An aerial photograph of a water treatment facility, showing concrete structures, pipes, and a large reservoir. The background features rolling hills under a clear blue sky. A large, semi-transparent blue circle with a white border is centered over the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

ALAMEDA COUNTY
WATER DISTRICT

Strategic Plan

2025 - 2030

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Introduction

For more than 110 years, the Alameda County Water District (ACWD, District) has provided a reliable supply of high-quality water at a reasonable price to the communities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City. As we continue our second century of service, adapting to a changing world will drive ACWD's work to ensure the continued reliability and high quality of your water service. In 2018, the first District Strategic Plan was adopted and implemented. This 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan update will guide ACWD's priorities and activities over the next five years.

Over the past five years, ACWD successfully weathered numerous challenges including a historic drought, the COVID-19 pandemic, evolving regulations, and a changing workforce. More uncertainties lie ahead including climate change, new environmental and water-quality regulations, continued land use intensification, and evolving technology that will require new approaches. Through the 2025 strategic planning process, the Board of Directors delved into myriad current and future issues, risks, and opportunities. Taking stock of the District's progress and accomplishments through the implementation of the 2018 Strategic Plan, the Board considered potential areas of improvement as we continue to evolve to support our mission and maintain the trust and respect of our customers. We have examined all aspects of our work, from water supply, water quality, cost-effectiveness, staffing resources, financial stability and resiliency, to emergency preparedness and response, and community outreach and engagement.

The Strategic Plan update process involved four public workshops with the Board of Directors and senior staff, internal employee engagement, and external outreach and engagement with local city councils and other groups.



Image 1: Aerial Drone picture of ACWD Staff at District Headquarters.

The District took the opportunity to re-align the structure and hierarchy of the Strategic Plan (Plan) to adhere to industry best practices. Through this process, the Board defined ACWD’s vision and values, and updated the core mission to elevate focus on our customers. Six strategic goals were established to drive organizational alignment and priorities for the next five years. The updated Plan was developed to communicate and track ACWD’s key areas of focus (or “pillars”), goals, strategies, and the specific tactics required to achieve each goal. The tactics and core metrics are detailed in the new “Implementation Action Plan” which is included as an appendix to the Strategic Plan.

We are pleased to share this updated Plan with our customers and community to showcase the District’s priorities and focus areas for the next five years.

Strategic Plan Structure Refined

In keeping with industry best practices for strategic plan development and presentation to the public, the District has refined the Plan structure. The 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan includes the following key elements: Pillars (organizational areas of focus), Goals (priorities), and Strategies (pathways to meeting our goals). Below is the flowchart that

identifies the key elements, how the key elements are linked, and how the Board’s decisions are incorporated into the process.

The Board also developed and incorporated a District-wide vision and values to guide the organization. The vision and values are guiding principles that inform the strategic plan elements.

