



EOCWD
EAST ORANGE COUNTY
WATER DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN
2026-30





CONTENTS

PAGE 2 CONTENTS

PAGE 3 MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

PAGE 4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PAGE 5 MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

PAGE 6 INTRODUCTION

PAGE 7 VISION & MISSION

PAGE 8 DISTRICT VALUES

PAGE 10 GOALS, STRATEGIES, & OBJECTIVES

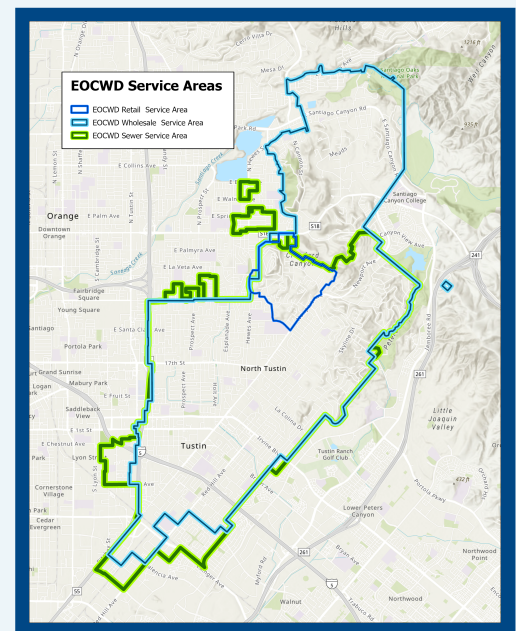
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Welcome to the East Orange County Water District's (EOCWD) 5-Year Strategic Plan. This document is a blueprint for how EOCWD will respond to current challenges and make the best of future opportunities for the benefit of our customers. It confirms our mission and goals as a public agency dedicated to providing high quality water and sewer service to the more than 90,000 residents in the EOCWD service area. It outlines the specific goals, strategies, and objectives we will pursue to move us from where we are to where we want to be.

EOCWD is a locally governed, public wholesale and retail water district formed in 1961 encompassing an area of approximately 10,000 acres. It is a member of the Municipal Water District of Orange County, which is a member of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and therefore entitled to receive Colorado River and Northern California imported water. This treated water is delivered to a portion of the incorporated areas of the cities of Tustin and Orange and the adjoining unincorporated communities of North Tustin, Lemon Heights, Cowan Heights, Orange Park Acres and Panorama Heights. In July of 1985, the District assumed the operations of Orange County Water Works District #8 and became a retail water provider. In 2016, EOCWD assumed operation of the local sewer service from the Orange County Sanitation District, serving approximately 18,000 customers.

The EOCWD Board of Directors and staff are charting a course for continued success in the future through the development and execution of this Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan defines the vision, mission, values, goals and 5-year business strategy for EOCWD. Our commitments to the communities we serve fall into four areas: water and sewer service and infrastructure reliability, community representation and engagement, financial integrity, and professional workforce. These commitments are established as the four goals of the plan. Our Board actions will consistently support these commitments, and we will track our progress against this plan, revisiting the plan on a recurring basis to adjust as conditions warrant. EOCWD will continue to provide the excellent customer service for which we are known.

To ensure our services remain reliable and valued, EOCWD will continue to invest in significant water and wastewater facilities including replacing the Peters Canyon Reservoir. The delivery of these capital projects will need to occur seamlessly with the ongoing service obligations of the District. To that end, EOCWD conducted a detailed rate study in 2023 to determine how best to ensure adequate capital is available to support these needed long-term investments. The setting of rates will be an important EOCWD activity for this 5-year Strategic Plan period.



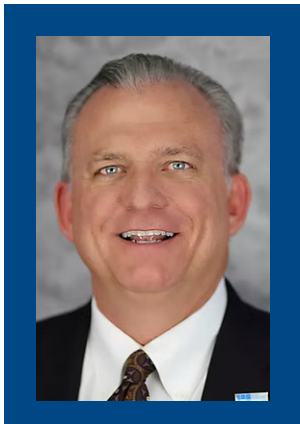
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Director George Murdoch
President



