

Nipomo Community Services District 2018 Strategic Plan

Prepared by Rauch Communication Consultants, Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ed Eby, President,
Dan A. Gaddis Vice-President
Craig Armstrong, Director
Dan Woodson, Director
Bob Blair, Director

STAFF

Mario Iglesias: General Manager
Lisa S. Bognuda: Finance Director/Assistant General Manager
Peter V. Sevcik: Director of Engineering & Operations

148 South Wilson Street
Nipomo, CA 93444
805-929-1133
ncsd.ca.gov

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CONSULTANT

Martin Rauch, Managing Consultant

Contents

Developing the Strategic Plan

- About Strategic Planning1
- How the Strategic Plan was Developed2

Highest Priority Issues

- Priorities3

Mission, Vision and Values

- Mission4
- Vision4
- Values4

Goals Objectives and Implementation Approach

- About Goals, Objectives and Priorities5
- Goals 1 through 86-13

Monitoring and Ensuring Results

- Overseeing the Plan14

Appendix

- Expectations of the Strategic Planning Process.....

DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Planning is strategic when it helps move an organization forward from its current situation to its desired future, and anticipates new challenges and conditions.

About Strategic Planning

The Strategic Plan Nipomo Community Service District's highest level planning document, and represents the Board's direction for the future. It is developed through a step-by-step process that includes understanding the District's situation and operating environment, while identifying the highest priority issues, strengths and weaknesses, as well as its opportunities and threats.

The Strategic Plan defines the agency's mission and vision, while providing a framework of goals and objectives that becomes a basis for all decision-making.

The Strategic Plan is also a practical working tool that provides clear direction to the staff about the Board's goals and objectives. The District staff will develop and implement a practical work plan or implementation plan to guide them in carrying out the Board policy-level goals and objectives.

Given its importance, the Strategic Plan should be referred to regularly as a guide to agency actions during the period covered.

To keep it fresh, it should be updated periodically as new factors enter the picture, and rolled forward so that there is always a multi-year guide to the future.

How the Strategic Plan was Developed

The strategic planning process was carried out in the series of steps as outlined below.

FOLLOW UP TO 2014 PLAN

Nipomo Community Services District completed a full strategic planning process in 2014. This is an update to that plan.

INITIAL RESEARCH

Research. The consultant began by holding discussions with the General Manager, and by reviewing background documents, including agendas and minutes, documents and reports, the budget, and other pertinent information.

Confidential Interviews. The research phase was followed by a series of confidential interviews carried out by the consultant. The goal was for the interviewees to candidly express their interests and perspectives on the District. Interviewees included the Board of Directors, General Manager, Finance Director/Assistant General Manager, Director of Engineering & Operations.

PLANNING WORKSHOPS

The Board of Directors, senior management staff and general counsel participated in one strategic planning workshop facilitated by Rauch Communication Consultants.

Workshop. During the workshop, the participants reviewed the results of the interviews, undertook exercises to examine the current state of the District, and identified critical issues and opportunities expected to confront the District in the future. They also identified priorities.

Additional Information from the Planning Process

During the planning process, a number of exercises and discussions were undertaken to review.

They provide useful additional information and ideas.

Expectations of the Participants.

Summary of the Interviews.

Current questions, challenges and open issues needing direction.

What is Coming Down the Road: Challenges and Opportunities.

Highest Priority Issues

Below are the initial priority issues for the coming years, identified during the workshop of the strategic planning process as areas that merit additional attention. Note that these priorities don't mean they are more important than other issues – for example, Safety is a top priority, but it is already being well attended to. The numbers in parenthesis at the end of each item represent “votes” by workshop participants with 1 being a highest-level priority, 2 a next-level priority, etc.