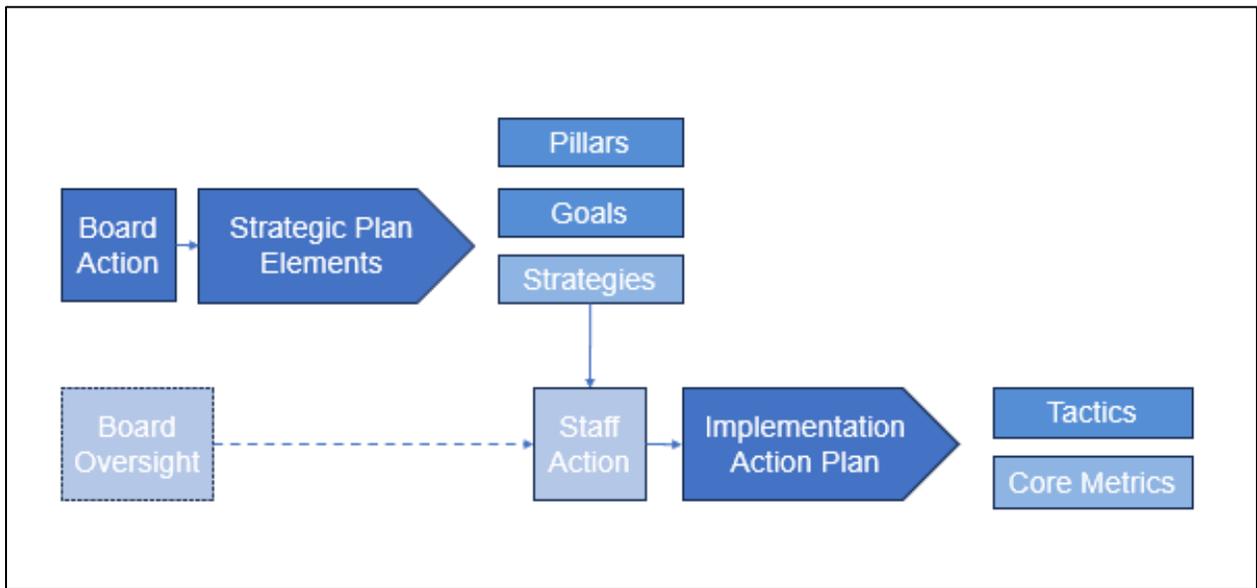


Figure 1: 2025 Updated Strategic Plan Structure and Hierarchy.

Vision Statement

A vision statement defines an organization’s future orientation and long-term aspirations. The intent of the vision statement is to inspire and motivate and align the District’s Board, staff, and management.

The Board adopted the following Vision Statement:

“Quality water, thriving community.”



Image 2: ACWD Staff in a decorated District vehicle participating in City of Newark, Newark Day’s Parade.

Mission Statement

A mission statement focuses on the organization’s current purpose and objectives. The Board refined the existing mission statement and adopted a streamlined purpose below.

“To provide our customers with reliable, sustainable, high-quality water service at a reasonable price.”

Values

Values guide and inform decision-making processes within an organization.

Additionally, by identifying and defining the District’s values, we hope to foster a unified culture, strengthen team collaboration, prioritize initiatives aligned with organizational goals, enhance stakeholder trust and engagement, and support long-term sustainable and ethical practices.

In the 2025 Update, the Board identified and defined core values for the organization. Through a rigorous process of internal and external interested party engagement, the Board adopted the following core values.

Core Values	Description
Service	We deliver exceptional service and support, always putting the needs of our customers and communities first, understanding they are the reason we exist.
Safety	We recognize that our employees are our most critical asset and strive for every decision and action to contribute to a safe workplace and healthy workforce.
Trust	We build trust through integrity, reliability, transparency, community engagement, and honoring commitments to our workforce, customers, and partners.
Resilience	We plan and prepare for challenges with intention, learning from setbacks, adjusting as needed, and emerging stronger in pursuit of our mission.
Collaboration	We achieve more through a culture of internal and external cooperation and respect, leveraging common interests, and valuing the unique strengths each party brings.
Stewardship	We act as responsible stewards of our resources, infrastructure, finances, people, environment, and community, ensuring our actions today create a positive legacy for tomorrow.

District Pillars and Strategic Goals

The Pillars are organizational areas of focus that will help guide goals and strategies over the next five years. Below are the District's six organizational pillars and strategic goals.

1. **Cost Effectiveness and Value:** Maintain and improve the cost effectiveness, reliability, and value of District services.
2. **Water Supply:** Sustain a reliable, high quality water supply for our customers.
3. **Finance:** Maintain the District's financial stability and promote transparency.
4. **Workforce:** Improve workforce health and safety, enhance recruitment, maintain retention, and deepen employee engagement.
5. **Communication:** Promote clear and open communication, outreach, and engagement with customers and communities.
6. **Emergency Preparedness and Response:** Ensure organizational readiness to respond to disasters and emergencies that threaten our ability to carry out our mission.

In the next sections of the Strategic Plan, the pillars and strategic goals are explained with the associated strategies for implementation. Additionally, a brief explanation is provided for the tactics and core metrics that will help the District accomplish the strategic goals.

PILLAR #1 – COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUE

Strategic Goal: Maintain and improve the cost effectiveness, reliability, and value of District services.

It is our priority to ensure District services continue to add significant value to the communities we serve. This goal applies broadly to the value and cost effectiveness of all District work and services.

Below are the strategies developed to work toward this pillar. They require work from, and collaboration among, all areas of the organization, including some activities that are already in progress, and some activities that will require broader organizational alignment moving forward.

Strategies:

- CEV 1. Efficiently manage and maintain our infrastructure to ensure reliability.**
- CEV 2. Continue to meet water quality standards 100% of the time.**
- CEV 3. Prioritize efficient water system management and operations.**



Image 3: ACWD Newark Desalination Facility pipes and treatment membranes.



Image 4: ACWD Blending Facility transmission pipelines.

