chart shows the percentage of responses for each management technique.



Stakeholder Input by Group:

Core Team

ASPIRATIONS

- Continuing to be good fiscal stewards, providing superior service quality, reliability, and excellent customer service
- Leading efforts to ensure regional water sustainability
- Being a highly resilient service provider that is well-prepared and positioned to handle future conditions
- Recognition as a top performing utility that values its motivated employees
- Successful in executing the core mission in a way that best serves the community

STRENGTHS

- Professional, high-functioning, and passionate employees dedicated to public service
- Collaborative, unified, and inclusive environment
- Fiscally responsible and efficient operations, providing stable and cost-effective rates
- Customer service oriented and high customer satisfaction
- Forward-thinking utility focused on reliability and resiliency for the future

OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance the Utility's capability to attract, develop, and retain its passionate and dedicated team of employees
- Provide sustainable and resilient services by planning for and responding to challenges and risks such as growth, climate change, business continuity, water efficiency mandates, and regulations
- Increase proactive maintenance activities and continue rehabilitation of infrastructure
- Expand community and stakeholder engagement to maintain trust and increase understanding
- Develop data management and analytics capabilities to optimize operations and drive decision-making
- Continue fostering collaboration, teamwork, and open communication

Stakeholder Input by Group:

Attribute Team Employees

ASPIRATIONS

- Providing excellent customer service and the best quality water at a competitive rate
- Continuously improving and keeping up with new technology and innovations
- Operating proactively in all areas of the utility
- Being a role model for other utilities and communities

STRENGTHS

- Very knowledgeable and hardworking staff and strong leadership throughout the organization
- Collaborative, supportive, and inclusive work environment
- Customer service-focused
- Provides high-quality water
- Operations are focused on planning for future needs

OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue proactive water resource and infrastructure planning to address growth, climate change, and drought
- Monitor and prepare for regulations and continue government relations practices
- Expand employee growth opportunities within the organization and develop succession plans
- Optimize operations further by reviewing processes and considering technology improvements
- Increase water efficiency practices, mandates, and outreach

Stakeholder Input by Group:

Elected Officials

ASPIRATIONS

- Becoming a resource for the community to assist residents in reducing and optimizing water usage
- Recognized Statewide for excellence
- Staying as well-run, reliable, affordable, and forward-thinking as the Water Utility is now
- Positioned to continue providing the same service levels to all residents of Roseville in the future

STRENGTHS

- A forward-thinking utility focused on developing plans and capabilities for the future
- Affordable and dependable
- Strong leadership and management of the utility
- Good community perception and trust

OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue diversifying the available water supply to prepare for future growth and droughts
- Expand outreach and education to increase community awareness of the Water Utility's efforts in water sustainability and conservation
- Enhance employee retention and succession planning
- Proactively address aging infrastructure
- Develop a strong advocacy team for rate changes to increase public knowledge, communication about the changes, and involvement of elected officials

Stakeholder Input by Group:

Municipal Stakeholders

ASPIRATIONS

- Viewed as the best water utility in the State of California
- Striving for efficiency and effectiveness through continuous improvement
- Being the most affordable utility in the region
- Approaching future needs proactively, flexibly, and creatively

STRENGTHS

- Professional, knowledgeable, and forward-thinking employees
- Strong reputation in the community and with stakeholders
- Developed good regional partnerships
- Proactive long-term water supply planning

OPPORTUNITIES

- Balance water scarcity with growth, considering the regional water availability
- Expand employee development and formalize succession planning
- Continue efforts to communicate with and educate the public, especially about water conservation
- Be well-prepared to replace aging infrastructure

Stakeholder Input by Group:

External Stakeholders

ASPIRATIONS

- Partnering with large customers to increase water conservation using smart practices and new technology
- Continuing to be a high-performing water utility providing excellent service
- Being more regionally connected and sharing supply sources through interconnected infrastructure

STRENGTHS

- Competent, professional, and visionary employees
- Ability to consistently deliver high-quality water and with reasonable rates
- Annual meter program and backflow programs are strong
- Public communications are best in class

OPPORTUNITIES

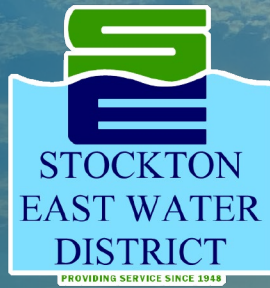
- Develop regular communication with major customers
- Partner with and provide proactive support for large customers to improve water efficiency and conservation measures
- Communicate and celebrate the water utility's successes and how well it has planned for growth
- Expand regional collaboration and consider consolidation of unincorporated areas
- Continue planning for future needs of the community, including diversifying the water supply and building the workforce
- Stay active in the regulatory environment

Contact

DARIN THOMAS

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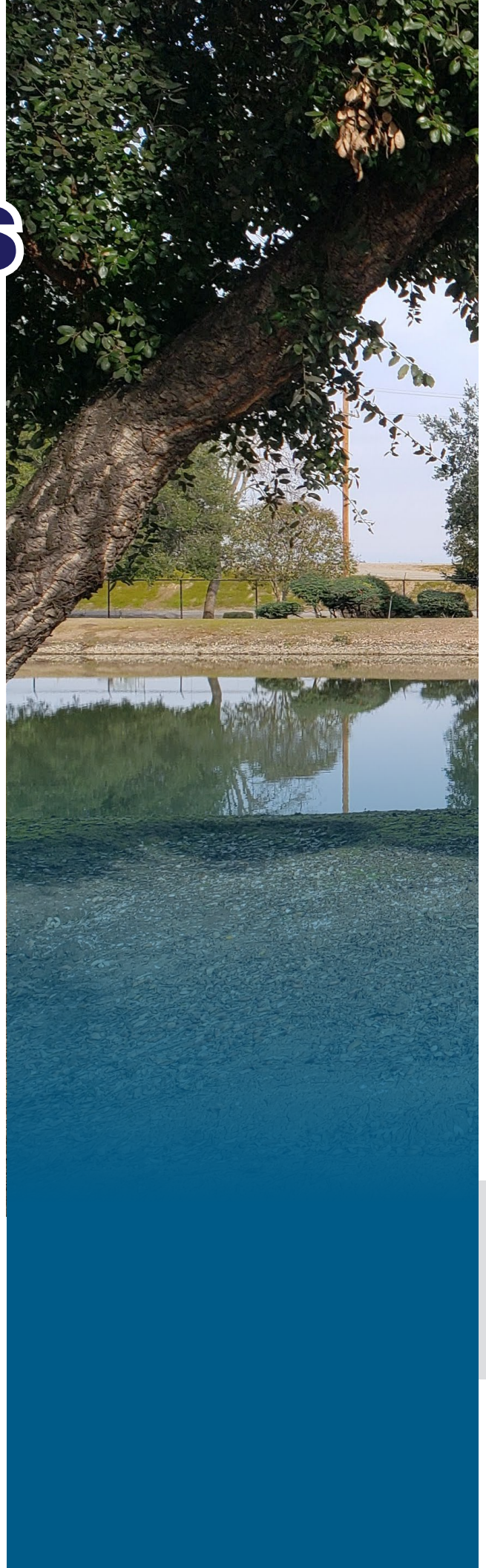
Strategic Plan