FIRST-LEVEL PRIORITIES

Seek to Maintain and Enhance Community Sustainability. This refers both to ensure quality service and to maintaining the affordability and sustainability of the service for customers. (1, 1, 1, 3)

Financial Stability. The District will ensure that it maintains strong and reliable finances over time. (1, 1, 2, 3)

Infrastructure Stability. Ensure the District's infrastructure is built and maintained for long-term cost effectiveness, and reliability. (2, 2, 2, 3, 3)

SECOND-LEVEL PRIORITIES

Operational Optimization. The District seeks to maximize cost-effectiveness, reliability. (1, 4, 4, 4))

Customer Satisfaction. The sole reason for the District's existence is to serve customer needs, this has been a focus for a long-time and is a top priority. It is only a second-level priority in terms of new initiatives. (3, 3, 4)

THIRD-LEVEL PRIORITIES

Operational Resiliency. Is the District prepared for emergencies such as if Creeks back up and leaving generators underwater and causing backups? (4, 4)

Employee Leadership and Development. Ensure the District is prepared for succession of staff, that staff are well trained, enjoy their positions, etc. (3).

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Mission

A mission statement describes the reason an organization or program exists, services it exists to supply, who it serves, and how it measures excellence. The District's, existing mission statement is reproduced below.

Provide our customers with reliable, quality, and cost-effective services now and in the future.

Vision

A clear vision provides a guide for an agency. The clearer the vision, the easier it is for the Board, Staff and stakeholders to picture what the Board is trying to achieve and then achieve it. The existing Vision of Nipomo Community Services District is reproduced below:

Provide superior and cost-effective services to our customers, a valued place to work for employees, respected and supported by our public and peers, and helping to maintain the rural quality of life in Nipomo.

Values

Values are what we consider important—what we believe is right. The Board is responsible for identifying and being the guardian of values. Effective organizations identify and develop clear, concise and shared values, beliefs, priorities, and provide direction so that every employee understands and can contribute by implementing their work in line with the organization's values. The existing values statements are written as questions which can be posed to help make difficult decisions.

- *Is it open, transparent and responsive to our customers?*
- *Is it sensitive to rates, cost efficient and financially responsible?*
- *Does it support our commitment to maintaining-quality facilities and infrastructure?*
- *Does it support our ability to provide quality and reliable services?*
- *Does it support the welfare of our employees?*
- *Does it support the quality of life and rural character of our community?*

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

About Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives are presented on the following pages. They, along with the mission, vision and values represent the core strategic direction provided in this plan.

Goals are intentions that are directed at meeting the mission of the District. They describe broad, primary areas of management, operations, and planning that need to be addressed to ensure optimum progress. Goals are not connected to timelines.

Objectives are more specific directions that expand upon and refine the goals. They are set by the Board. There may be multiple objectives for each goal. They are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Related to Goals, and Time Certain.

Implementation. A summary of Staff's approach to implementing the plan is shown under each objective.

Timing. Staff will implement the goals and objectives as appropriate and report on all of them annually early in each budget season.



Goal 1. WATER SUPPLIES. Actively plan to provide reliable water supply of sufficient quality and quantity to serve both current customers and those in the long-term future.

1.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

- A.1 Obtain the necessary permits to utilize the full capacity of the Supplemental Water Project pipeline. [2020]**

- A.2 The District shall provide new service connections to customers when the NCSD Board lifts Severe Criteria condition groundwater pumping restrictions. [July 2018]**

- A.4 NCSD will make available imported water to other purveyors once the NSWP pipeline is permitted to be used at full capacity. [2020]**

- A.5 Expedite funding and implementation of final phases of the Supplemental Water Supply Projects (up to 3,000 acre-feet). [2023]**

- A.6 Update the Water Master Plan to ensure: long-term quality; reliability; cost-effectiveness; and ability to meet customer needs and regulatory requirements. [2018]**

- A.7 The District will seek to sell temporary water to other purveyors to utilize take or pay water and offset costs. [2018]**

1.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- B.1 Seek to have the County implement sustainable water supply policies that match the level of development they approve, including all the features described in the Water Resources Policy Statement.**

- B.2 Engage with other local and regional organizations to develop solutions to long-term water supply challenges such as providing emergency backup supplies, and ensuring long-term water supply reliability, etc.**

- B.3 Seek opportunities for mutually beneficial shared use of the Supplemental Water Project pipeline once it is permitted to transmit its full capacity.**

- B.4 Maintain the Water Shortage Response and Management Plan to respond to drought and other supply emergencies.**

Goal 2. FACILITIES THAT ARE RELIABLE, ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSIBLE

AND EFFICIENT. Plan, provide for and maintain District facilities and other physical assets to achieve reliable, environmentally sensible, and efficient District operations.