To accomplish the identified strategies, staff intend to implement the tactics listed in the Implementation Action Plan, Appendix A. For Pillar #1 and associated strategies, the tactics are focused on infrastructure, regulatory compliance, and emerging innovations and technologies that help the District meet the needs of our customers now and in the future. Each tactic has a measurable goal and outcome that staff will utilize to track progress towards meeting the strategic goal.

PILLAR #2 – WATER SUPPLY

Strategic Goal: Sustain a reliable, high quality water supply for our customers.

A high quality, reliable, and resilient water supply is essential to meet the needs of customers now and in the future. With changes in climate, water use, regulations, and technology ahead, this goal was developed to focus the District's efforts that will help to sustain a reliable supply for the long-term.

The Water Resources Master Plan is currently being developed to outline recommended projects and actions that will address long-term water supply needs. The Water Resources Master Plan is a stand-alone document that will help achieve this goal and its underlying strategies and tactics.

Because key challenges lie within the next five years, the District has developed several strategies to work toward this pillar. These include continued stewardship in managing and protecting our existing supplies, as well as substantial planning and coordination efforts. Accomplishing these objectives will require dedication and collaboration from teams across the organization.

Strategies:

- WS 1. Protect, maintain, and enhance the sustainability, reliability, and quality of local, regional, and imported water supplies.**
- WS 2. Advocate for the value of imported water supplies.**
- WS 3. Evaluate new and innovative water management concepts to foster resilient water supplies.**



Image 5: Alameda Creek at sunset.

To accomplish the strategies, staff intend to implement the tactics listed in the Implementation Action Plan, Appendix A. For Pillar #2 and associated strategies, the tactics are focused on long-term reliability and management of water supplies to ensure that the District is planning for the future of our customers. Central to these strategies is implementation of the District's Water Resources Master Plan, developed separately, but in coordination with this Strategic Plan. Each tactic has a measurable goal and outcome that staff will utilize to track progress towards meeting the strategic goal. Tactics that flow from the Water Resources Master Plan are to be included in the Implementation Action Plan.

PILLAR #3 – FINANCE

Strategic Goal: Maintain the District’s financial stability and promote transparency.

Reliably and sustainably delivering high-quality water at a reasonable cost to our customers remains the District’s primary mission. This goal focuses on planning wisely for our financial future by ensuring stable revenues, reasonable costs, and prioritizing financial transparency.

Below are strategies to achieve this goal. These strategies require alignment of efforts by the Finance & Administration Department staff and staff throughout the organization to address many of the initiatives moving forward.

To accomplish the strategies, staff intend to implement the tactics listed in the Implementation Action Plan, Appendix A. For Pillar #3 and associated strategies, the tactics are focused on ensuring financial transparency and reasonableness for District customers. Each tactic has a measurable goal and outcome that staff will utilize to track progress towards meeting the strategic goal.

Strategies:

- F 1. Ensure revenue stability.**
- F 2. Ensure cost reasonableness and prudently manage customer financial impacts.**
- F 3. Prioritize financial transparency.**
- F 4. Support customer access and affordability.**

