

# Mission Springs Water District 2024 Strategic Plan

*Adopted March 18, 2024*



# Executive Summary

Mission Springs Water District's 2024 Strategic Plan outlines a focused roadmap for efficient water management and community service. Building on a 70-year legacy, the plan aligns with MSWD's mission to provide, protect, and preserve water resources.

## Key Elements:

- Historical Evolution: From a one-square-mile entity in 1953 to 135 square miles today, MSWD has expanded infrastructure and services to over 44,000 residents.
- Mission and Vision: MSWD's mission is clear - to provide, protect, and preserve water. The vision emphasizes trust-building, employee empowerment, customer-focused service, environmental stewardship, and public health.
- Values: Accountability, leadership, professionalism, and service form the foundation of MSWD, guiding decisions and fostering a culture of excellence.

·Strategic Focus: The 2024 plan is a dynamic action-oriented document, prioritizing efficient leadership, management, and operational excellence. It serves as the pinnacle planning guide for the organization.

·Commitment to Excellence: The Board of Directors and staff are committed to exceeding customer expectations, ensuring MSWD remains dedicated to excellence and envisions a sustainable future for water resources.

In essence, the MSWD Strategic Plan is a forward-looking blueprint that underscores the district's commitment to responsible water management and community service, guided by a clear mission, vision, and set of values.



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# The Strategic Plan

This document represents the strategic plan of the District, incorporating valuable insights from the Board of Directors, dedicated staff, and the community we are committed to serving. The overall process of the development of our strategic plan included four workshops with distinct purposes as described in the figure above.

Our strategic plan serves as the overarching guide, ensuring that every action, activity, and decision aligns with our vision and upholds our mission. This framework is designed to enhance the efficiency of leadership, management, and overall District operations.

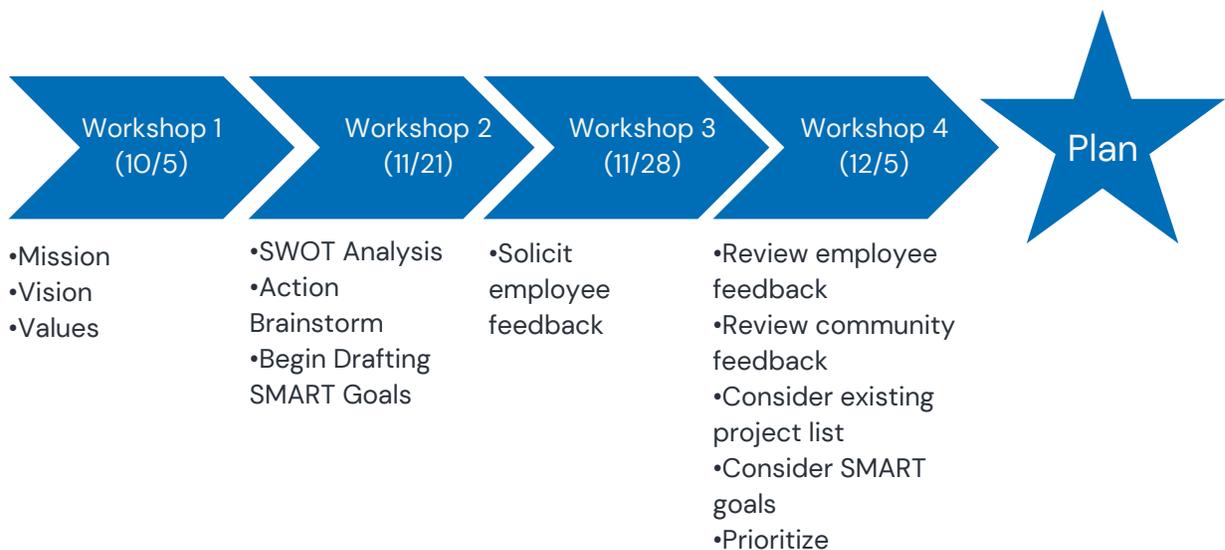
A strategic plan stands as the pinnacle planning document for our organization. It establishes the foundation upon which all other organizational, operational, financial, and resource planning efforts are built, emphasizing its paramount significance.

## Historical Perspective and Future Outlook

In 1953, the Desert County Water District, endorsed by a resounding vote of 246 to 9, laid the groundwork for what would eventually become the Mission Springs Water District. Governed by Subsection 30000 et seq. of the California Water Code, MSWD is overseen by a five-member, publicly elected Board of Directors.

Starting with 100,000 feet of pipelines, five water wells, and two reservoirs, MSWD has evolved significantly. The District now boasts over 1.25 million feet of pipelines, 13 water wells, 12 booster stations, and 24 reservoirs.

The District serves Desert Hot Springs, North Palm Springs and several unincorporated areas of Riverside County.



## Historical (continued)

As a testament to our commitment over the past 70 years, MSWD has diligently managed groundwater through conservation, protection projects, and general stewardship. Our 13,880 water accounts rely solely on groundwater, a responsibility we approach with dedication and care.

Complementing our water services, MSWD currently manages 9,719 sewer connections. Wastewater treatment is conducted at the Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Desert Crest Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the almost complete Nancy Wright Regional Water Reclamation Facility. In total, the District treats approximately 2 million gallons of wastewater per day before returning the treated water to the aquifer.

Our strategic plan for 2024 builds upon the achievements of the 2017 plan, considering the rich history, current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It is not merely a document but a dynamic action plan that propels MSWD forward, ensuring our continued success in providing, protecting, and preserving our most vital resource —Water!



## MSWD Mission

Our Mission at MSWD encapsulates the core function and intrinsic value that defines our existence. It is a simple yet robust statement, articulating our fundamental purpose and the reasons that drive our daily endeavors.