2023

Contents

Charting a Course Toward a Sustainable Water Future	1
Strategic Planning Process	2
Community Profile	4
About the District	6
District Governance	7
Strategic Framework	8
Strategic Outcomes	10
Implementation and Next Steps	12

Strategic plan facilitation by:



Charting a Course Toward a Sustainable Water Future

A Message from the Directors

The Stockton East Water District (District) was created to ensure proper management of our groundwater basin and provide supplemental surface water supplies. When our mission was established in 1948, the then Stockton & East San Joaquin Water Conservation District had to rely on big ideas, regional collaboration, and unwavering fortitude to achieve the overarching goal. Through visionary foresight and tireless progression towards the District's mission, prior constituents, directors, and staff have contributed more to the groundwater basin than any other local conservation agency.

In 2014, the District was presented with a new challenge to our mission and accomplishment thereof – the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The SGMA requires the District to accomplish the mission of sustainable groundwater basin management by 2040. Achievement of the District's mission and SGMA requirement was further complicated in 2019 by approval of Bay-Delta Plan Amendments, which have the potential to reduce availability of necessary surface water supplies that previous generations of District Boards worked arduously to secure. Current threats to the District's water supplies warranted realignment of constituents, directors, and staff through a strategic plan process to ensure everyone was flowing in the same direction.

The Strategic Plan was developed through an engaging and collaborative process that included vision and feedback from the District's talented employees, management team, Board of Directors, and valued constituents: domestic well owners, agricultural customers, and the urban contractors. The Board of Directors appreciates the time and thoughtful input of all those involved. The resulting Strategic Plan provides valuable guidance for the District's path forward, maintaining focus on the most important strategic areas, such as our employees, while refining objectives for new strategic areas such as water supply reliability.



Richard Atkins

President, Stockton East Water District Board of Directors

I look forward to working with staff to turn our new vision into a reality. The path forward will be full of new challenges, but nothing is beyond our reach and I am certain the District's talented team is up for the challenge. The Board and I are ready to support staff and constituent efforts to make implementation of this Strategic Plan a success.



Justin Hopkins

General Manager, Stockton East Water District



Strategic Planning Process

The Stockton East Water District (District) initiated a strategic planning process in 2023, using a process designed to ensure:

- + A shared vision of the outcomes that the District sought to create. Organizations driven by clear purposes and shared values have a greater capacity to succeed than those that are not.
- + A collective understanding of the available resources, the operating context, and the principles upon which desired outcomes and strategies are based.
- + Acceptance of the direction and urgency of the strategic plan, which will be integrated into the way the District is operated on a day-to-day basis.



To achieve these conditions for success, the District’s strategic planning process involved input from a broad group of internal and external stakeholders. Major elements of the engagement process included:

- + Interviews and work sessions with the District’s Board of Directors
- + Interviews and work sessions with the General Manager and leadership team
- + A survey distributed to all District employees
- + Interviews with key stakeholders and a survey of the District’s agricultural customers

Input was used to develop the utility’s six strategic outcome areas, as well as the associated strategies for implementation over the next five years.

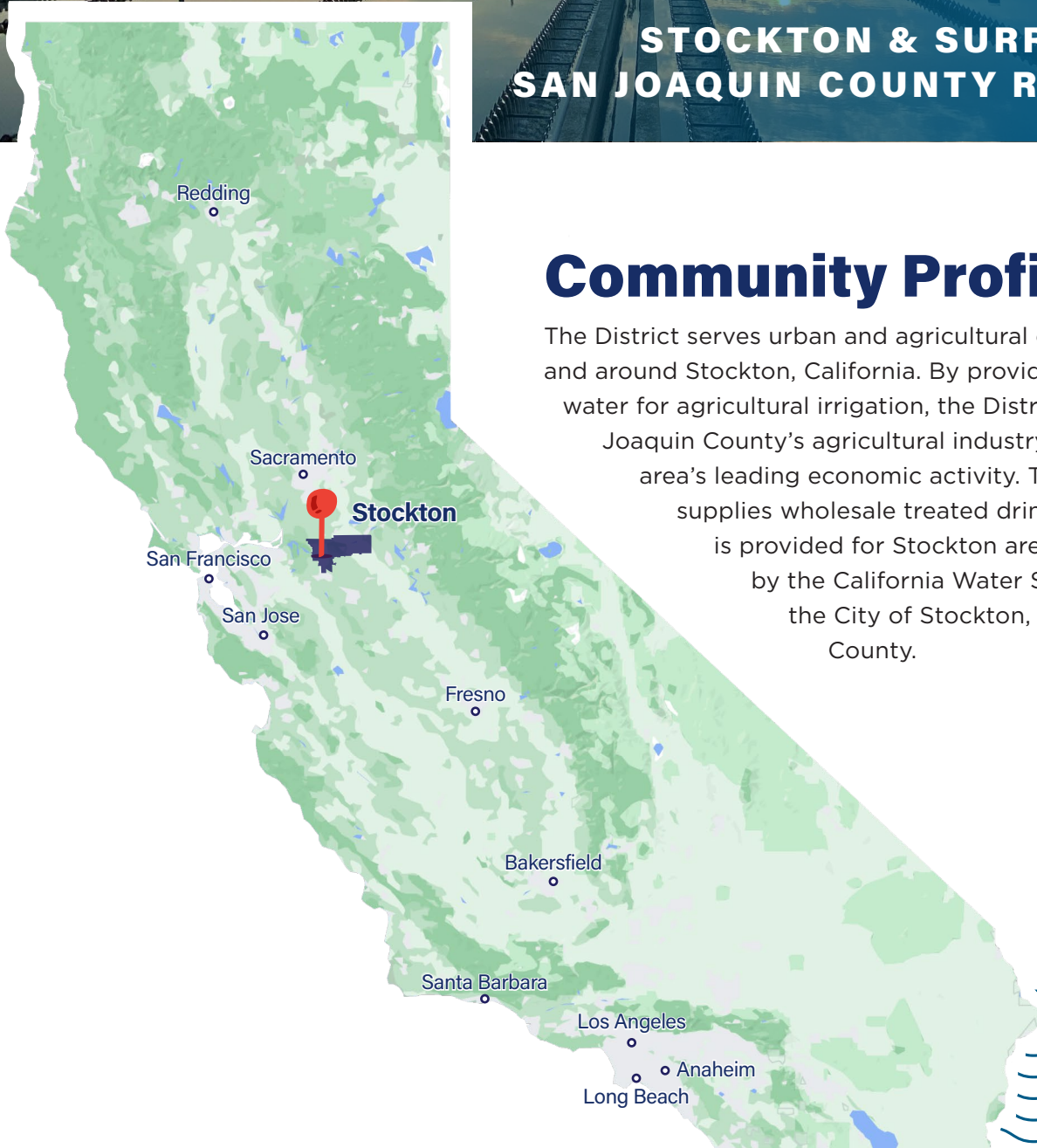


325,000+

**STOCKTON & SURROUNDING
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY RESIDENTS**

Community Profile

The District serves urban and agricultural customers in and around Stockton, California. By providing surface water for agricultural irrigation, the District supports San Joaquin County’s agricultural industry, which is the area’s leading economic activity. The District also supplies wholesale treated drinking water, which is provided for Stockton area retail customers by the California Water Service Company, the City of Stockton, and San Joaquin County.





