

Example Strategic Initiatives for the District

1. Infrastructure Reliability & Asset Management

Goal: Keep water and sewer systems safe, reliable, and compliant.

What this means:

- Prioritize replacement of the highest-risk aging infrastructure
- Reduce deferred maintenance and emergency repairs
- Use phased planning aligned with grants and low-cost funding opportunities
- Address anticipated environmental risks and increasing regulatory requirements
- Plan infrastructure improvements consistent with future consolidation opportunities.

Why it matters:

- Protects public health and the environment
- Reduces system failures and service interruptions
- Improves compliance and funding readiness

Outcome(s):

- 1. Develop a 2-5-10-20-year capital infrastructure improvement plan for the water distribution system, the sewer collection/treatment system and the recycled water system.**
- 2. Decide the desired outcome of partnering with Graton and Occidental as well as the long-term regionalization possibilities and incorporate the infrastructure needs for these into the wastewater treatment infrastructure capital improvement plans.**
- 3. Resolve timelines and requirements for complying with the increasing nutrient and ammonia regulatory requirements and incorporate necessary treatment plant improvements into the capital improvement plans.**
- 4. Conduct and document all required maintenance on District assets.**

2. Financial Sustainability & Rate Stability

Goal: Strengthen long-term finances while protecting affordability.

What this means:

- Revise and/or Adopt clear reserve and financial policies
- Plan multi-year, predictable rate adjustments based on CIP needs/operating costs

- Clearly link rates to safety, reliability, and compliance
- Aggressively pursue grant opportunities

Why it matters:

- Avoids rate shock and financial instability
- Builds public understanding and trust
- Supports long-term system reliability

Outcome(s):

- 1. Conduct a comprehensive cost of service study and develop a 5-year rate structure that establishes defensible rates and collect the minimum amount of revenue required to meet operating and capital improvement obligations and maintain required reserves.**
- 2. Review and update District financial policies.**
- 3. Obtain all available grant funding for infrastructure improvements.**
- 4. Proactively manage relationships with outside funding agencies.**

3. Healthy Organization & Workforce

Goal: Maintain a skilled, motivated, and resilient organization.

What this means:

- Plan for retirements and prepare for turnover
- Cross-train and document key processes (SOPs)
- Invest in training and employee development
- Support morale through clear roles, balanced workloads, and recognition
- Promote a culture of trust, teamwork, accountability, and safety

Why it matters:

- Reduces operational and compliance risk
- Improves retention and service quality
- Protects institutional knowledge

4. Regional Partnerships & Shared Services

Goal: Stretch limited resources while maintaining local control.

What this means:

- Share specialized services where feasible
- Coordinate with neighboring agencies and the County

- Collaborate on regional projects

Why it matters:

- Lowers costs and staffing strain
- Expands access to expertise
- Improves emergency and operational resilience

5. Regulatory Readiness & Risk Management

Goal: Stay ahead of regulations and reduce compliance risk.

What this means:

- Monitor regulatory changes early
- Align capital projects with compliance needs
- Strengthen documentation and reporting
- Maintain strong relationships with regulators

Why it matters:

- Avoids enforcement actions and penalties
- Improves predictability in planning and budgeting
- Protects public trust

6. Water Supply Resilience & Resource Optimization

Goal: Improve long-term water reliability under climate change.

What this means:

- Explore recycled water and reuse options
- Integrate water and wastewater planning
- Support long-term conservation strategies

Why it matters:

- Reduces vulnerability to drought and wildfire
- Improves supply stability
- Supports environmental stewardship

7. Community Engagement & Trust

Goal: Build understanding and support for long-term decisions.

What this means:

- Communicate clearly about infrastructure needs and costs
- Engage the community early on major decisions
- Use simple, transparent messaging

Why it matters:

- Reduces resistance to rate changes

- Improves transparency
- Strengthens long-term trust

8. Board Effectiveness & Good Governance

Goal: Provide strong, consistent, and strategic leadership.

What this means:

- Clearly understand Board and staff roles
- Focus on long-term planning, finance, and risk
- Use clear policies and ethical decision-making
- Support Board education and self-reflection

Why it matters:

- Leads to better decisions
- Reduces confusion and organizational risk
- Builds staff confidence and public accountability