**We provide, protect, and preserve our most precious resource . . . Water!**

## MSWD Vision

Our Vision at MSWD serves as a compass, charting our course toward a future state that reflects our aspirations and commitment to excellence. It encapsulates not just what we aim to become but envisions the success we strive for and the positive transformations we aim to bring to all those we serve.

## Vision (*Continued*)

·**Trust:** Our vision at Mission Springs Water District is to build a trusting community through open communication, accountability, collaboration, and mutual respect among the Board of Directors, staff, and our customers.

·**Employees:** Our vision for Mission Springs Water District employees is to cultivate a workplace where each person is empowered as a steward of our community's water, fostering a culture of excellence, innovation, and service in alignment with our shared mission.

·**Customers:** Our vision for Mission Springs Water District is to deliver reliable, sustainable, and community-focused service to our customers, ensuring you can trust us to meet your water needs while contributing to a healthier, vibrant community.

·**Environment:** Our vision for the natural environment in Mission Springs Water District is harmonious coexistence through responsible management, aiming to be a model for environmental stewardship and sustainable practices, ensuring the health and vitality of our local ecosystems.

·**Public Health:** Our vision for Mission Springs Water District is to serve as a cornerstone of community well-being by providing reliable and safe water services that protect and support a healthy and thriving community.

## MSWD Values

Our Values at MSWD stand as the bedrock of our organization, shaping how we work and defining who we are. These guiding principles not only clarify our identity but also serve as a compass for our purpose, culture, and decision-making processes.

·**Accountability:** We are accountable for our actions, committed to transparency, integrity, and rectifying mistakes, ensuring the District's operations are conducted with honesty and responsibility.

·**Leadership:** Leadership is a core value for us, representing a commitment to setting a positive example, inspiring others, and fostering innovation to address water management challenges and drive progress in our community.

·**Professionalism:** We maintain the highest standards of competence, ethics, and integrity in our actions, delivering water services with accountability and respect for the community, ensuring professionalism and expertise in every operation.

·**Service:** We ensure access to clean, reliable water and cultivate a positive, supportive, and respectful environment for our staff, recognizing that community well-being and employee satisfaction are integral to achieving our mission.



# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

MSWD's Board and staff conducted a SWOT analysis, assessing internal strengths and weaknesses, along with external opportunities and threats. This visual breakdown below guides our understanding: strengths (internal positives), weaknesses (internal areas for improvement), opportunities (external positives), and threats (external challenges).

|          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
|          | Positive | Negative |
| Internal | S        | W        |
| External | O        | T        |

The details of the SWOT analysis are found in Appendix A.

## Actions

Following the SWOT analysis, the Strategic Plan Team separated into groups to brainstorm action steps that could be taken. Four groups worked on developing lists of ideas, then each presented their ideas to the full team.

These actions became the basis for SMART goals described in this document.

# Employee Feedback

MSWD hosted an "all hands" meeting where all employees were invited to learn more about the Strategic Plan and provide feedback on the direction it was going. Strategic Plan Team members presented the work and asked for feedback. Several changes to the vision and values statement were made as a result.

Employees shared that they generally agreed with the results of the SWOT analysis and emphasized the need to focus on internal communications, suggested that flood control and stormwater capture could be opportunities, and highlighted the State of California's new recycled water and Chromium 6 regulations as potential threats.



## Employee (Continued)

Employees weighed in on potential actions as follows:

- Recycled water should be given a high priority.
- Processes and procedures should be a priority and can be combined with cross training.
- An intranet could be used for several things on the list and address several weakness/threats.
- Regarding the new software for accounting, the focus has been an “all in one” software but employees would be accepting of a new program if they solve 2/3 of the District’s needs.

Employees also provided additional actions as follows:

- Youth development programs such as education in schools, vocational/college certificate programs, or internships.
- Holding vendors to the same standards as staff, as they are extensions of staff.
- Expanding rebate and conservation programs.
- Explore opportunities for water recovery/water banking: saving rainwater.
- Enhancement of the District’s “right fit” interviews to ensure quality candidates are being hired.



## Themes

Based on the SWOT analysis, the actions, and employee feedback, staff, and the MSWD Board identified key themes that are essential for our sustainable growth and effective service delivery. The Board also considered current, ongoing projects identified in the 2017 Strategic Plan.

Through this discussion several themes emerged. These themes strategically align with our strengths with opportunities, address weaknesses, and mitigate threats. Serving as a compass for decision-making and resource allocation, they guide our operational enhancements, allowing us to fulfill our mission.

This prioritization ensures a focused and targeted approach with optimal impact. As SMART goals were developed, they were categorized into themes.

Following are our themes:

- **CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS**
- **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**
- **WATER SUPPLY**
- **SYSTEM RELIABILITY**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**
- **TECHNOLOGY & AND PROCESSES**
- **WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE**

# Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) Goals

SMART goals represent the tangible outcomes and achievements we aspire to accomplish. Serving as beacons of direction and purpose, these goals provide clarity for our activities, shaping a path towards success.

Our SMART goals directly stem from the insights of our SWOT analysis. While a SWOT paints a picture of "what" needs attention within a timeframe, SMART goals become the actionable "how" to address the identified areas of focus.

Each SMART goal is accompanied by specific actions and activities, forming a detailed plan of action. Referred to as key performance measures, these components outline the intricate steps required to achieve the overarching SMART goal.

The beauty of SMART goals lies in their precision. They not only articulate the desired outcome but also outline the specific actions necessary for successful implementation. This approach ensures that our efforts are targeted, measurable, and aligned with our strategic objectives.

In essence, each SMART goal, with its associated initiatives, is a blueprint for success. It guides our teams in translating strategic priorities into actionable steps, driving purposeful action towards the realization of MSWD's mission and vision.

Our commitment to SMART goals reflects our dedication to strategic planning, effective implementation, and continuous improvement for the benefit of the communities we proudly serve.