7,000+
AGRICULTURAL CUSTOMERS

With a population of almost 325,000 people, the City of Stockton is the 11th largest in California and the 58th largest in the United States. Founded in 1849 as part of the California Gold Rush, Stockton is located on the San Joaquin River and served as an important inland seaport for ocean-going vessels and supply stop for prospectors. Thousands of miles of waterways in and around Stockton make up the California Delta, which sees approximately half of the total river flows in the state. The County seat for San Joaquin County, Stockton was the most diverse city in the United States in 2020, according to U.S. News and World Report. The City's median household income is \$63,916,

compared to \$84,097 in the State of California, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

In addition to providing drinking water for the City of Stockton and San Joaquin County, the District has approximately 250 agricultural surface water, 1,900 agricultural groundwater, and 6,000 domestic well accounts. San Joaquin County, with 920,000 acres of agriculturally productive land, is California's 7th-largest agricultural producer, generating approximately \$3 billion for the region in 2020. Top crops and agricultural products include almonds, milk, grapes, walnuts, and cherries. Approximately 4,000 farms are located in San Joaquin County, with an average size of 202 acres.

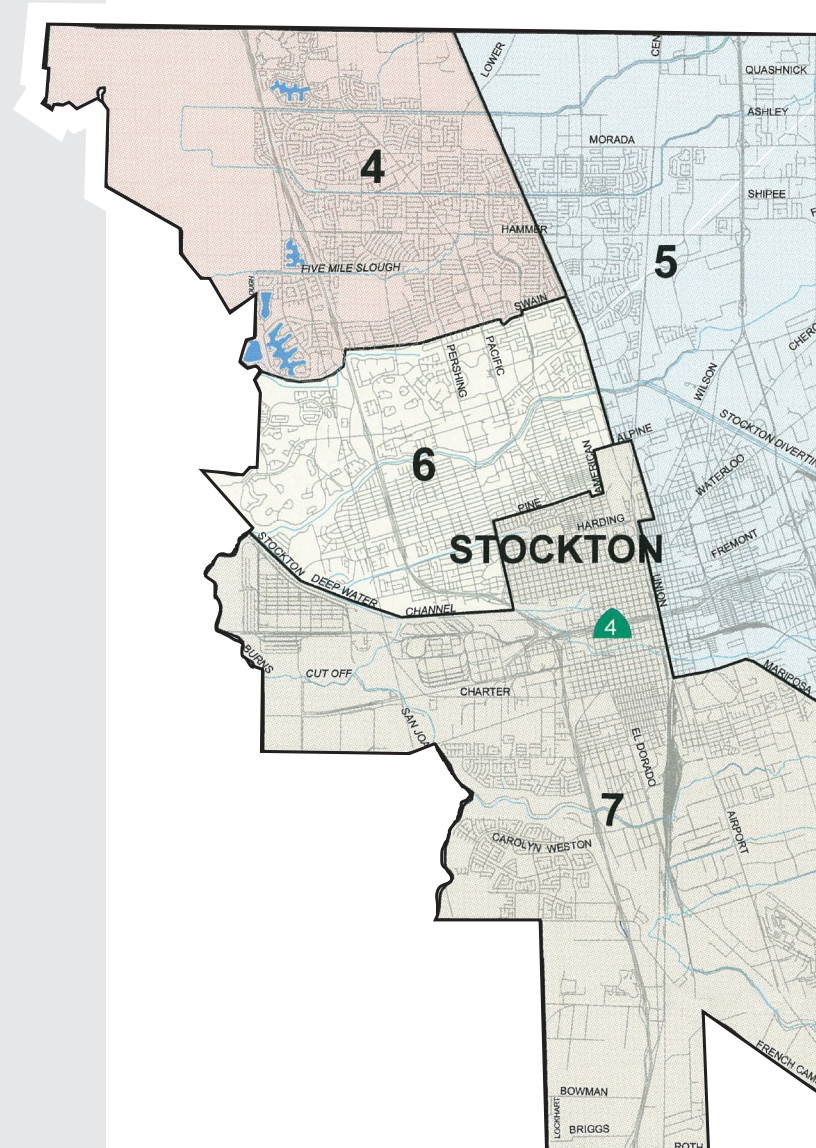


About the District

The District was formed in 1948 under the 1931 Water Conservation Act of the State of California, and was originally organized as the Stockton and East San Joaquin Water Conservation District, an independent political subdivision of the state government.

