

Burney Water District 2011-2016 Strategic Plan

2011-2016 Strategic Plan

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Burney Water District 2011-2016 Strategic Plan

What is a Strategic Plan? In general, small water systems draw up formal plans for important capital improvements projects and when such plans are required (e.g., for permits, licenses, rate review processes, etc.). This kind of long-range planning typically involves developing a goal and a series of milestones that will be met over a certain period of time. However, it typically does not prepare systems to successfully respond to unknown or changing conditions, nor does it involve improving operations and management.

Strategic planning guides these infrastructure improvements and focuses the use of limited resources on previously defined priorities, improves decision-making, and enhances responsiveness and performance of a system. Strategic planning not only provides a road map for accomplishing these tasks, but also prepares a system to effectively respond to unexpected events, while accomplishing its overall goals and objectives.

The Board of Directors of the Burney Water District held a public meeting on June 4, 2011 at the District offices to develop its Strategic Plan. This document represents the results of that meeting. Once adopted, the approved Plan is intended to:

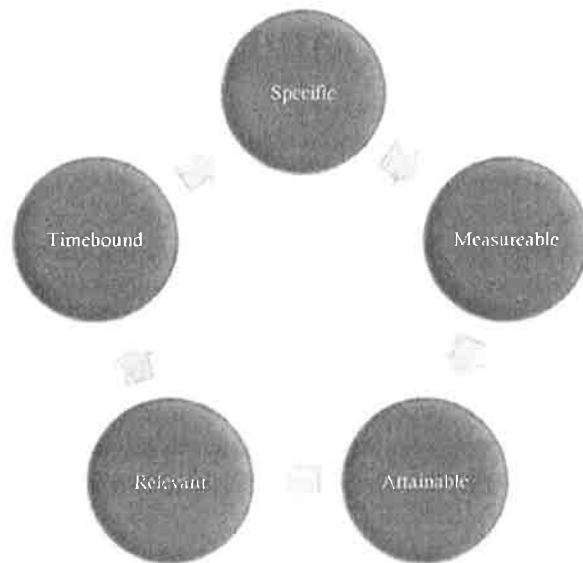
- Provide an actionable road map for the District's next five years.
- Provide guidance and direction for staff.
- Provide a plan for replacing aging infrastructure, meeting extensive regulatory requirements, operating in an environment with increased competition and public expectations, and ensuring system security and safety.

Mission Statement

The Burney Water District is committed to providing a safe and reliable water supply, environmentally safe disposal of wastewater, and responsible governance of our pool and parks for our community.

Goals

The Board of Directors has set several short and long terms goals as part of this Strategic Plan. Each goal is based on the principals of SMART planning:



The Board of Directors identified a set of Goals that form the basis of this Strategic Plan. These goals will be met within the next five years. Programs, projects and initiatives that are brought before the Board during this time should *clearly illustrate how they will contribute the achieving these goals.*

1. Develop procedures and protocols for all aspects of Board actions, District management, operations and maintenance.
2. Achieve fiscal stability via a balanced budget to ensure the long-term viability of the District.
3. Create a positive work environment for staff at all levels.
4. Develop a proactive, funded approach to infrastructure maintenance and emergency preparedness.
5. Provide rate-payers transparency in all operations, programs and management of the District.
6. Develop viable partnerships to improve and enhance District services and operations.
7. Explore all viable options for cost savings, grant/funding/financing opportunities to benefit the District.

1.0 Management Roles and Board Norms

Goal #1 calls for development of procedures and protocols for all aspects of Board actions, District management operations and maintenance. This section of the Strategic Plan is specific to how the Board will interact with each other and staff and establishes roles and norms to support management.

The Roles of the Board of Directors, General Manager and Staff

Task 1.1 The Board of Directors shall agree to adopt a management philosophy which establishes specific roles for the Board, the General Manager and staff as follows:

- Governance focuses on accountability and provides direction to and oversight of, the overall operation and management of the District. This is the role of the Board of Directors.
- Management focuses on responsibility and controls the day-to-day operation and management of the District. This is the role of the General Manager.
- Operations should focus on performance, implementation and must meet certain performance standards. This is the role of District staff.