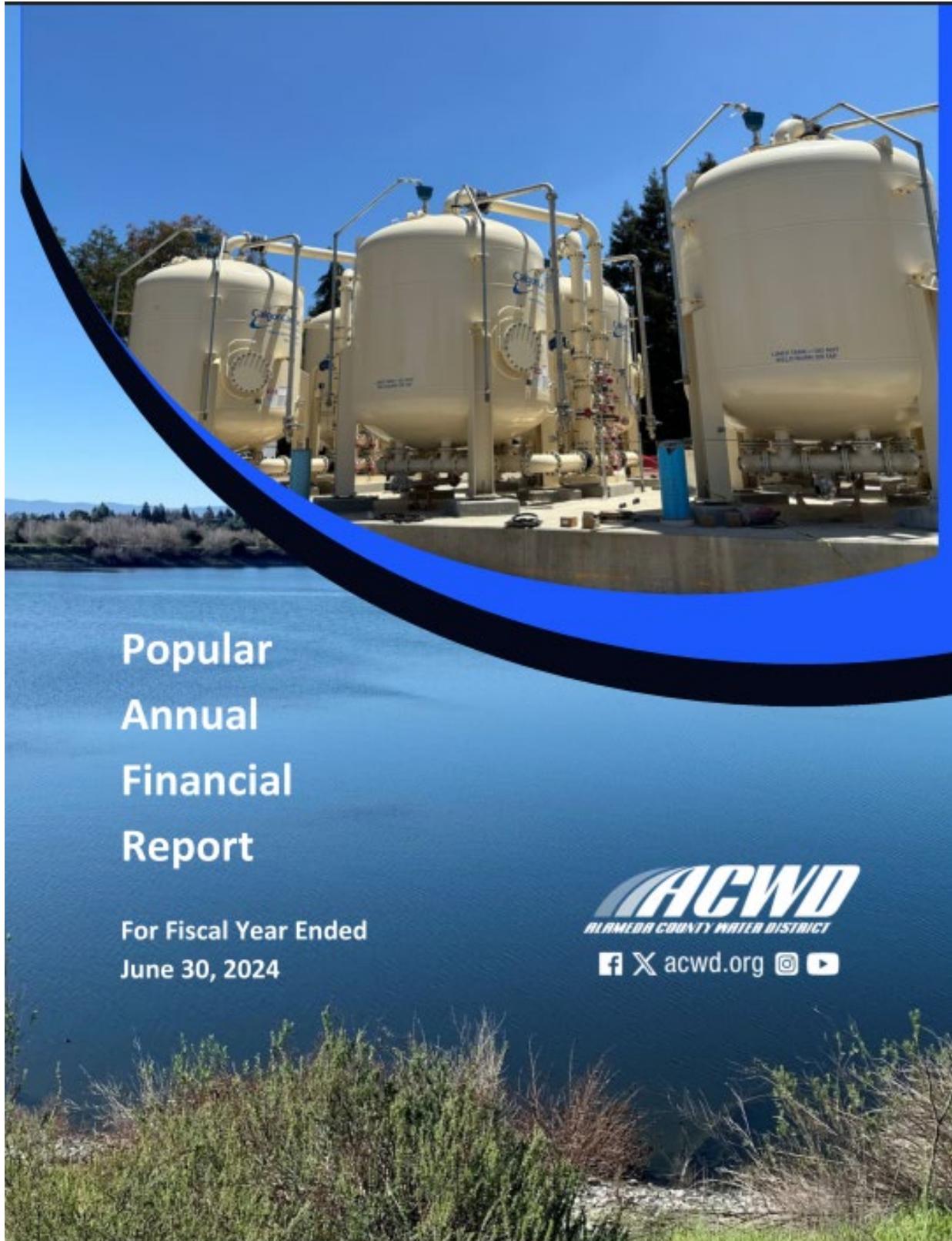


Image 6: Cover page of ACWD's Popular Annual Financial Report from 2024.

PILLAR #4 – WORKFORCE

Strategic Goal: Improve workforce health and safety, enhance recruitment, maintain retention, and deepen employee engagement.

One of the District's greatest assets is its workforce. It takes specialized skills and great dedication to meet the challenges of running a modern-day water system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To that end, this pillar and associated strategies were developed to meet current and future workforce needs, which will ensure continued high-quality water service to the community for the long-term.

Strategies:

- WF 1. Enhance recruitment strategies to attract a highly qualified and diverse workforce.**
- WF 2. Maintain employee retention by encouraging, valuing, and developing employee contributions and skills.**
- WF 3. Champion employee safety and wellbeing to drive a thriving and resilient workforce.**
- WF 4. Cultivate an engaged, productive, and innovative workforce.**
- WF 5. Enhance succession planning and knowledge transfer.**



Image 7. ACWD Distribution staff working on a truck.



Image 8. ACWD Construction Inspectors standing in front of heavy equipment.

To accomplish the strategies, staff intend to implement the tactics listed in the Implementation Action Plan, Appendix A. For Pillar #4 and associated strategies, the tactics are focused on exploring future career pipelines while ensuring that the current workforce has the necessary support to develop skills to contribute to the District and customers. Each tactic has a measurable goal and outcome that staff will utilize to track progress towards meeting the strategic goal.

PILLAR #5 – COMMUNICATION

Strategic Goal: Promote clear and open communications, outreach, and engagement with customers and communities.

The District has an ongoing interest in communicating with customers and promoting awareness in the community about the sources of water, environmental issues and needs surrounding that water, and the quality and value of the water they receive from the District. Sharing this information can help customers make informed decisions about their water use and better understand the key issues facing their water supplier. With new tools available now and coming soon, there are increased opportunities to communicate and engage with our customers in the coming years. This pillar and associated strategies were developed to focus efforts on increasing awareness through specific means, harnessing the power of new tools, and connecting with a diverse range of interested stakeholders.