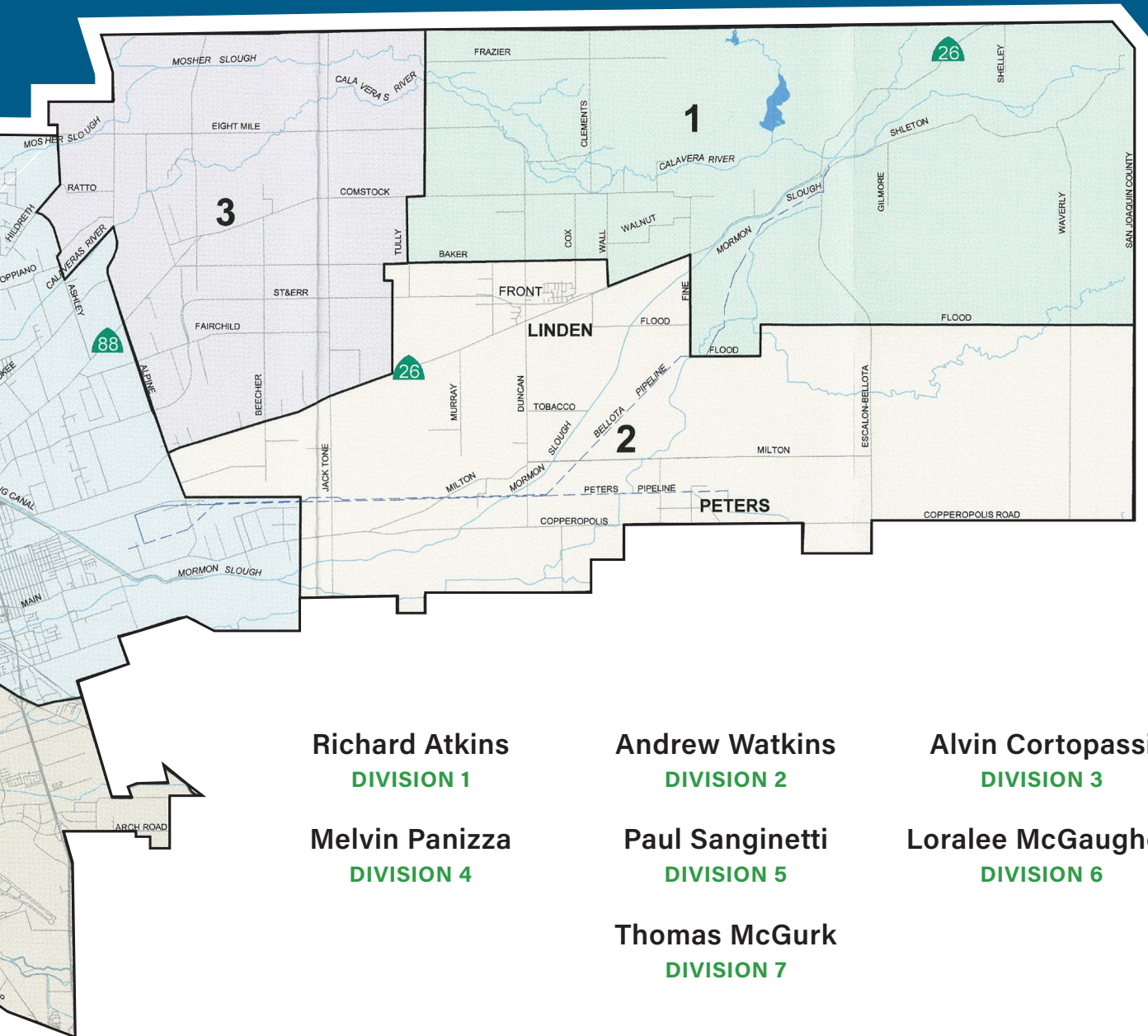
The District was responsible for acquiring a supplemental water supply and developing water use practices that would secure a balance between the District's surface water and its customer's groundwater supplies. From 1948 to 1963, the District focused its efforts on water resource planning by evaluating groundwater conditions and determining requirements for supplemental water. These intensive efforts by the District and other local agencies resulted in the construction of New Hogan Dam in 1964.

In 1971, District boundaries were expanded to include the entire Stockton urban area, and plans were initiated for a 30 million gallon per day (MGD) drinking water treatment plant. The plant has since been upgraded to 65 MGD, in recognition of increased demand from urban customers. After further expansion to encompass additional agricultural users, the District's service area now includes more than 143,000 acres.



District Governance

From a governance perspective, the District is divided into seven divisions, each of which is represented by an elected Director. Though each division's candidate for Director must reside within that division, every voter in the District's service area is eligible to vote on any and all contests, so Directors are elected by division but voted on at-large.



Creating a Vision for the Future

On March 14 2023, the District’s Board of Directors and leadership team met to articulate a strategic direction for the organization. The resulting framework includes the District’s vision, updated mission, and strategic outcome areas, thereby setting the course for future activities.

In looking to the future, each Director was asked to share what they believe to be true about the future of the District. Responses are captured in the following graphic.

THEMES...

THIS I BELIEVE

GOOD STAFF and PEOPLE
OPERATIONALLY WE are in GOOD SHAPE
NEED to BE PROACTIVE to ACQUIRE WATER WE OWN SOME WATER

STAY FOCUSED on OUR GOALS
THERE IS a LOT HAPPENING in WATER in the STATE

STOCKTON is GROWING...
GETTING PEOPLE to UNDERSTAND the FUTURE
WE ARE DOING WELL!

DELIVERING on our MISSION
BEING a DIRECTOR is MEANINGFUL to ME
IT TAKES a TEAM

WE ARE MOVING AHEAD
and OUR ISSUE is MONEY
EXPAND WHAT we HAVE...
IT COSTS MONEY to COMPLY, WE NEED FUNDING

GOOD STAFF and MANAGEMENT
as a BOARD, OUR MAIN FOCUS:
BE FORWARD LOOKING and IMAGINATIVE and TAKE SOME RISKS

WE NEED to COMMUNICATE OUR NEEDS...

WORK with OUR PARTNERS to USE MORE SURFACE WATER

BUILD to BEING REGIONAL LEADERS

Strategic Framework



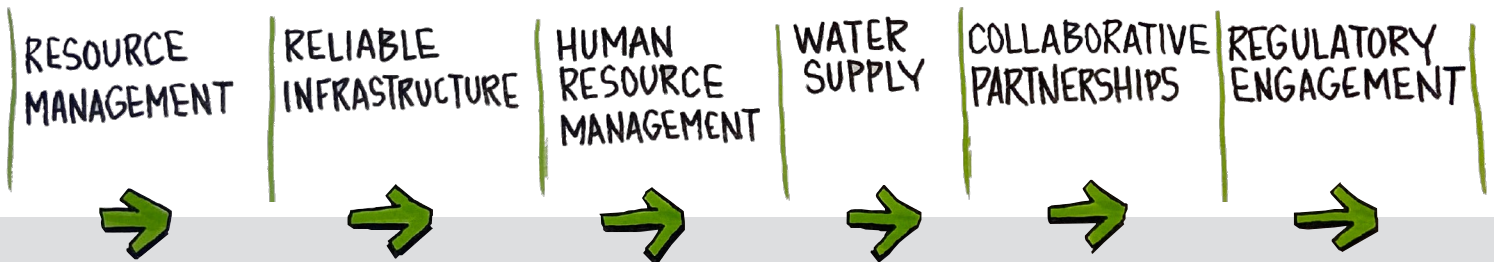
VISION

to be A REGIONAL LEADER and RELIABLE PARTNER *by* IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS for our AGRICULTURAL & URBAN CUSTOMERS, SECURING EXISTING and ADDITIONAL WATER RESOURCES, and ACHIEVING GROUNDWATER BASIN SUSTAINABILITY

MISSION

STOCKTON EAST WATER DISTRICT ENSURES SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER, HIGH-QUALITY DRINKING WATER, and SUPPLEMENTAL SURFACE WATER for AGRICULTURAL USE

OUTCOME AREAS



Strategic Outcomes

Resource Management

Facilitating successful financing and grants for high-value projects through execution of thoughtful policies, long-term plans, and reasonable rates.