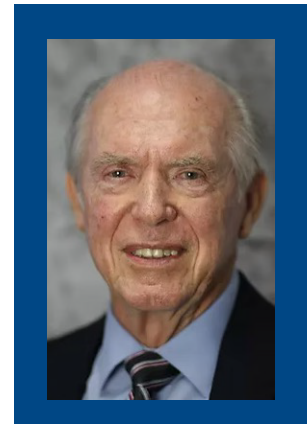
Director Marilyn Thoms
Vice President



Director Douglass S. Davert



Director Karin Marquez



Director John L. Sears



MESSAGE FROM

THE GENERAL MANAGER

While our core business remains constant over time, this plan directs how we will take on the complex issues and challenges we face in the next several years. In developing this Strategic Plan, we focused on four priority areas:

- Water and sewer service and infrastructure reliability
- Community representation and engagement
- Financial integrity
- Professional workforce

Why these four? These four areas summarize the “big picture” of what we need to do – and do well – so that we achieve our mission to: “Provide our customers with reliable, high-quality water services featuring hometown service, fiscal discipline, and direct accountability”. Why this order? This is a logical order of what we have determined to be the highest priority as a District, however, the priority of individual areas will shift in emphasis over the course of this plan as events dictate. Strategic planning is an ongoing process. We will continue to periodically review the Strategic Plan in conjunction with our budget process to readjust as changing conditions dictate. With the support of the Board, I am confident this plan will help us achieve the expectations of those we serve in the months and years to come.

Respectfully submitted,



David Youngblood P.E.
General Manager



INTRODUCTION

Strategic Planning is a structured process to prioritize issues. Due to the reality of finite resources, staff must be focused on the key issues that are critical to its mission. The Strategic Plan Process consists of the following activities:

- Review background documents
- Review current operating environment – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, & threats
- Review Vision, Mission, Values and establish Goals
- Develop Strategies and Objectives
- Develop staffing and resource needs in conjunction with the Annual Budgeting Process
- Regularly update the Plan

The planning process enabled the EOCWD board and staff to step back from daily activities and deliberate on ways to achieve the EOCWD mission. The Strategic Plan was developed under the guidance of the Board of Directors and senior management representing all of the EOCWD's functions. This team met over a two-month period following the steps in the call out box to the right. The focus of the staff's strategic deliberations was the key issues EOCWD will face in the next five-year planning horizon (and beyond). Workshops were held with the Board and the Senior Management staff to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) that the plan should consider. A workshop was held with the Board of Directors on August 4, 2025 to verify the vision, mission, goals and values statements and review the four goals that set the framework for the strategies and objectives development by the management team. The Board adopted the plan on January 22, 2026. The five-year Strategic Plan will be implemented and tracked through the Budget process.

Hometown Service. Fiscal Discipline. Direct Accountability



VISION & MISSION

DISTRICT **VISION**

“Support our customers’ high quality of life by providing valued water and sewer services”

DISTRICT **MISSION**

“Provide our customers with reliable, high-quality water and sewer services featuring hometown service, fiscal discipline, and direct accountability”



DISTRICT VALUES

EOCWD will embody the following core values in the setting and implementation of its policies and practices:

INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

EOCWD will consistently adhere to high moral and ethical principles



COMMUNITY

EOCWD will cooperatively work together and with stakeholders to further the mission and goals of the organization



CUSTOMER SERVICE

EOCWD will professionally and responsively serve the needs of its customers



RESPECT

EOCWD will work with our stakeholders in a respectful, professional, and courteous fashion



DISCIPLINED (FISCALLY AND OPERATIONALLY)

EOCWD will be good stewards of the facilities, people, and financial resources entrusted to it



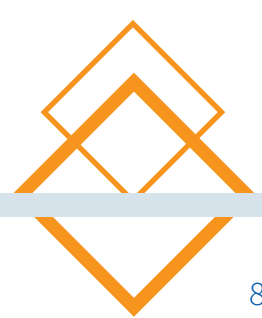
CREATIVE

EOCWD will encourage and value the introduction of new ideas and methods

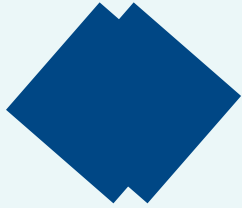


TRANSPARENT

EOCWD will engage its stakeholders and interact with them in a fair, open and honest manner