2.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

- A.1 Complete the Supplemental Water Project (NSWP). (2024)**

- A.2 Develop a pathway to complete needed upgrades and replacements for the Blacklake wastewater treatment plant. [2018]**

- A.3 Carry out treatment plant expansion on the scheduled trigger of 700,000 gallons per day of capacity.** District is currently at 650,000 gallons per day (3-5 years).

2.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- B.1 NCS D shall maintain long-range infrastructure management, upgrade and replacement planning.**

- B.2 Manage both collection systems with the objective of zero spills and zero permit violations from all regulatory oversight agencies and to ensure the long-term preservation of assets.**

- B.3 Manage both treatment facilities with the objective of zero permit violations from all regulatory oversight agencies and to ensure the long-term preservation of assets.**

Goal 3. PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATION. Maintain a qualified, long-term and productive workforce to assure an effective organization.

3.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

A.1 Raise the Bar on Operational Effectiveness. [Ongoing with Annual Report]

IMPLEMENTATION: Staff defined and follows operating rules and agreements with purveyors, coordinates with the city of Santa Maria on a daily basis on operating the SWP, is implementing a new disinfectant, and is managing the transmission system at a more sophisticated level.

A.2 Plan for staff succession.

Develop a 3 to 5 year staff succession plan by January 2019

3.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

B.1 Ensure the District is adequately staffed with high quality, long-term employees and supported by appropriate contractors and partnerships.

B.2 Maintain a strong commitment to a safe work place.

B.3 Maintain effective disaster response capability. This includes operational resiliency in the face of floods, earthquakes and other emergencies.

Goal 4. FINANCE. Maintain conservative, long-term financial management to minimize rate impacts on customers while meeting program financial needs.

4.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

- A.1 Develop a financial plan to fund the infrastructure buildout,** including the fair share from participants in the water supply pipeline. [Prioritize after the current rate study is complete] (2018)

- A.2 Ensure billing processes are efficient, cost-effective and fair. Evaluate the potential costs and benefits of monthly compared to bi-monthly billing.** [2018]

- A.3 Develop a Near-, Mid-, and Long-Term Plan to Pay for Take-or-Pay Water.** Evaluate potential and options for ramping rates over time compared to making rate jumps as the water becomes available. [2019]

4.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- B.1 Evaluate, plan for and maintain finances that are adequate** for all needs, stable, and reliable over the long-term.

- B.2 Ensure that purveyors and others pay their fair share of financing water supply,** supplemental water, conservation, and sustainability of the regional water supply. Purveyors should pay their share up front before getting water in order to help finance next phases of supplemental water program.

- B.3 Monitor liabilities for post-employment benefits.** Continue to track State progress to reform post-employment benefit programs.

- B.4 Monitor opportunities for grant funding.**

IMPLEMENTATION: Staff is pursuing Proposition 1 grant funding and looking for other ways to pay for infrastructure improvements.

- B.5 Maintain adequate rates to fund future capital replacements.**

- B.6 Maintain sound investment policy and investments.**

Goal 5. OPERATIONS. Maintain a proactive program to ensure readiness of systems and cost-effectiveness of operations.

5.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

A.1 Ensure efficiency and effectiveness in operations, including evaluating Automated Meter Reading. [2019]

A.2 Utilize metrics for measuring operational effectiveness to ensure improvements in reliability, and cost-effectiveness of operations and maintenance. [2020]

5.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

B.1 Continue to improve maintenance management programs for both water and wastewater systems to ensure quality and reliability of services, to maintain warranties, and protect investment in new facilities (maintenance management).