Strategies:

- + Review, update, and streamline District policies
- + Conduct long-term financial planning, to include grants, rate setting, and financing strategies
- + Review and optimize diversification of District investments

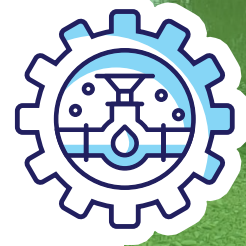


Reliable Infrastructure

Implementing plans to fully address aging infrastructure, promote technology enhancements, and provide reliable water supply for customers.

Strategies:

- + Develop and implement Master Plans for water supply, and water treatment
- + Apply efficient and proven technology enhancements to meet the changing needs of our customers and operations
- + Proactively address infrastructure maintenance and rehabilitation through asset management



Human Resources Management

Attracting, developing, and retaining exceptional employees through professional development, employee recognition programs, and competitive compensation packages.

Strategies:

- + Promote a forward-looking and collaborative organizational culture
- + Identify and address knowledge and training gaps and institute incentive programs to support employee development
- + Develop and implement a holistic onboarding process



Water Supply

Ensuring groundwater sustainability by maximizing the use of surface water with agricultural and urban customers and improving drought resiliency.



Strategies:

- + Develop rates, assessments, and policies that encourage and maximize the use of surface water
- + Comply with SGMA through development and implementation of projects, partnerships, and groundwater recharge opportunities in the Basin
- + Increase water supply resiliency, including perfecting existing water rights applications

Regulatory Engagement

Collaborating with local, regional, state, and federal interest groups to enhance the District's ability to monitor, shape, and ultimately meet regulatory requirements.



Strategies:

- + Leverage industry associations and lobbying efforts to better understand and impact regulatory and legislative changes
- + Engage with regulatory agencies to ensure compliance with existing and upcoming regulations
- + Protect the existing water rights that benefit the District

Collaborative Partnerships

Fostering strong relationships through open and transparent communication and pursuit of shared goals.



Strategies:

- + Develop an external organizational identity and outreach program to build awareness of SEWD and the value provided by the District
- + Build regional consensus for high impact water projects
- + Encourage a stronger relationship with Urban Contractors through regular communication and the pursuit of mutually beneficial goals

Implementation & Next Steps

Each of the strategic outcome areas included in this plan contain a series of strategies and projects that will move the District toward achievement of its long-term priorities. However, it is important to note that for the desired results to be achieved, the strategies must be effectively implemented. Therefore, careful attention and focus on strategy implementation is essential for achieving success.



The District’s Implementation Process Includes:

Leveraging internal subject matter expertise by continuing to use key staff and Board members that are knowledgeable, energized, and committed to the implementation of the strategies to draft implementation plans for each strategy, including:

- + Tasks and activities necessary for implementation
- + Assigned individuals or groups
- + Due dates and timelines for key tasks
- + Resource requirements

Monitoring and sharing implementation progress with organizational leadership and the Board of Directors

Reviewing and updating implementation tasks on at least an annual basis



+ A delegation of District representatives traveled to Washington DC in March 2023 to engage lawmakers around current and future regulatory requirements (left to right: Consultant Barkett, General Manager Hopkins, Board President Atkins, Representative Josh Harder, Director Watkins, and Director Sanguinetti).



Pictured above are the full Stockton East Water District Board of Directors and 38 of the 48 total employees.



Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 5157, Stockton, CA 95205
Physical Address:
6767 East Main Street, Stockton, CA 95215
www.sewd.net

DRAFT



2018 - 2022

STRATEGIC PLAN

ONSLOW WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

"Contributing to the health and safety of our community."

ONWASA has now begun looking ahead to the future through a strategic planning process that enables us to meet our customer's needs now and for years to come.

GREG HINES

*Chairman
ONWASA Board of Directors*

MESSAGE FROM THE **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

The Onslow Water and Sewer Authority (ONWASA) has long served its community by providing exceptional water and sewer services. Continuing to do so, and to be a respected regional utility, requires:

- Board members who have consistently provided guidance to the organization and have made long-range planning a top priority
- A team of dedicated and highly-skilled employees
- Satisfied customers and partners
- Sufficient financial resources
- Extensive, modern, and well-maintained infrastructure
- Efficient operations

As an important component of our efforts to effectively and efficiently

manage the utility, ONWASA has developed a new strategic plan in pursuit of a well-defined and positive future for our organization and community. This document presents and describes that plan.

We would like to express the appreciation of the ONWASA Board of Directors and management for the support and contributions of many people who helped us develop this plan, including:

- Employees who provided input, developed the plan, and will ultimately implement the plan
- External stakeholders who provided valuable input
- Board members who participated in a strategic planning workshop

We believe that ONWASA has created a strategic plan that will build a solid foundation to position the utility as a valued partner and community resource for Onslow County (County). Working as a cohesive team, ONWASA is committed to being a respected regional utility, providing exceptional service to our community.

JEFFREY L. HUDSON

*Chief Executive Officer
Onslow Water and Sewer Authority*



ONWASA Board of Directors

Mr. Gregory Hines, Chairman
Mr. Jerry Bittner, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Paul Conner, Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Royce Bennett
Mr. Jack Bright
Mr. Michael Lazzara
Mr. Daniel Tuman
Ms. Pat Turner

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	01
INTRODUCTION	03
Overview	
Process	
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	05
Community Profile	
Industry Trends and Local Context	
Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR)	
STRATEGIC DIRECTION	17
Overview	
Vision	
Mission	
Values	
Goals	
Measures and Strategies	
Strategic Framework	
COMMUNICATIONS	21
IMPLEMENTATION	22

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The Onslow Water and Sewer Authority (ONWASA) initiated a strategic planning process in October 2017 to create an organizational vision and a framework for guiding the utility into the future. The strategic framework presented in this document will help guide investment, allocate resources, and provide a structure for annual reviews to assure that long-term goals and objectives are achieved.

Those who fail to plan, plan to fail. In order to move ONWASA forward, we must have a plan.

Royce Bennett

Member, ONWASA Board of Directors





PROCESS

ONWASA's strategic planning process was designed to assure:

A shared vision of ONWASA's ultimate goals. Organizations driven by clear purposes and shared values have a greater capacity to succeed than those who are not.

A collective understanding of the available resources, the environment, and the principles upon which strategies will be based.

Acceptance of the direction and urgency of the strategic and operating plans, which will be integrated into the way ONWASA is operated on a day-to-day basis.

To achieve these conditions for success, ONWASA's strategic planning process involved input from a broad group of internal and external stakeholders and consistent communications of ONWASA's vision, mission and overall strategic plan. Major elements of the process included:

Stakeholder Input

Input was obtained from Board members, employees, and external stakeholders through a combination of interviews, a Board Workshop, an online employee survey with 74 responses, and three employee focus groups, with approximately 35 attendees.

Foundation Workshop

A Core Strategic Planning Team (Core Team), consisting of members of ONWASA's senior management, met to consider the stakeholder input and to draft the organization's Vision, Values, Mission, and Goals.