# Strategic Plan Implementation

Effectively using, updating, and tracking the implementation of a strategic plan is crucial for its success. Now that SMART goals have been established and a blueprint has been created, the following steps describe implementation:

## 1. Create an Implementation Team at Staff Level:

Each SMART goal has a dedicated team responsible for overseeing the implementation of the SMART goal and updating the plan as necessary. As staff changes occur, it will be critical to ensure all roles remain filled for each goal.

The implementation team should conduct regular meetings to discuss achievements, challenges, and adjustments and use these meetings to reinforce commitment and address issues promptly.

## 2. Communicate the Plan:

The Board of Directors, General Manager, and staff are responsible for clearly communicating the strategic plan to all employees, impacted agencies/organizations, and other impacted parties. Some of this can occur through informational email but other aspects will require meetings or other events to solicit input or feedback. Each Implementation Team can make those determinations as needed.

The Board of Directors and staff understand the importance, how it will drive decision-making, and how periodic review and adjustment is necessary to address evolving strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It will be important to review this information with new, incoming staff and leadership.

Communicate how each Board member and every employee has a role in the success of the plan and thus MSWD.

# Implementation (Continued)

## **3. Regularly Review and Update the Plan and SMART Goals:**

Each SMART goal has actionable steps associated with its implementation. During MSWD's management meetings, implementation team leaders or representatives should report on the progress made toward achieving those steps. At those times, staff can update the goals and their actions as needed to adapt to changing circumstances.

When a SMART goal is completed, the implementation team can develop the next SMART goal required to meet the priorities identified in this plan.

Each quarter, MSWD leadership will schedule a Board of Directors review session to report progress and recommendations for updates/changes.

## **4. Celebrate Milestones with Staff and Board Members:**

Acknowledge and celebrate achievements, no matter how small as recognition boosts morale and motivates the team.

## **5. Seek Feedback:**

Encourage open feedback from team members and stakeholders to refine goals, strategies, actions and improve implementation.

## **6. Document and Share Learnings:**

Document lessons learned during the implementation process. Share insights to enhance future planning and implementation efforts.

## **7. Continuous Improvement by All:**

Embrace a culture of continuous improvement. Regularly assess the SWOT, strategies, and goals and adjust as needed.

## **8. Regularly Report Progress:**

Provide regular updates to stakeholders through the intranet, website, social media, YouTube, and other tools available to MSWD. Transparent reporting builds trust and keeps everyone informed.

Provide information as goals are completed and next steps are developed.

## **9. Incorporate the Strategic Plan Elements in other work:**

The annual budget should align with the themes in this Strategic Plan. Capital Improvements Plan priorities should include consideration of the Strategic Plan.

By adhering to these steps, MSWD ensures a structured and effective approach to the implementation, updating, and tracking of progress in our strategic plans. This iterative process not only promotes adaptability but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement, laying the foundation for our long-term success.

At MSWD, we are committed to the dynamic evolution of our strategic initiatives, aligning with our mission to provide, protect, and preserve our most vital resource — water — for the communities we proudly serve.

In order to support continued progress to the Mission, Vision, and Values described in this plan, the Strategic Goals in the next section should be considered starting points. As each goal is completed, staff on the implementation team should develop a next step goal using the tools provided.

The next step goal should be a SMART goal that moves the District forward. As goals are achieved, the success and lessons learned should be documented and discussed in the development of the next goal and should be shared during the progress reports.

# SMART Goals

*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely*

1

## **Customer Communications**

Enhance customer trust, satisfaction, and understanding of water and wastewater services.

2

## **Water Supply**

Comprehensively evaluate and present viable options for implementing a diversified water supply.

3

## **Financial Management**

Ensure long-term financial stability and resilience by implementing sound financial management practices, optimizing revenue streams, and minimizing financial risks.

4

## **System Reliability**

Ensure each component of the water and wastewater systems contributes to the long-term health and reliability of overall operations.

5

## **Environmental Sustainability**

Increase district-wide efficiency by adding new renewable energy resources, optimizing processes, implementing green building practices, and reducing overall water consumption

6

## **Improved Technology & Processes**

Ensure each component of the water and wastewater systems contributes to the long-term health, reliability and addresses workflow inefficiencies by implementing technology solutions and process improvements.

7

## **Workforce Excellence**

Investment in staff and management to cultivate a high-performing and knowledgeable workforce.

# Customer Communications



# SMART GOAL #1: CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS

## Enhance customer trust, satisfaction, and understanding of water and wastewater services.

A strategic effort to enhance outreach and engagement directly correlates to the District's vision statements, which are focused on trust. Because MSWD has a positive and progressive story to tell the public, this enhanced effort will better inform the customers while creating greater engagement throughout the community.

**1.1 Develop and initiate an annual plan to increase customer outreach and engagement through various communication channels, technologies, and community events. The goal is to enhance customer trust, satisfaction, and understanding of water services with ongoing refinement of the communications plan and its goals.**

### *Key Success Measures*

1. By the end of the second quarter 2024, identify and design an annual plan outlining deliberate strategies to increase customer outreach and engagement.
2. Leverage a mix of communication channels, technologies, and community events to convey information and engage with the community effectively.
3. Cultivate a vital customer service focus through communicating and engaging with the community on matters important to our region.
4. Survey customer groups involved in water-related events (e.g., construction activities, service interruptions, water quality changes, emergencies, and other vital issues) to hear about the customer experience and determine if MSWD can improve how the event is handled.
5. Refine the communications plan annually based on feedback, evolving customer needs, and emerging communication trends.
6. Incorporate District initiatives, including Chromium-6, conservation and fleet electrification, and other mandated projects so that customers understand District operations and mandates better.
7. Communicate the goals of the strategic plan to both internal and external customers.
8. Improve recognition and familiarity of MSWD and the services we provide. Differentiate the District from its State Water Contractor and City, and clearly explain the nexus between the agencies. Use regular customer polling to document progress made in this area.