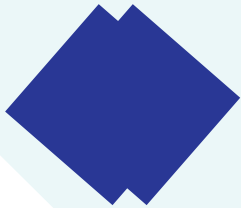


GOALS, STRATEGIES, & OBJECTIVES



GOAL 1

EOCWD will provide safe, reliable, and environmentally-sustainable water and sewer services and infrastructure that meet the needs of the community



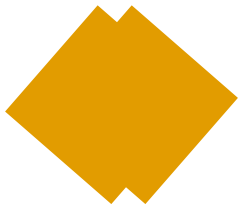
GOAL 2

EOCWD will provide responsive local governance, value and outreach to the communities we serve



GOAL 3

EOCWD will manage our financial assets to provide and maintain reliable water and sewer services



GOAL 4

EOCWD will maintain workforce expertise to ensure service quality, continuity, and reliability

Management and staff have identified specific strategies and measurable objectives for each goal area to ensure the proper actions are taken to fulfill the commitment implicit in the goal area. The strategies and objectives listed below include both current and new activities. They are not listed in any priority. The implementation of these strategies and objectives will be further detailed through specific memoranda.

GOAL 1: WATER AND SEWER SERVICE RELIABILITY – EOCWD will provide safe, reliable, and environmentally-sustainable water and sewer services and infrastructure that meet the needs of the community

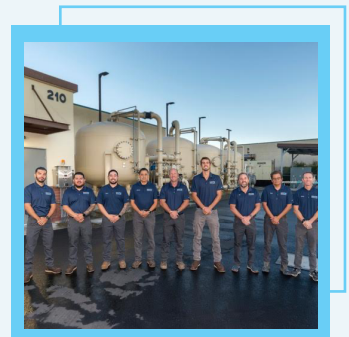
Strategy 1 – Provide proper management, development, and replacement of infrastructure

- Objective 1 Execute current capital improvement plan
- Objective 2 Update the Water Master Plan and Capital Improvement Program
- Objective 3 Update the Wastewater Master Plan and Capital Improvement Program
- Objective 4 Complete the 2030 Urban Water Management Plan
- Objective 5 Develop a replacement strategy for Peters Canyon Reservoir including an appropriate land use policy for the site
- Objective 6 Implement the grant to install automated meter reading (AMI) capability



Strategy 2 – Operate the system to achieve service level standards

- Objective 1 Continue to generate and share system performance and condition information with the Board
- Objective 2 Regularly review to determine progress
- Objective 3 Provide 100% compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act standards
- Objective 4 Manage the sewer collection system to prevent or mitigate spills



- Objective 6 Optimize system operations to minimize nitrification; continue involvement in MWDOC nitrification workgroup
- Objective 7 Evaluate incentives to convert septic to sewer
- Objective 8 Continue valve and hydrant exercise program
- Objective 9 Evaluate appropriate mitigation steps to manage fire risk
- Objective 10 Assess merits of expanding asset management programs at EOCWD

Strategy 3 – Ensure adequate supplies of water to meet EOCWD demands

- Objective 1 Track and advocate at Orange County Water District (OCWD) for EOCWD groundwater interests
- Objective 2 Protect supply and reliability of local groundwater
- Objective 3 Track and advocate at Municipal Water District of Orange County regarding imported water supplies
- Objective 4 Support and track OCWD PFAS litigation efforts

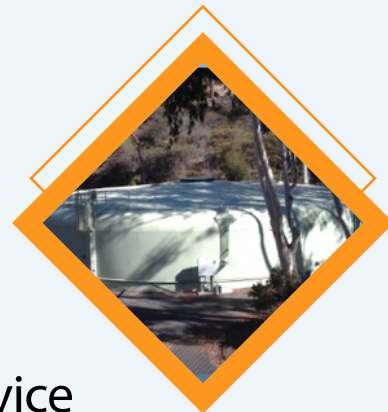


GOAL 2: COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT – EOCWD will provide

responsive local governance, value, and outreach to the communities we serve

Strategy 1 – Maintain alliances to support the interests of EOCWD

- Objective 1 Update the Communications Plan (which includes messaging on new CIP projects, facility development, water quality issues, etc.)
- Objective 2 Refresh the District website
- Objective 3 Consider cooperative opportunities with local agencies
- Objective 4 Proactively advocate for District interests in regulatory and legislative processes
- Objective 5 Support Board participation in the governance of regional and state-wide organizations
- Objective 6 Track opportunities to provide shared services
- Objective 7 Evaluate representation on the Orange County Sanitation District Board