Strategy Workshop

The Core Team brainstormed Strategies and Measures, and then made preliminary decisions concerning the Measures and strategies to be included in the final plan.

Core Team Review

After documentation of the Strategy Workshop results, the Core Team met again to review and revise, as necessary, the elements of ONWASA's strategic plan.



The largest employer in the County is the Department of Defense, with more than **43,000** personnel being assigned to the area's bases each year.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Community Profile

ONWASA is a government entity that provides water and sewer services to the unincorporated areas of Onslow County, which includes areas outside of the City limits of Jacksonville, and all of the towns of Holly Ridge, Swansboro, Richlands, North Topsail Beach, and Surf City, North Carolina. ONWASA currently provides water to approximately 56 percent of Onslow County's population.

The utility's service area is in south eastern North Carolina, and the southeastern border is the Atlantic Ocean. Jacksonville is Onslow County's seat, and has a population of just under 68,000, which is approximately 30% of the County's population. The County's population has increased substantially, adding more than 80,000 people since 1970. The County's median household income is \$46,335, which is less than both the median household income for the State of North Carolina (\$50,584), and the United States (\$59,039). The County's population is somewhat transient, as the County is home to Camp Lejeune, which is the largest US Marine Corps base on the East Coast, the US Marine Corps Air Station New River, and the Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC).

The largest employer in the County is the Department of Defense, with more than 43,000 personnel being assigned to the two bases each year. Other organizations with more than 1000 employees include the Onslow County Board of Education, Marine Corps Community Service, Wal-Mart Associates Inc., the County of Onslow, and the Onslow Memorial Hospital. The area also has significant tourism, with Topsail Island, Hammocks Beach State Park, and numerous other beaches, parks, and recreational activities drawing visitors from all over the country.

ONWASA's
operating
environment
was documented
through:

Analysis of community
demographics and other external
influences (Community Profile)

Considerations of key industry
trends and their potential impact
on the Organization

The Organization's Strengths,
Opportunities, Aspirations, and
Results (SOAR)



INDUSTRY TRENDS & LOCAL CONTEXT

The services provided by ONWASA are central to assuring a sustained vitality of the service area. To achieve continued success, ONWASA must address several national and state-wide trends of particular significance for the organization as it works to update and implement its strategic plan. These include meeting future regulatory requirements, changes in usage patterns, and growing concerns about the impact of global climate change. These, and other challenges, must be considered to adequately plan for the utility's future.



Key trends, expectations for the future, and potential ONWASA responses, many of which are embodied in the strategic plan and/or will be addressed in implementation plans, are presented on the following pages.

TREND #1

POPULATION

The Current Situation:

The service population is increasing, and local developers are active. The service area is seeing both military and non-military growth, and the County's population is young, and tends to be transient.

Expectations for the Future:

Growth and development is expected to continue within the service area.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Expand infrastructure (service lines, water and sewer transfers, new plants, etc.)
- Expand staffing levels
- Focus on continuous outreach and education efforts

TREND #2

THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Current Situation:

ONWASA is highly regarded as a well-run organization. The political environment is complex, and ONWASA has a multi-jurisdictional Board of Directors who serve a mixture of 2- or 4-year terms on their appointing boards or councils.

Expectations for the Future:

The political situation is expected to be stable, but political interests may conflict at times.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Provide resources for Board member on-boarding
- Continue to build a strong brand and reputation within the community

TREND #3

REGULATIONS

The Current Situation:

Like utilities across the nation, ONWASA faces increased regulation and enforcement on all sides, particularly for treatment, which impacts rates, operations, capital budgets, etc.

Expectations for the Future:

ONWASA anticipates that treatment plants will require upgrades, and costs will continue to increase in order to ensure the utility's continued regulatory compliance.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Provide employee training
- Increase revenues to ensure appropriate funding for improvements
- Explore additional raw water sources

TREND #4

WORKFORCE ISSUES

The Current Situation:

To maintain the lowest rates possible, ONWASA has eliminated positions. At the same time, the customer base has continued to expand rapidly. ONWASA is now experiencing staffing pressure due to its inability to find highly qualified applicants for key positions.

Expectations for the Future:

ONWASA has sought to minimize the need for additional staff through the application of technology. However, additional staff in key positions will be required in the next five years. Recruiting and retaining the most highly skilled staff with advanced certifications (where necessary) is essential to the mission of the organization.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Utilize technology, such as AMR, internet services, and interactive voice response outage management software to further enable existing staff and broaden customer satisfaction
- For mission-critical essential positions, expand hiring packages
- Cast a wider net for employment of key positions

A grayscale photograph showing a person's hands and arms in a jacket, working on a large, textured object. The person is using a tool, possibly a chisel or a similar implement, to shape or carve the object. The object has a rough, fibrous texture, suggesting it might be wood or a large pipe. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a fence or structure visible.

ONWASA NEEDS
TO **CONTINUE**
TO **SUPPORT**
AN **EXPANDING**
SERVICE AREA.

A grayscale image of a hand holding a pen, positioned over a document. The background is dark and slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a desk or office environment. The text is overlaid in the lower right quadrant of the image.

**TECHNOLOGY IS
KEY TO MEETING
ENVIRONMENTAL
REGULATIONS,** AND IT
TOUCHES EVERY FACET OF
ONWASA'S BUSINESS.

TREND #5

TECHNOLOGY

The Current Situation:

Technology is key to meeting environmental regulations, and it touches every facet of ONWASA's business. External customers prefer increased technology options, and ONWASA needs to train on and fully utilize its existing technology packages to remain responsive to customer and operational needs.

Expectations for the Future:

Regulation and growth will continue to drive the need for enhanced technology.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Avoid using technology to delay hiring additional staff
- Enhance training processes for new and existing staff
- Expand access options for the customer base

TREND #6

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

The Current Situation:

The community is diverse in terms of home ownership, vacation rentals, etc. Currently customers have minimal education and awareness of the requirements associated with water processes and treatment. Customers expect low rates and consistently reliable water service.

Expectations for the Future:

Customer expectations will continue to increase.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Enhance ONWASA's customer service culture
- Plan, and communicate the plan, to employees and the public
- Train employees to be proactive in explaining situations and communicating effectively
- Use technology to meet multi-generational expectations

TREND #7

UTILITY FINANCIAL
CONSTRAINTS**The Current Situation:**

ONWASA's rates have not increased since FY 2010, despite the utility's continued need to invest in infrastructure needed to provide water and sewer service.

Expectations for the Future:

ONWASA anticipates the need for potential rate increases, as well as the implementation of other initiatives to increase revenues due to the need to maintain and replace aging infrastructure and pay for increased operational costs.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Conduct outreach to key stakeholders around cost, processes, what to expect, and customer expectations
- Investigate options for recurring monthly revenues
- Continue to conduct capital improvements planning

TREND #8

ENERGY / REUSE

The Current Situation:

ONWASA has access to plentiful, but expensive, energy, which has driven the utility to take advantage of energy-related cost savings.