**1.2 When customers better understand what the District does and how it operates, they will recognize MSWD's work to protect and provide water services. Enhancing customer education will increase trust in the District's services.**

### *Key Success Measures*

1. Continue providing Water 101 presentations for schools, service organizations, and elected officials.
2. Hold monthly Water Talks to engage and educate the public on water issues facing our valley and state water systems. Include information on District infrastructure, water quality, financials, and/or future water issues.

# SMART GOAL #1: CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS (Continued)

3. As the Long Range Financial Master Plan is completed, ensure customers' understanding of water costs and impacts on rates.
4. Establish a communication plan that empowers our customer service workers to be brand ambassadors and build relationships with the public.
5. Expand tour and lecture opportunities and work with staff to create a speaker's bureau of knowledgeable presenters.
6. Increase school opportunities and expand the Groundwater Guardian activities within the schools.
7. Partner with the DHS High School Real Academy to increase school opportunities for students to learn more about the District.

**1.3 Deliberate customer outreach also has a ripple effect of educating employees about the District. Employees can serve as ambassadors for the District, helping create and strengthen customer relationships.**

### *Key Success Measures*

1. Create an internal Intranet as a hub for employee communications.
2. Resume employee tours and onboarding programs so new employees can learn about our operations better.
3. Promote water outreach opportunities to employees, like the CV Water Counts Academy.
4. Enhance and strengthen the organizational culture by promoting the District's Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision, and Values. Work with Human Resources to add these to the employee evaluation process.

**1.4 Cultivate positive community relations and partnerships with industry, media, and legislative contacts.**

### *Key Success Measures*

1. Create a culture of transparency and provide comprehensive information on the MSWD website.
2. Cultivate supportive and positive relationships with federal, state, and local agencies that may impact District operations.
3. Cultivate positive relationships with key industry professionals to stay informed and gather feedback.
4. Pursue grants and projects that would benefit our customers.
5. Develop and enhance media relationships and write and distribute press releases promptly to communicate topics important to the community. Share these stories on social media and to industry publications for greater pickup.
6. Identify and influence legislation that aligns with the District's Legislative Platform and continue to foster positive relationships with city, county, state, and federal legislators.
7. Participate in ACWA, CASA, CSDA, and other industry committees to help shape industry trends and bring back best practices to the organization.
8. Apply for and receive individual and organizational certifications for leadership, transparency, and excellence and publish these accomplishments as an example of MSWD's leadership within the water/wastewater industries.

# Water Supply



## SMART GOAL #2: WATER SUPPLY

### Comprehensively evaluate and present viable options for implementing a diversified water supply.

Water supply is of the utmost importance to the District. Several types of concerns about water supply were identified throughout the strategic planning process; ensuring and securing long-term water supply is a critical priority for the District. This goal will investigate options for creating recycled water and stormwater capture programs to ensure sustainable and reliable water provision for its customers.

#### 2.1 Ensure excellence in regulatory compliance.

##### *Key Success Measures*

1. Actively monitor new regulations and engage in the rulemaking process.
2. Deliver services in accordance with standards set by regulatory agencies.
3. Chromium-6 MCL
  - Share best practices and collaborate with other water districts in the Coachella Valley through our consultant to develop a cost-effective approach to managing Chromium-6 levels within our water supply.
  - Increase transparency, create an education and outreach plan to share the District's approach with the community, and increase overall awareness of water quality and supply issues facing the District.
  - Ensure the District's Chromium-6 plan is incorporated in the Long Range Financial Plan and that any capital projects are incorporated into the Five-Year CIP Program.
4. Lead & Copper Rule
  - Develop a lead service line inventory and make it publicly available.
  - Develop a lead service line replacement plan.
  - Sample schools and childcare facilities for lead and copper.
  - Strengthen treatment to comply with the new 10 microgram/liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ) trigger level.
  - Develop a communications plan to educate the public about the Lead and Copper Rule Revision's requirements and the steps MSWD takes to meet them.
5. Conservation as a Way of Life
  - Continue to work with regulators to address the feasibility of state-set conservation goals.
  - Continue to review regulations and apply for variances based on agriculture, evaporative coolers, and seasonal populations while evaluating other areas that may reduce conservation targets.
  - Solicit grant support to help pay for an MSWD weather station to obtain better precipitation and evaporation rates in our service area.
  - Enhance customer rebate programs to include water-saving appliances like dishwashers, clothes washers, and high-efficiency toilets.
  - Budget for and incorporate a Conservation as a Way of Life engagement campaign into the annual customer communications plan.
  - Solicit grant funding to develop an Evaporative Cooler Maintenance and Replacement Program.
  - Review the turf rebate program and target outreach efforts to customers with turf.
  - As part of the new Critical Services Center, construct a new demonstration garden to encourage the use of native drought-resilient plants.

## SMART GOAL #2: WATER SUPPLY (Continued)

**2.2 Support / Advocate regional development of local water supply and reduce reliance on imported supply.**

### *Key Performance Measures*

1. Explore options and grant funding to create a financially feasible recycled water program (looking at potable and non-potable options) at the Horton and Wright facilities.
2. Work with the City and other water districts to encourage the use of native drought-resilient plants; work with the City to add to developer requirements.
3. Evaluate options for stormwater capture and reuse.
4. Participate in negotiations for the final determination of the Ground Sustainability Agency for basins within the District's service area, which include the San Gorgonio Pass Sub-Basin, the Mission Creek Sub-Basin, the Indio Sub-Basin, and the Desert Hot Springs Sub-Basin.
5. Work with the Salt Nutrient Management Plan stakeholders to continue monitoring Total Dissolved Solids in the Coachella Valley and advocate for project funding to protect our aquifer.
6. Continue to explore opportunities with the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation to access groundwater.
7. Review and explore options with our State Water Project allocation, preparing for contract expiration and the possibility of reduced Colorado River supplies.
8. As part of the Water Master Plan, include projects that connect the MSWD IDE areas to the MSWD "main" system.