Strategies:

- C 1. Increase awareness of District services, resources, and value in the community.**
- C 2. Continuously work to improve the customer experience and engagement.**
- C 3. Foster transparent and consistent communication with diverse communities, customers, and District partners.**
- C 4. Sustain a culture of water use efficiency through education, outreach, and engagement.**
- C 5. Help customers prepare for water-related emergencies.**



Image 9. ACWD Staff at a community event engaging with the public about engineering projects.

To accomplish the strategies, staff intend to implement the tactics listed in the Implementation Action Plan, Appendix A. For Pillar #5 and associated strategies, the tactics are focused on meeting customer needs through a variety of methods including tours, newsletters, electronic messaging, and leveraging existing and new partnerships. Each tactic has a measurable goal and outcome that staff will utilize to track progress towards meeting the strategic goal.



Image 10. ACWD staff lead a tour of Rubber Dam No. 1 Fish Ladder.

PILLAR #6 – EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Strategic Goal: Ensure organizational readiness to respond to disasters and emergencies that threaten our ability to carry out our mission.

The District faces challenges and opportunities to enhance and improve our organizational readiness to respond to disasters and emergencies. As the frequency of natural hazard events and cybersecurity threats increases, the District needs to plan, prepare, and proactively respond to disasters. This pillar has been structured to improve the District's ability to plan, prepare, and respond to disasters and emergencies through programmatic, infrastructure, human, and organizational cultural readiness. This readiness will enhance the resilience of District operations to deliver high-quality water to our customers.

Strategies:

- EPR 1. Ensure programmatic readiness.**
- EPR 2. Ensure infrastructure readiness.**
- EPR 3. Ensure human readiness.**
- EPR 4. Ensure organizational cultural readiness.**



Image 11: ACWD crew during emergency response exercise installing manifolds and hose to bypass pipelines crossing the Hayward Fault.



Image 12. City of Fremont Fire Department Hazardous Incident Team alongside a fire truck at ACWD Treatment Plant 2 spill simulation training debriefing with ACWD staff.

To accomplish the strategies, staff intend to implement the tactics listed in the Implementation Action Plan, Appendix A. For Pillar #6 and associated strategies, the tactics are focused on ensuring that the District is best positioned to protect, enhance, or improve emergency preparedness and response across the District. Each tactic has a measurable goal and outcome that staff will utilize to track progress towards meeting the strategic goal.

Implementation Action Plan

Implementation of this Plan over the next five years will require dedication, focus, and investment of staff time and resources. Many of the strategies have been updated to reflect changes in technology, innovation, regulations, disaster and emergency planning, and climate change.

As referenced in the executive summary, the District has created implementation action plans (IAP) for each of the Pillars. The IAP is structured to identify the tactics, metrics, and outcomes of each activity to meet the stated goals and strategies. The IAP was developed through a series of internal working group meetings with subject matter experts.

One area of refinement from the 2018 strategic plan is the inclusion of the IAP in the appendix of the 2025 Update. By linking the two documents, we are better able to track our progress toward meeting the approved goals and strategies.

The IAP will be adaptatively managed over the course of the next five years to ensure we make the needed adjustments to achieve our strategic goals and address emerging priorities as unforeseen circumstances arise. In addition, as goals are achieved and metrics met, new ‘stretch’ goals and refined metrics will be added and modified to make further progress toward the Board-adopted goals and strategies. As such, the IAP is to be managed by staff, with regular progress updates provided to the Board.

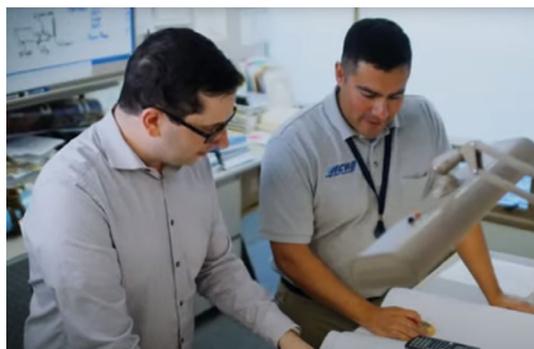


Image 13. ACWD staff reviewing engineering plans.



IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX A TO STRATEGIC PLAN



The Implementation Action Plan (IAP) is a companion to the Strategic Plan. It is a living document, managed by staff and as such, was not adopted by the Board. The Board gave input and direction regarding the IAP during development of the Strategic Plan, and such input is reflected in the IAP. If you are interested in reviewing the current IAP, please contact the [District Secretary](#).

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