



Plan
for the Future

Integrity
Professionalism

Trust
Loyalty
Respect
Responsibility

2022 Strategic Plan



This Strategic Plan is the core document that will guide the District's efforts to positively adapt to change, and further clarify the future from the perspective of Board and management. The plan establishes a vision and direction for the District, with goals and objectives over the next five to seven years. It identifies areas of critical concern that must be addressed for the District to remain successful and provides management and staff with common goals to achieve our mission.



Mission Statement

The water and wastewater specialists – providing reliable and sustainable services.

Vision of the Future

To be a best-in-class utility for “One Water.”

Organizational Values

Integrity

Honest and ethical policies, communication, and actions without bias.

Loyalty

Dedicated to the Public, the District, and its employees.

Respect

Appreciate differences in background, opinion, and approach, and acknowledge with high regard.

Responsibility

Demonstrate prudent use of all public and environmental resources.

Trust

Our actions and words inspire fairness and support.

Professionalism

Conduct interactions in a courteous and respectful manner and be responsible for personal actions and decisions.

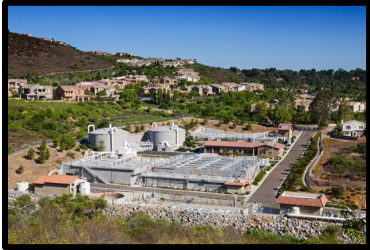
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STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1 – INFRASTRUCTURE INTEGRITY

Focus: Ensure reliable facilities and infrastructure.



Strategy 1.1 – Operations and Maintenance

The life of District assets can be extended by performing preventative and predictive maintenance, repairing, and replacing equipment as needed, to ensure that our customers continue to receive a high level of service that includes a safe and reliable water supply, dependable sewer collection services, and cutting-edge wastewater treatment that meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements.

Strategy 1.2 – Asset Management and Replacement

Infrastructure includes the traditional utility assets (pipelines, pump stations, treatment plants, etc.) as well as supporting facilities, such as District buildings and Information Technology systems. Leveraging the historical maintenance and performance history of our facilities with mapping, condition assessment, and analytical tools will allow the District to manage its infrastructure more efficiently. The development and prioritization of an asset replacement schedule is crucial to minimize the financial burden of prematurely replacing infrastructure that still possess useful life and reduce the frequency of unplanned and costly breaks and repairs.

Strategy 1.3 – Facility Planning

The Water, Wastewater and Recycled Water Master Plan is the fundamental growth-related planning document of the District, which identifies current and future Capital Facility needs and the required funding to meet those needs. The Master Plan will be updated based on need due to land use changes and/or regulatory requirements and will include projections on water, wastewater, recycled water demands, facilities required to meet those demands, as well as long term buildout capital facilities and demands.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2 – ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT/EFFICIENCY

Focus: Increase organizational effectiveness and customer service excellence.



Strategy 2.1 – Technology

Technology is critical to our ability to keep our systems secure and prepare for disasters. Staying current with technology is a never-ending challenge that must be balanced by our needs and wants through a cost benefit analysis. Using reliable, tested products with ongoing support helps to ensure the systems will continue to meet our needs in the future.

Strategy 2.2 – Continuous Improvement

Efficiency and improvement require evaluation, willingness to review and consider change and the ability to manage our work processes more effectively. By reviewing our processes on a regular basis to determine what works well or needs to change, we can revisit the capabilities of technology to get the most benefit and increase efficiency. Rather than “reinvent the wheel,” collaboration with other agencies can result in organizational improvements in a cost effective and more efficient manner. We will also refer to industry standards and best practices established by professional associations.

Strategy 2.3 – Performance Measurement

To measure our overall performance, data is processed and interpreted to provide meaningful information, or metrics. Metrics focus on key areas, track performance, and identify trends. When possible, metrics compare to industry standards and best practices using benchmarks. Regular reports are provided to management and the Board. Employee performance evaluations contain Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based (S.M.A.R.T.) goals.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3 - WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

Focus: Attract and retain a well-trained, diverse, and inclusive workforce.



Strategy 3.1 – Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment an employee has to an organization and is closely linked to employee satisfaction, morale, and retention. Employees are more engaged when there is effective two-way communication with management, teamwork, and personal responsibility. Communication is vital in keeping employees informed and maintaining morale. Culture is instrumental and people come first as we work together to achieve common goals in support of the mission.

Strategy 3.2 – Employee Recruitment and Retention

The District will need to find new ways to entice applicants and be the employer of choice in the water and wastewater industry. Partnerships with local schools and military bases may help with internships and the hiring of veterans. Internal career paths and opportunities for advancement are equally important for employee retention. Continuing to provide competitive salaries and enhance benefits including supporting a better work/life balance such as by offering flexible schedules and opportunities for telecommuting is critical for recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees. Staffing plans may be developed to forecast future needs of departments.