Board Norms

The norms of the Board develop as the usual way it gets things done. They are the accumulated habits about how directors behave and interact with each other. Norms are usually tacit and may or may not support the outcomes the board needs and wants to achieve. The Board of Directors discussed this at its Strategic Planning Workshop and agreed to the adoption of norms to improve its performance. These norms will be introduced to new directors in the future. The Board Chair may invoke the norms as part of that role, or the responsibility can be placed with the Vice Chair during meetings.

Task 1.2 The Board shall adopt the following norms:

- Board members will review agendas and staff reports prior to meetings and contact the General Manager prior to meetings to ask for clarifications or more information if necessary.
- Board members will address concerns regarding programs, staff performance and business to the General Manager and will refrain from discussions directly with staff.

- Board members will treat staff members, stakeholders and members of the public with respect at all times.
- All Board members contribute and adds value.
- Board members will strive to stay focused on the agenda topic.
- Board members agree to listen without interrupting or talking over each other.
- Board members will ask questions and explore concerns without getting mired in tactical details.
- Board members agree, if it needs to be said, they will say it during the meeting instead of in the parking lot or in other arenas.
- Board actions and discussions will remain at a strategic or policy level instead of detailed, tactical level.
- Board members will assume positive intent of other Board members, staff and members of the public.
- Board members will avoid defensiveness if challenged.
- Board members agree that issues will not be re-hashed after voting; support is expected after voting.
- Board members agree to speak to a purpose and avoid grandstanding.
- All Board members can and will support change when appropriate.
- Board members are encouraged to take a stand on issues but must also learn when it is time to let go.

2.0 Fiscal Planning

Like many others municipal agencies California, the Burney Water District is faced with increasing costs of conducting its business, maintaining its infrastructure, remaining prepared for emergencies and ensuring the safe, reliable delivery of services for its community. The Board has explored a variety of options over the years to close the gap between revenues and expenditures. The fiscal health of the District is essential to ensure its long-term viability and as such, the Board of Directors discussed how to address these challenges as part of its Strategic Planning process.

Water and Wastewater Rate and Fee Study

The Burney Water District has implemented rate increases over the years but has not been consistent in its review of actual costs of providing water and wastewater services. As this accounts for 99% of the District's income, it is critical that rates reflect actual costs of doing business *including* costs associated with long-term maintenance, improvement and investments in existing infrastructure. Every effort should be made to reduce costs in all areas of operations to bridge the gap between revenues and expenditures. The Board agrees that it must strive for a balanced budget each and every year.

To ensure fiscal viability the Board directs the General Manager to undertake the following tasks:

- Task 2.1 Utilizing a consultant, complete a comprehensive Rate Study during fiscal year 2011/2012 to endure the fiscal viability of District operations. This will include a review of all costs including labor, overhead, and infrastructure/asset management for water and wastewater services.
- Task 2.2 Review projected versus actual income and expenses on an annual basis and provide the Board with an annual report and recommendations for changes and/or adjustments to fiscal projections for both income and expenditures and means to reduce costs when possible.
- Task 2.3 Provide the Board of Directors with an annual recommendation adjust rates if necessary to reflect cost of living. Consistent market driven increases based on the true costs of doing business will give the District the ability to ensure safe, secure delivery of water and wastewater services to its rate payers.

Pool /Park User Fee Study

The Burney Water District currently manages and provides programs at a community pool. It also has oversight over two parks which currently are not being utilized to their full potential, largely because of a lack of funding for programs and concern that this may or may not be an area the community wishes to see the District involved in.

During the last two fiscal years, the District successfully acquired grant funding to supplement maintenance efforts for the pool. There is also an active citizenry that supports community access to the pool. The Board wishes to accommodate the needs of the community by developing plans that balance cost and use of these assets.