Strategy 2 – Maintain excellent customer service

- Objective 1 Measure and report customer satisfaction
- Objective 2 Work with wholesale customers to resolve potential water quality problems
- Objective 3 Provide opportunities for customer education
- Objective 4 Leverage available funding from regional, state, and federal agencies

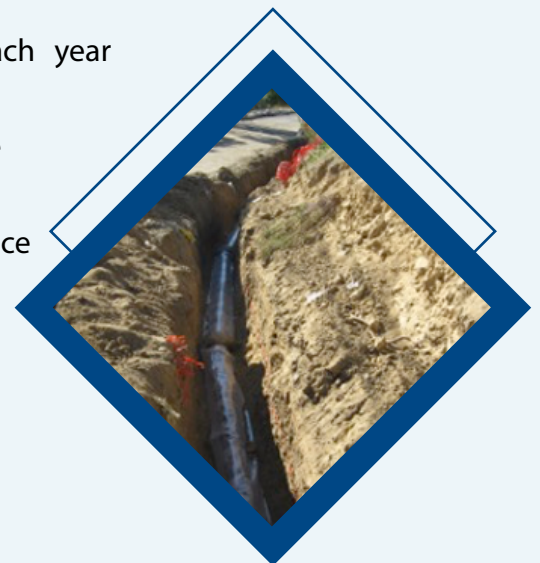
Strategy 3 – Promote water use efficiency and public education

- Objective 1 Provide regular contact via social media, website, etc.
- Objective 2 Provide opportunities for customer education
- Objective 3 Leverage available funding from regional, state, and federal agencies

GOAL 3: FINANCIAL INTEGRITY – EOCWD will manage our financial assets to provide and maintain reliable water and sewer services

Strategy 1 – Ensure that adequate financial capacity exists to maintain District assets

- Objective 1 Manage within the budget to the extent practical
- Objective 2 Receive a satisfactory audit outcome each year
- Objective 3 Maintain adequate insurance coverage
- Objective 4 Conduct a water and sewer cost of service study at least every five years
- Objective 5 Update the Finance Plan
- Objective 6 Maintain adequate level of reserves



Strategy 2 – Ensure the District operations are efficient and effective

- Objective 1 Track and report progress against the Strategic Plan
- Objective 2 Optimize sewer system cleanings
- Objective 3 Define appropriate SCADA system improvements
- Objective 4 Track and implement appropriate cybersecurity improvements



GOAL 4: PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE –

EOCWD will maintain workforce expertise to ensure service quality, continuity, and reliability

Strategy 1 – Develop long-term strategy to retain staff

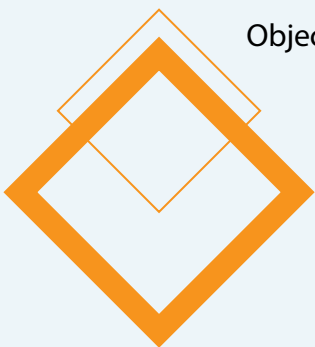
- Objective 1 Maintain staff morale
- Objective 2 Maintain competitive compensation and benefits
- Objective 3 Maintain an awareness of staffing needs and plan accordingly

Strategy 2 – Staff development

- Objective 1 Provide appropriate training opportunities including cross training
- Objective 2 Support and incentivize staff to advance certifications

Strategy 3 – Optimize administrative support systems

- Objective 1 Develop a document management system
- Objective 2 Evaluate asset management plan needs
- Objective 3 Develop on-line policy manual
- Objective 4 Develop a handbook for new Directors
- Objective 5 Develop Standard Operating Procedures for key activities
- Objective 6 Develop an AI use policy



NEXT STEPS

The plan is intended to be a living document and will be reviewed and updated annually to remain current. It will be used in planning and budgeting the activities of EOCWD.

Executive Team & Consultant Support

David Youngblood P.E., General Manager

Jerry Mendzer, Operations Manager

Bobby Young P.E., Engineering Manager

Edward Means, Means Consulting LLC