Strategy 3.3 – Employee Training and Development

Keeping staff trained and up to date is critical to maintain a skilled and efficient workforce. Employee development includes responsibility, realistic goals, timely feedback, growth opportunities, and recognition. Supervisors play a vital role in employee development and also need to receive ongoing training for soft skills and leadership. A variety of methods can be used in support of knowledge management to pass on knowledge of the District and utilize experience obtained in the water and wastewater treatment industry.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 4 - FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Focus: Ensure fiscal health and fair utility rates.



Strategy 4.1 – Fiscal Management

Now, more than ever, it is critical to be aware of economic decisions and how they impact rate payers. The District must weather periods of expansion and growth as well as economic recession through prudent and financially sustainable practice and policy. An emphasis on fiscal responsibility must be promoted throughout the District. Fiscal management affects nearly every aspect of the District's operations and helps to minimize future rate increases.

Strategy 4.2 – Operating and Capital Facility Reserve Funding

Reserve funds ensure continuing operations, fund unanticipated, unforeseeable, and planned repair or replacement of water and wastewater system facilities, equipment and infrastructure and avoid the cost of debt issuance and ongoing interest expense. Capital facility fees pay for capital improvements exclusively to accommodate future demands and support asset planning by ensuring "growth pays for growth." Replacement funding must be developed in a fair and equitable manner to ensure appropriate funding sources and levels.

Strategy 4.3 – Customer Rates and Charges

Consider water and sewer rates that support the operation and maintenance of the District and adequately fund replacement and upgrades required to ensure reliable service and sustainability. Maintain reasonable, affordable rates and control costs through sound financial planning. Consider alternative revenue sources, grant funding, and other ways to enhance revenues and recover costs that would otherwise increase the revenue requirement for setting rates.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 5 – PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

Focus: Actively engage our customer base to promote Vallecitos Water District.



Strategy 5.1 – Customer Outreach

To ensure contact with our customer base the District must use all possible ways of outreach including newsletters, tours, social media, local events, website, and the speaker's bureau. Outreach efforts increase awareness of the value we provide and an understanding of how we provide it.

Strategy 5.2 – School Outreach

Educating children on water, wastewater and our industry is critical because they are the future. To reinforce the need to conserve water, it is important to reach younger water users at an early age and create a life-long behavior. The greatest source of this audience is the school system and the creation of a cooperative program with the local school districts incorporating established standards adopted by the California State Board of Education.

Strategy 5.3 - Water Use Efficiency

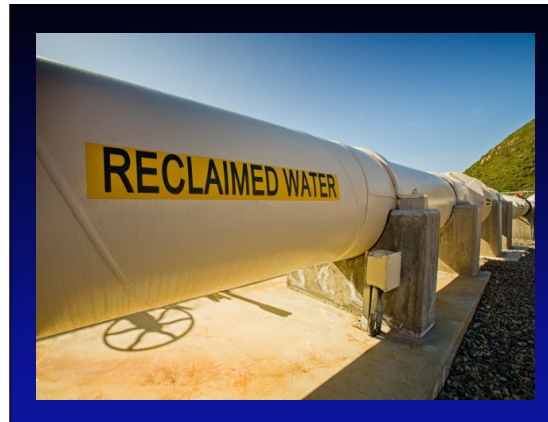
Changing public opinion towards outdoor water use (which accounts for 50 to 80% of residential consumption) will save significant volumes of water. Reducing water use is mandated but is also the right thing to do as drought conditions continue and will have a detrimental effect on future generations.

Strategy 5.4 - Public/Private Partnerships

Partnerships between local governmental agencies and private sector organizations can provide a cost effective, business friendly and sustainable resource. When cost-effective and feasible, identify and evaluate mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration with private or public agencies. These partnerships may also help with filling jobs in water and wastewater industry.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 6 – ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Focus: Contribute to resource sustainability and environmental stewardship.



Strategy 6.1 – Water Resources

Water availability and climate change are some of the largest threats to the District and its rate payers. The District will need to evaluate water supply options taking into consideration reliability, quantity, quality and price. Restrictions and cost of traditional water supply sources as well as regulatory changes have made water reuse a viable alternative.

Strategy 6.2 – Water Supply Management

The Urban Water Management Plan includes consideration of local and statewide issues as well as programs and goals of the San Diego County Water Authority and any legislation adopted by the State. Drought, climate change and other water shortage issues highlight the need to manage water loss from a variety of sources in water distribution systems. The District can increase water supplies and recover revenue by identifying the scale and cost of these losses. The Water Loss Audit Reporting Program provides guidance to identify and eliminate water loss.

Strategy 6.3 – Renewable Resources

District operations have the potential to consume considerable quantities of non-renewable resources. Improving the operating efficiency of District assets and expanding the use of photovoltaic energy and battery storage systems will reduce the reliance on traditional resources. The use and lifecycle management of other materials, such as single use plastics, have damaging impacts on the environment. Exploring alternative materials and evaluating District purchasing policies can reduce the impacts of District operations.

Strategy 6.4 – Natural Environment Protection

District operations have the potential to impact the surrounding natural environment. Enhanced District operations will result in better protection of the natural environment.

Coordination with surrounding land use agencies can promote better watershed management and result in new building standards that are more environmentally friendly.