The Board directs the General Manager to undertake the following tasks:

- Task 2.4 Utilize an outside consultant to review the current costs of operating and maintaining the community pool and make recommendations which may include but are not limited to

revisions to user fees, development of an assessment fee and/or other means which may be necessary to provide programs and services to our community.

- Task 2.5 Explore the fiscal viability of managing, maintaining and providing services via programs at the two parks the District currently controls. The study should include an outreach component to gauge sentiment amount District constituents regarding the need and appropriateness of the District engaging in these services. As a cost savings measure, the General Manger will seek the assistance of a college Planning Department utilizing students to prepare the Study as part of their education process. Appropriate schools including Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Chico State University and others will be offered this opportunity.

Energy Savings

The District has already successfully reorganized its staff and made appropriate reductions to lower costs. The next highest expense incurred by the District is in energy.

The Board of Directors directs the General Manager to undertake the following task:

- Task 2.6 Explore the use of smart meters, alternative energy options (solar, LED lighting, induction lighting) and/or other means to reduce the Districts energy costs without incurring upfront costs for transition and/or capital investment.

Grant, Financing and Funding Options

Federal, state and private agencies offer a broad range of grant programs, low cost financing options and matching fund programs for water and wastewater service providers throughout California. The ability of the District to secure these resources when appropriate will be greatly enhanced by adoption of this Strategic Plan and the development of other tools described in Section 3.0.

- Task 2.7 The Board, General Manager and staff will be encouraged to proactively identify all potential grant, financing and funding options which may be appropriate.

3.0 Prioritization of Programs, Projects and Partnerships

The District's assets include a treatment plant, offices, community pools, parks, nearly 30 miles of pipes, three storage tanks, three wells, two lift stations, one booster station and shops with a net worth of approximately \$6 million. The Sewer system consists of 12 miles of sewer mains, a half-mile mile of force mains, and almost three miles of laterals that the District is responsible for. Maintaining these assets ensures that the District will

be able to consistently deliver water, wastewater and other services as directed by ratepayers into the future. Currently there is no plans in place to allocate appropriate fiscal and human resources for the ongoing maintenance of these assets. The Board believes this is a critical gap in its long term planning efforts and as such explored prudent measures to determine appropriate allocations of funds and staff time for this task.

Planning Documents

The Board of Directors directs the General Manager to undertake the following tasks:

Task 3.1 Utilize an outside consultant to develop a basic Water Master Plan/Capital Improvement Plan. This will serve as blueprint for planning a district's capital expenditures. It will detail costs for proactive maintenance of the Districts pipelines, pump stations and facilities and allocate funds for emergency repairs on an annual basis. The Plan will:

- Facilitate coordination between capital needs and the District's operating budget.
- Identify the most economical means of financing capital projects.
- Increase opportunities for obtaining federal and state aid.
- Focus attention on community objectives and fiscal capacity.
- Keep the public informed about future needs and projects.
- Coordinate District activities and those of neighboring and overlapping units of local government to reduce duplication.
- Encourage careful project planning and design to avoid costly mistakes and helps the District reach desired goals.

Task 3.2 Utilize an outside consultant to develop a Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP). This is a document that describes the activities the District will use to manage its wastewater collection system effectively. Effective management of a wastewater collection system includes:

- Maintaining or improving the condition of the collection system infrastructure in order to provide reliable service into the future.
- Cost-effectively minimizing infiltration/inflow (I/I) and providing adequate sewer capacity to accommodate design storm flows; and
- Minimizing the number and impact of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) that occur.

- Task 3.3 Engage staff members at all levels in the development of an internal Plan to identify cost saving measures and overall increase in efficiency in all aspects of District operations. This should be an annual exercise to actively involve staff members in District operations.

Develop Partnerships

Partnerships are key to the District's long-term health and can provide a multitude of cost-savings solutions to implementation of programs and initiatives.