B.2 Meet all regulations.

Goal 6. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION. Conduct District activities in an efficient, equitable and cost-effective manner.

6.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

A.1 Periodically review, update and reaffirm District policies and procedures. [2020]

A.2 Conduct annual customer satisfaction survey. [Annually]

6.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

B.1 Utilize technology to maximize productivity and communications.

B.2 Provide excellent customer service.

Goal 7. COMMUNICATION. Use public outreach to communicate effectively with the public to obtain their input and build understanding and support for the District.

7.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

A.1 Develop and implement a complete outreach plan and timeline with specific goals and budget each year. [2018]

IMPLEMENTATION: Will continue to maintain the staffed position that utilizes current communication strategies including multiple online platforms, monthly news articles for the local paper, monthly and quarterly newsletters, advertisements in other traditional media platforms and other outreach efforts.

7.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

B.1 Maintain productive communication and relationships with key stakeholders, such as city, County, State and Federal legislators, service clubs, etc. As appropriate, plan and assign for this role.

Goal 8. ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICES. Staff should focus on meeting the goals and objectives of existing services. Adding new services will be considered on a case-by-case basis and entered into only if funding can be found and existing services are not harmed.

8.A. ACTIVITIES FOR COMPLETION

A.1 SOLID WASTE. Seek to maximize solid waste services for community and build understanding of services like hazardous waste, recycling, etc. and District's role. [2020]

8.B. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

B.1 PARK. Remain engaged in community planning at the Board level and communicate District's commitment to follow through with pending acquisition when/if availability of funding source is secured.

B.2 STREET LIGHTING. Monitor maintenance of facilities and respond to observed problems.

B.3 DRAINAGE. Monitor maintenance of facilities and respond to observed problems.

B.4 STREET LANDSCAPING. Monitor landscape maintenance and respond to observed problems.

Overseeing the Plan

To ensure that the Strategic Plan continues to be implemented and results achieved, the District plans to take the steps outlined below:

- Publish the Mission, Vision, Values Goals and Objectives in the, newsletter and on the district website
- Incorporate the Mission, Vision, Values, Goals and Objectives into the employee handbook, as well as orientation and training materials for new employees.
- Present the Strategic Plan to the entire staff so they are familiar with it and can better undertake their individual roles in fulfilling it.
- GM performance will be evaluated in part based on their implementation of the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.
- Staff will reference Strategic Plan items on Board meeting agendas as appropriate.
- The Board, with staff support, will review and update the Strategic Plan periodically and roll it forward.

Appendix

Expectations for the Strategic Planning Process

The first question asked in the first workshop was for each of the participants to share their initial expectations for the workshop by considering their own goals for the workshop, and what they hoped the outcome would be. The expectations are organized into topic headings below.

Note: the numbers in parenthesis indicate how many comments were made on that topic. E.G. BUILD CONSENSUS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES was commented on 7 times.

BUILD CONSENSUS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES (7)

Gain consensus on important issues coming up in the next several years.

Identify our priorities and reality check them.

Identify goals and objectives to stay on track.

Foster a good discussion and hear from each other.

Team building and hear from others.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF (3)

WHERE DO WE GO NEXT? (2)

Completed many projects, now what?

FUTURE INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS (2)

Consider institutional relationships in light of upcoming LAFCO MSR

Determine how to deal with SOCWA moving forward (JPA Agreements, Representation, Cost Allocation and Management)

Identify how can we engage with neighbors more and more effectively?

BOARD AND STAFF ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

Develop a roadmap to pave the way for new direction in a way that would be useful in the near term and to future directors and staff.

Think ahead and consider what actions may affect us - supply, technology, regulations, etc. -- so we can be prepared.

Conduct what-if exercises and scenarios, and provide clarity of direction.

LOCAL WATER SUPPLY

Consider more options.

Identify what is next with recycled water?

SUCCESSION

BACK COVER
Prepared By:
RCC LOGO
www.rauchcc.com