# Financial Management

## SMART GOAL #3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### Ensure long-term financial stability and resilience by implementing sound financial management practices, optimizing revenue streams, and minimizing risks.

Enhancing Mission Springs Water District's financial sustainability and resilience will result in a more stable, flexible, and forward-looking organization. It strengthens the District's ability to navigate challenges, fulfill its mission, and provide reliable water services to the community.

#### 3.1 Conduct Long Range Financial Planning to ensure adequate and reliable revenue streams.

##### *Key Success Measures*

1. Update of the Long Range Financial Master Plan
  - Review and maintain a robust reserve fund to mitigate the impact of unforeseen financial challenges or emergencies. Ensure the District has a clear policy for allocating and replenishing the reserve fund based on financial risk assessments.
  - Evaluate existing debt structures and explore opportunities to refinance or restructure debt for better terms. Implement a disciplined approach to debt management, ensuring that new debt is acquired strategically and aligned with long-term financial goals.
  - Develop a prioritized infrastructure investment plan that aligns with the District's long-term goals and regulatory requirements. Explore financing options for major infrastructure projects, considering short-term and long-term financial implications.
  - Assess financial risks, including market fluctuations, regulatory changes, and environmental factors. Develop contingency plans and risk mitigation strategies to safeguard financial stability in the face of unforeseen challenges.
  
2. Update Cost of Service Study – Water & Sewer
  - Conduct a comprehensive review of current water/sewer rates and fees to ensure they align with operational costs and market trends.
  - Implement efficiency measures, such as adopting technology solutions and streamlined processes, to reduce operational expenses.
  - Adopt a flexible rate structure that allows the District to react to external factors and internal demands.
  - Considers regulatory compliance needs, conservation requirements, and drought restrictions and ensures the model can perform what-if scenarios.
  - Ensure the rate structure is sound and defensible and that customer groups are charged appropriately.
  - Increase revenue stability by recovering more fixed costs through fixed charges while maintaining customer group fairness.

## SMART GOAL #3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (Continued)

### 3. Update of Water and Wastewater Master Plans

- Conduct a financial and operational analysis of the impact of future residential and commercial development based on the Cities of Desert Hot Springs' and Palm Springs' General Plan.
- Evaluate options for relocation of existing water infrastructure within inaccessible areas of the District for ease of maintenance.
- Pipeline replacement project for aging pipes within the water distribution system. Incorporate the project in the Master Plan updates.

### **3.2 Control costs and manage debt responsibly.**

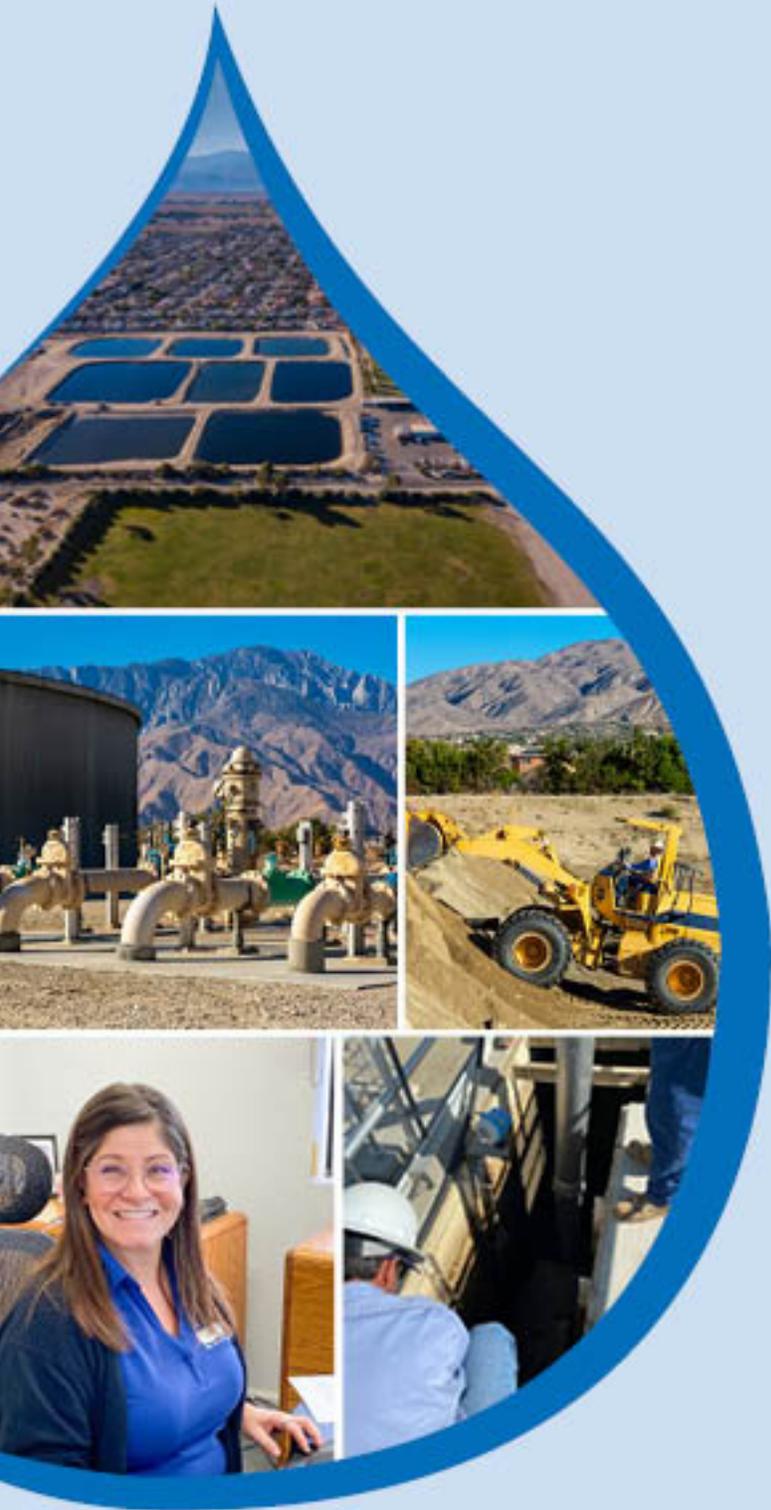
#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Actively manage costs and live within the "approved" budget.
2. Adjust spending in response to revenue fluctuations and restrictions.
3. Look for ways to reduce water loss and increase system efficiencies.
4. Limit the impact of unexpected expenditures.
5. Preserve the District's credit rating, enabling us to qualify for favorable borrowing terms in the future.
6. Stabilize rates and develop a plan to finance essential projects conservatively.