Expectations for the Future:

Energy will likely remain a significant portion of ONWASA's operating budget.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Continue to explore energy efficiency upgrades
- Explore alternative energy sources for operational requirements



TREND #9

INCREASED RISK PROFILE

The Current Situation:

ONWASA is vulnerable to hurricanes, and a potential target for terrorists.

Expectations for the Future:

The current situation is expected to continue or worsen based on cyclical Atlantic hurricane seasons and increased threats of terrorism.

Potential ONWASA Responses:

- Prepare and plan for hurricanes and other major weather events
- Maximize security measures



STRENGTHS. OPPORTUNITIES. ASPIRATIONS. RESULTS.

ONWASA utilized a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis to form the basis for its strategic plan. This technique, known as Appreciative Inquiry, is part of the environmental scan and provided valuable input to the strategic plan development process.



SOAR



STRENGTHS

Provided input to the development of a vision and mission that build upon what the organization does extremely well.



OPPORTUNITIES

Helped the Core Team develop strategies to identify and explore innovative approaches to meeting future needs.



ASPIRATIONS

Focused on the expectations or hopes of internal and external stakeholders.



RESULTS

Supported the determination of the desired future outcomes.



Planning may not be anything more than corrective hindsight plus organized foresight, but it's a good place to start.

Jerry Bittner

Vice-Chairman, ONWASA
Board of Directors

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

VISION

Ultimately, implementation of this plan will enable ONWASA to achieve its desired future state as articulated in its Vision, which is:

“To be the respected regional water utility, providing exceptional service to our community.”

MISSION

The Mission describes the organization's purpose and role within the service area. After carefully considering these factors, the Core Team stated:

“Our team protects the community's health and the environment by providing high-quality water utility services through excellent customer experiences.”

VALUES

Values articulate ONWASA's deeply held beliefs, norms, and qualities, which drive day-to-day activities. ONWASA's Value Statement is.

The Onslow Water and Sewer Authority is guided by our:

- **Integrity** – *doing the right thing*
- **Caring** – *treating others as we would like to be treated*
- **Dedication** – *to our mission, our employees, and our community*
- **Environmental Stewardship** – *protecting and enhancing our environment*
- **Sense of Community** – *working together toward shared goals*

OVERVIEW

This Strategic Plan serves as a blueprint for future decision making. Furthermore, this plan provides a structure by which annual reviews can be accomplished to assure that goals and objectives retain their relevance over time. By laying out a course of action, this plan represents a disciplined process for making the fundamental decisions that will shape ONWASA's future.

The Strategic Plan contains the Organization's Vision, Mission Statement, Values, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies. It addresses ONWASA's current challenges and helps to ensure continued success in operations and the management of resources and assets.

GOALS

Goals represent the most important issues that must be addressed to achieve the desired future. ONWASA's Goals were driven primarily by the factors that are most critical to the organization's future success (critical success factors). Comments relating to each are presented below.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Attracting, developing, and retaining a professional, highly skilled, engaged, and versatile team

A high performing workforce requires individuals who are skilled and dedicated. Accordingly, ONWASA will attract, retain, motivate, manage, and reward exceptional employees who make significant contributions to its success.



ENHANCED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE:

Creating a culture that delivers an enhanced customer experience

The ONWASA team recognizes the importance of communicating with customers and showing genuine interest in solving their problems. This is done with superior service that fulfills needs and provides lasting value.



COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP:

Fostering an environment that encourages open communication and supports partnerships

ONWASA has committed to maintaining effective internal and external partnerships in furtherance of its mission and vision. Ensuring the utility's success requires strong, consistent communication through a variety of mediums.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP:

Generating revenues sufficient to support operations and growth, while maintaining reasonable rates

Operating a utility is a resource-intensive endeavor, which depends on appropriate operating and capital funding. ONWASA is committed to utilizing its financial resources in a strategic and efficient manner.



RELIABLE AND SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE:

Planning, delivering, and maintaining dependable infrastructure necessary to address the changing needs of the service area

ONWASA is proud of its work on existing infrastructure systems and the new infrastructure under construction. A continued focus on developing and maintaining a sustainable infrastructure that will meet customer needs now and in the future, will be critical to success.

Measures and Strategies

Measures define accomplishment for each Goal, and Strategies are key resource allocations that should be made over the next several years. These critical elements of the strategic plan, as well as the Vision, Values, Mission and Goals, are presented on the strategic framework included in the document.

Boundaries

The Strategies included in ONWASA's strategic framework were designed to be innovative and creative with consideration of budgetary, regulatory, legal, and policy boundaries.

STRATEGIC framework

VISION

To be the respected regional water utility, providing exceptional service to our community.

VALUES

The Onslow Water and Sewer Authority is guided by our:

1. Integrity – doing the right thing
2. Caring – treating others as we would like to be treated
3. Dedication – to our mission, our employees, and our community
4. Environmental Stewardship – protecting and enhancing our environment
5. Sense of Community – working together toward shared goals

MISSION

Our team protects the community's health and the environment by providing high-quality water utility services through excellent customer experiences.

GOALS



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Attracting, developing, and retaining a professional, highly skilled, engaged, and versatile team



ENHANCED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Creating a culture that delivers an enhanced customer experience



COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Fostering an environment that encourages open communication and supports partnerships



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Generating revenues sufficient to support operations and growth, while maintaining reasonable rates



RELIABLE AND SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning, delivering, and maintaining dependable infrastructure necessary to address the changing needs of the service area



MEASURES

1. Decrease the average time from job post-to-offer date
2. Develop a baseline and increase employee satisfaction levels, as measured by a regular survey

1. Increase customer satisfaction, as measured by an annual survey
2. Measure and increase one-contact resolution, as measured by a post-call survey

1. Increase the number and use of different platforms to share information internally
2. Increase participation in community partnerships
3. Annually increase social media use and interactions

1. Maintain rates within EPA-recommended affordability standards
2. Maintain or improve bond rating

1. Complete 80% of funded CIP projects on time and within budget
2. Reduce unaccounted for water by 2% annually
3. Reduce average leaks/breaks by 5% annually