### **3.3 Enhance transparency in financial reporting by adopting best practices and ensuring timely and accurate financial disclosures.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Communicate financial performance and challenges effectively to internal and external stakeholders, fostering trust and confidence in the District's financial management.
2. Implement budget best practices to ensure ongoing GFOA certification.
3. Develop and provide financial reporting tools (dashboard) to internal and external stakeholders.
4. Keep customer bills fresh and straightforward while providing sufficient information about charges and water use.
5. Ensure ongoing dissemination of financial information, including performance to budget, water sales and purchases, and wastewater, as part of the District's overall financial health.
6. Provide information to customers about internal versus external cost of services and pass through appropriate Replenishment Assessment Charges and City of Desert Hot Springs Utility Users Tax increases.
7. Foster a culture of financial responsibility and accountability across the organization.



# System Reliability

## SMART GOAL #4: SYSTEM RELIABILITY

### Ensure each component of the water and wastewater systems contributes to the long-term health and reliability of overall operations.

The District must maintain and improve our current water and wastewater infrastructure in a cost-effective manner to ensure the safe-sustainable delivery of water and wastewater services now and in the future. We will protect these valuable assets while preparing for emergencies. This strategic goal emphasizes a holistic and forward-thinking approach to water and wastewater system management and infrastructure, fostering innovation, collaboration, and enduring strategies that align with the District's mission while ensuring the long-term reliability of its overall operation.

**4.1 By September 2026, complete the construction of a Critical Service Center, which will foster increased collaboration, communication, and teamwork among employees working at one central location.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Construct a new administrative and operations building to allow the District to grow and continue to provide service to its customers.
2. With the Two Bunch location no longer feasible, ensure that the District's second choice, the Corporate Yard, is feasible and meets the District's future needs before engaging a contractor.

**4.2 Update Existing Water and Wastewater Master Plans.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Review the District's five-year Capital Improvement Plan and ensure it aligns with the Long Range Financial Master Plan and all long-term financial strategies.
2. Conduct a financial and operational analysis of the impact of future residential and commercial development based on the Cities of Desert Hot Springs' and Palm Springs' General Plans.
3. Work with the City of Desert Hot Springs to develop an infrastructure feasibility study for unserved areas poised for growth.
4. Execute a mutual services agreement with Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) to serve customers in the CVWD service territory without water/sewer access.
5. Collaborate with the City of Desert Hot Springs, Riverside County, and other stakeholders to repair old infrastructure and bring it up to current standards. Ensure that infrastructure improvements not only meet current demand but are designed to support future water and wastewater requirements, contributing to the overall reliability of the systems.
6. Evaluate options for relocating existing water infrastructure within inaccessible areas (including rear lot easements) of the District for ease of maintenance and risk reduction.
7. Identify and remove problematic tamarisk trees and other vegetation to prevent future root-related system issues.
8. Create a Predictive and Preventative Pipeline Replacement Project for aging piping within the water distribution system.

## SMART GOAL #4: SYSTEM RELIABILITY (Continued)

9. Continue to work with the Army Corp of Engineers to design and construct all defined assessment areas while leveraging grant funding to lower customer costs.
10. Identify additional capital projects and improvements that enhance system resiliency. Focus on increasing water yields from current projects through strategic enhancements and upgrades, aligning with the long-term reliability goals.
11. Conduct an analysis of available capacity within the current water system with future water demand projections to forecast the time of demand need. Incorporate results in Urban Water Management Plan updates and Master Plan updates.

### **4.3 Maintain and renew assets while facilitating strategic Capital Improvements.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Create a Predictive and Preventive Maintenance Program to meet established performance benchmarks.
2. Diligently manage and maintain current equipment to provide maximum value to the District.
3. Assess existing pipelines and associated equipment as part of the Predictive and Preventive Maintenance Program.
4. Research and implement a complete Computerized Maintenance Management System.
5. Build a connection to the MSWD IDE areas to the MSWD "main" system.
6. Evaluate system interconnects with neighboring agencies.
7. Evaluate emerging technologies and consider implementation.
8. Provide a comprehensive backup transmission system.

### **4.4 Invest and look at ways to fortify infrastructure security.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Optimize security preparedness at all sites.
2. Identify, monitor, and resolve risks of flood, earthquake, or natural disaster.
3. Invest in emergency backup generators and system redundancies for fail-safe operations.
4. Enhance security measures at critical remote sites and standardize systems and software to manage these operations.

### **4.5 Ensure the District is prepared to react to manmade and natural emergencies.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Continue to improve and refine the District's emergency response plan.
2. Effectively communicate with outside agencies and emergency preparedness partners, including mutual response like CalWARN or first response personnel at the City and County.
3. Continue to train District personnel in National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) to recommended levels and review the applicability of Web-EOC software programs.
4. Ensure earthquake retrofitting of critical infrastructure is included in long-term planning activities, protecting District assets and those of the customers we serve.
5. Participate in regional tabletop exercises to ensure staff are prepared for emergency situations.

# Environmental Sustainability



## SMART GOAL #5: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

### **Increase district-wide efficiency by adding new renewable energy resources, optimizing processes, implementing green building practices, and reducing overall water consumption.**

Taking concrete steps toward being more environmentally sustainable, Mission Springs Water District will, in the next three years, increase District-wide energy efficiency by as much as 20% by adding new renewable energy resources, optimizing water treatment processes, implementing green building practices, and reducing overall water consumption through conservation programs and the encouragement of native and desert friendly landscaping by our customers. Being good stewards of our natural resources is part of MSWD's mission and vision for the future. It reflects our commitment and desire to uphold these values for the good of the community we serve.

#### **5.1 Increase Use of Sustainable Energy Sources and Optimize Efficiencies – “There is no waste; just wasted resources”.**

##### *Key Success Measures*

1. Add solar panels to District facilities and convert low electrical use sites to solar.
2. Evaluate hybrid/electric technology opportunities.
3. Explore biofuel opportunities.
4. Reduce overall energy consumption associated with District facilities by 20% in the next three years.
5. Evaluate opportunities to minimize greenhouse gas emissions in District operations.
6. Leverage the District's solar resources and look into expansion financing opportunities, including grants, leasing, and power purchase agreement opportunities.
7. Enhance sustainability by minimizing waste in resources needed to meet operation and maintenance objectives.
8. Consider the environmental impact on all business practices.
9. Explore additional sludge recycling options for future reuse.
10. Create an internal employee culture that proactively seeks ways to conserve water and energy and be more environmentally sustainable in everything we do.

#### **5.2 Fleet Electrification.**

##### *Key Success Measures*

1. Continue monitoring changes to fleet electrification mandates and work with regulators to ensure mandates are feasible.
2. Create a strategy that meets upcoming fleet electrification regulations and considers operational requirements. A financial analysis includes ongoing maintenance costs and the cost of electricity versus traditional fuel.
3. Pursue grant opportunities to fund the inclusion of Electric Vehicles in our fleet and provide funding for necessary charging infrastructure.

## SMART GOAL #5: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (Continued)

### 5.3 Embrace Green Building Standards.

#### *Key Success Measures*

- 1.Reduce overall energy consumption associated with District facilities by 20% and incorporate greater green building standards in all building projects, including the new Critical Services Center.
- 2.Ensure the new Critical Services Center design incorporates energy/water efficiency best practices, including but not limited to the building's positioning, solar control and shading, material selection, building envelope, efficient lighting (possible solar tubes), HVAC systems, and renewable energy systems.
- 3.Evaluate building designs and perform a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of incorporating LEED Green Building standards in construction projects.
- 4.Ensure all District construction projects adhere to California environmental laws and regulations.

# Technology & Processes



## SMART GOAL #6: IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY & PROCESSES

**Ensure each component of the water and wastewater systems contributes to the long-term health, reliability and addresses workflow inefficiencies by implementing technology solutions and process improvements.**

The imperative for addressing workflow inefficiencies through technological advancements has become critical in response to the evolving demands and challenges facing MSWD. This need was elevated through the SWOT analysis and employee feedback; thus, the Board identified this goal as a priority. By addressing these aspects, the District aims to meet its immediate operational needs and future-proof its processes, ensuring sustainable and effective water management for the community. This comprehensive approach reflects a commitment to excellence, innovation, and delivering high-quality services.

### **6.1 Embracing technological solutions that align the District with industry best practices and modern standards.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Ensure information systems planning is aligned with the District's Strategic Plan.
2. Enhance cyber security to ensure the continued safety of our system.
3. Ensure secure data access, remote access, and valid customer data.
4. Finalize the solicitation for a new enterprise resource planning software platform, which will seamlessly integrate Finance, Customer Service, and Human Resources needs.
5. Streamline processes and improve customer service by reducing delays and errors to enhance customer satisfaction and trust in the District's services.
6. Automate employee payroll structure and eliminate manual entry of employee time and project numbers.
7. Develop a work order management system and analyze workload allocations for infrastructure and maintenance operations based on industry key performance indicators and standards.
8. Identify opportunities for the privatization of routine maintenance functions to augment staffing levels.
9. Adopt an asset management system to ensure cradle-to-grave tracking of resources that aligns with the asset management and replacement component of the Long Range Financial Master Plan.
10. Continue to enhance purchasing processes to streamline staff processing times while ensuring appropriate approvals are met.
11. Evaluate options for automating the inventory management system for purchasing, receiving, and warehouse operations. Expand and improve the use of mobile computing and communication technology.
12. Adopt a records retention policy, incorporate retention schedules into processes, and automate them into new computer systems.
13. Review lien processing and streamline and consolidate processing to one department.
14. Look for additional ways to leverage technology and increase staff efficiency and operational savings. Information systems should support effective decision-making, system integration, reliable data, and decreased redundancy.

## SMART GOAL #6: IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY & PROCESSES (Continued)

**6.2 Hire a designated GIS employee and integrate asset management within the MSWD work order management system.**

### *Key Success Measures*

1. Review the existing Nobel platform and ensure it meets the District's ongoing needs.
2. Integrate data collection and analysis to allow for data-driven decision-making based on real-time data.
3. Boost real-time monitoring and incident response.
4. Enhance network analysis and optimization.