STRATEGIES

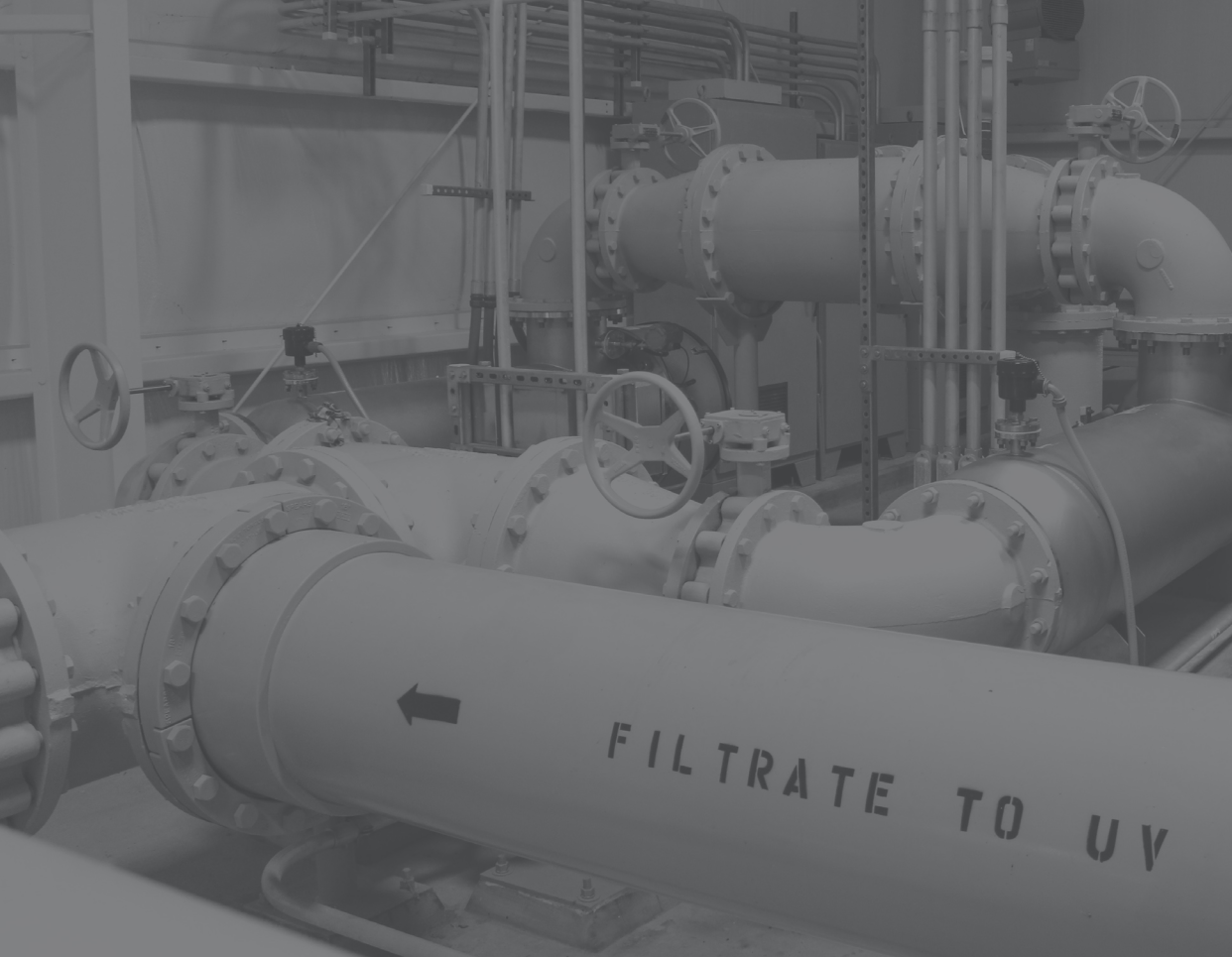
1. Review and enhance the hiring and onboarding processes
2. Develop a formal employee appreciation program to recognize excellent service
3. Formalize career paths and individualized professional development plans
4. Create opportunities for employees to participate in cross-functional teams

1. Develop a customer service training program for every ONWASA employee, and recognize successful interactions
2. Train and empower customer service representatives to strive for one-contact resolution
3. Review, evaluate, and update policies and processes associated with customer service

1. Improve internal communications and create avenues to solicit employee input
2. Increase community involvement, stakeholder engagement, and partnerships

1. Complete and implement recommendations from the 2018 Rate Study
2. Identify and communicate revenue requirements for operating and capital budgets
3. Identify and evaluate opportunities for alternative revenue streams
4. Review key business processes to improve efficiency

1. Develop and implement a 10-year needs assessment, with an associated 5-year capital program
2. Implement a program to systematically increase proactive maintenance activities
3. Define and initiate a comprehensive asset management program
4. Consider opportunities for service expansion
5. Reduce unaccounted for and nonrevenue water loss



COMMUNICATIONS

Through this strategic plan, ONWASA has committed to improving internal and external communications. Effective communication is critical not only for the successful implementation of the strategic plan, but also for ONWASA's overall success. The issue of communications, which surfaced in the stakeholder input process, cuts across the various strategic goals. As indicated on the strategic framework, communications will be enhanced through several efforts, including:

- Developing avenues to solicit employee input
- Creating a culture of communication, both internally and externally
- Expanding partnerships and stakeholder outreach

Enhanced communications will be a major initiative throughout the organization to ensure that all teams and individuals are working towards the ultimate vision and mission.

IMPLEMENTATION

The goals, measures, and strategies contain a series of initiatives and projects that, when implemented, will move ONWASA toward achievement of its desired outcomes. However, it is important to note that for the desired results to be achieved, the strategies must be effectively implemented. Therefore, careful attention and focus on strategy implementation is essential to achieving strategic success. Elements of the implementation process for ONWASA may include:

Creating and Leveraging Teams:

Create teams that are knowledgeable, energized and committed to the implementation of the strategies for different goals. These teams could:

- Draft implementation plans for each strategy that will include:
 - Tasks necessary for implementation
 - Assigned individuals or groups
 - Due dates for key tasks
 - Resources required
- Monitor implementation progress
- Report on implementation progress to senior management

Involving Senior Management:

During the implementation process, senior leadership could be involved in managing:

- Implementation progress
- Resources required (people, money, equipment, etc.)
- Strategies, which after initial implementation efforts, may require updates
- Achievement of objectives

Reporting to the Board of Directors:

Senior leadership is accountable to the Board of Directors for implementation of the approved strategic plan and achievement of the stated goals and objectives. Accordingly, senior management will periodically update the Board on progress, achievements, and issues related to the strategic plan

Strategic planning is a way of thinking that guides an analysis of the present and helps create a vision of the future. ONWASA has developed a strategic plan that will take some time to implement completely, however, it will provide a guide to the organization's long-term strategic success.



REALIZING THE VISION

Our vision is “to be the respected regional water utility, providing exceptional service to our community.” This is attainable. To make that future a reality, we must have a plan in place to guide us in making the right decisions and right investments of our limited time and resources.

We have created this plan with the input of our staff and our external stakeholders to ensure that we meet and exceed their expectations. ONWASA is grateful to all the individuals who took the time to provide input during this strategic planning process, and we look forward to sharing our progress and success as we work to achieve our shared goals.



ONWASA™

“Contributing to the health and safety of our community.”

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