# Workforce Excellence



## SMART GOAL #7: WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

### Investment in staff and management to cultivate a high-performing and knowledgeable workforce.

This SMART goal emphasizes the importance of ongoing investment in the District's most valuable assets—its staff and leadership. Through competitive compensation, expanded opportunities, and targeted development initiatives, the goal is to build a workforce that excels in performance, innovation, and leadership, increasing employee satisfaction and ensuring the sustained success of the District.

#### **7.1 Create development opportunities and facilitate staff participation in professional development opportunities.**

##### *Key Success Measures*

1. Continue to develop individual employee development plans to promote personal and professional growth.
2. Update the organization-wide succession plan, allowing employees the opportunity for professional growth, cross-training, and preparation for succession and temporary assignments to maintain continuity and operational effectiveness.
3. Modify the employee performance evaluation process to align with the District's new Strategic Plan and core values.
4. Hold managers accountable for performing timely performance evaluations that increases job knowledge, documents performance, and supports employees' overall success.

#### **7.2 Expand leadership development programs to enhance the knowledge and skills of employees.**

##### *Key Success Measures*

1. Leverage our member organizations, including ACWA, AWWA, CSDA, and CWEA to implement training initiatives to support leadership and succession planning to ensure a continuous pipeline of qualified individuals.
2. Create a Board of Directors onboarding program that provides new board members with resources and information to streamline their transition onto the Board.
3. Develop a comprehensive supervisor development and training program for existing managers, supervisors, and employees aspiring to supervisory positions.
4. On an ongoing basis, ensure 100% of employees have clearly defined job-related goals on their performance evaluations.
5. Publish and promote all employees' education/certification accomplishments internally.
6. Continue to hold regular GM/All-Hands meetings to create dialogue and promote organizational culture.

## **SMART GOAL #7: WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE (Continued)**

### **7.3 Recruit and retain employees.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Update and continue utilizing salary survey insights to inform salary decisions, ensuring that compensation remains competitive. Competitive compensation and expanded internship opportunities attract and retain top talent, contributing to a skilled and motivated workforce.
2. Create an internship program to increase opportunities for students and professionals, supporting industry employment growth and building a robust recruitment pool.
3. Foster collaborations with educational institutions to create pathways for talent to enter and thrive in the organization. Continue to investigate opportunities with local Colleges to create Career Technical Education pathways for some of our hard-to-fill positions.
4. Evaluate and look for ways to keep turnover rates at or below industry standards due to resignations or terminations (related to compensation or working conditions), not including retirements.

### **7.4 Ensure employee safety and wellness.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Continue to educate employees on safe working practices.
2. Require supervisors and lead workers to demonstrate their commitment to safe work practices.
3. Work towards a 100% non-litigation rate on Workers' Compensation claims.
4. Encourage Employee Wellness and implement a comprehensive, district-wide Employee Wellness Plan.

### **7.5 Cultivate a positive culture and teamwork among staff.**

#### *Key Success Measures*

1. Ensure the lines of communication are open for all employees.
2. Employees experience camaraderie and teamwork through on-site employee events, and the company continues to recruit employees to the events committee to avoid committee burnout.
3. Focus on maintaining high employee morale and a positive organizational culture.
4. Ensure our workforce is ready to embrace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion differences and continue routine training.

# Appendix A: SWOT Analysis and Results

The following is the raw data from our SWOT analysis. This information can be of value in defining future priorities and SMART goals.

## **Strengths:**

- Response time to customers
- Quality staff/staff emergency response
- Public Communications/outreach/strong bonds in the community
- Strong leadership/new leadership/board vision/desire to improve/engaged management
- Award-winning water/water quality
- Groundwater protection
- Financial stability
- Conservation
- Benefits/competitive pay/interesting work/low turnover
- Formal work processes/workflow
- Water/sewer system maintenance program
- Growing community infrastructure

## **Weaknesses:**

- Need to better prioritize
- Infrastructure/old building and facilities
- Physical silos
- Internal communications
- Record keeping
- Customer confidence/customer follow through
- Holding vendors and contractors accountable
- Chrom-6
- Power supply back ups
- Slow processes/need to modernize
- Revenue – fixed charge and property taxes
- Not always proactive
- Lack of recharge for aquifer/source of supply
- Water/sewer system maintenance program
- Knowledge loss from retirement/weakened staff levels
- Outdated ERP/lack of data analysis/customer account errors
- Timecards/payroll
- Technology gaps/use of all SCADA features/outdated software's

## Appendix A: SWOT Analysis and Results (Continued)

### Threats:

- Outdated technology/manuals/plans
- Copper theft
- Customers unable to pay bills/pressure on rates/disadvantaged community rate base
- Security threats (Cyber, vandalism)
- SGMA (DWA)
- DWA
- Legislative/regulatory (chrom-6, PFAS, conservation)
- Natural disasters (climate change, earthquakes, storms, statewide water shortages)
- Concerns with long-term health of the city
- Wholesaler increased costs that impact rates
- Economy
- Supply chain disruptions
- Real estate crash
- Customer trust
- Development/growth
- Loss of Colorado River Water/no ability to get MET allotment
- Talent shortage with specialized water industry credentials
- Political influence/litigation
- Social media/negative posts
- Aging infrastructure/leaks

### Opportunities:

- Infrastructure/devices
  - Surge anticipator valve
  - Weather stations
  - Site cameras
  - Tank mixers
  - Tank headspace ventilators
  - Flow metering/bi-directional flow meters
  - Pre-treatment program
- New technology
- Recycled water/nonpotable
- Employee retention programs/DEI initiatives/employee training/team building
- Transparency
- Communications/PR
- Secondary internet access
- Internal communications (who is on-call)
- Technology/AMI/customer portal/employee portal
- On-site electrician
- Grant funding opportunities
- Budget tiered rates/rate structure
- Community growth

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