- Task 3.4 The District will seek to identify potential public and private section partners to support its efforts in delivering services. This may include active engagement in Shasta County water management programs, partnerships with academic interests in the region to provide services and/or community based organizations such as Master Gardeners. The Board encourages the General Manager and staff as appropriate to become involved with the California Special Districts Association, the Rural Water Forum and others organizations that provide support, education and legislative representation for the District.

4.0 Employee Management

The Board believes the employees of the District constitute one of its greatest assets however it recognizes that its recent staff reorganization and a shift to a unionized shop have created dissention and unease in the workplace. The Board believes its staff is critical to the successful implementation of this Strategic Plan and

The Board of Directors directs the General Manager to undertake the following tasks:

- Task 4.1 Develop performance evaluation program for all staff members.
- Task 4.2 Commit to annual performance review for staff. The Board commits to an annual performance review for the District General Manager.
- Task 4.3 Develop team-building activities for District staff.
- Task 4.4 Develop cross training opportunities to for staff.
- Task 4.5 Support educational opportunities for staff that provide specific benefit to District operations.
- Task 4.5 Develop intranet/web based communications to support staff development and enhance communications.
- Task 4.5 Proactively engage and communicate with staff. Staff should be made aware of Board actions, programs and initiatives at the earliest possible opportunity.

5.0 Communications

The Board of Directors recognizes that it serves as the pleasure of the District's ratepayers and as such, believes it has a responsibility to provide transparency in all District operations and management. Customers should have access to complete and comprehensive information regarding the District's expenditures, programs and initiatives. Customer service should be a priority with staff at all levels properly trained to respond to all customer interactions and inquiries.

Communications also applies to regional municipal agencies and potential partners. The Board believes that the District's efforts in this area can boost awareness and support for programs and connect the District with other agencies with similar goals.

The Board of Directors directs the General Manager to undertake the following tasks:

- Task 5.1 Utilize a consultant to develop a Communications Plan for the District to ensure proactive communication with rate-payers, businesses, development community, regional stakeholders and partners. The purpose of the plan is to develop cost efficient channels to promote the District's programs, public education and advocacy efforts. By planning a long-term strategy, the District will be positioned to be more proactive and strategic, rather than consistently reacting to the existing environment.
- Task 5.2 Establish a website to provide the public with easy access to District information, programs, agenda's and education materials. The domain name www.burneywaterdistrict.com has been secured by Flint Strategies for the District's use. The site should be easy to maintain by District staff.
- Task 5.3 Establish protocols and procedures for customer service and train staff at all levels. The Board believes customer care is a primary responsibility of the District and as such, should be part of the organization's corporate culture.
- Task 5.4 Provide educational materials to schools, ratepayers, stakeholders and others regarding District services, conservations efforts and other programs (FOG-Fats, Oils Grease). Utilize existing materials provided at Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), California Special Districts Association (CSDA) and others whenever possible.

6.0 Environmental Stewardship (Sustainability)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) applies the concept of sustainability as follows:

“...the concept of sustainability has evolved to reflect perspectives of both the public and private sectors. A public policy perspective would define sustainability as the satisfaction of basic economic, social, and security needs now and in the future without undermining the natural resource base and environmental quality on which life depends. From a business perspective, the goal of sustainability is to increase long-term shareholder and social value, while decreasing industry’s use of materials and reducing negative impacts on the environment.

Common to both the public policy and business perspectives is recognition of the need to support a growing economy while reducing the social and economic costs of economic growth. Sustainable development can be facilitated by policies that integrate environmental, economic, and social values in decision making. From a business perspective, sustainable development is accomplished by capturing system dynamics, building resilient and adaptive systems, anticipating and managing variability and risk, and earning a profit. Sustainable development reflects not the trade-off between business and the environment but the synergy between them.

The Board believes that a successful approach to environmental stewardship includes the adoption of sustainable practices that balance environmental needs with economic realities and equity within its community.

Task 6.1 The Board will seek to develop an adopt policies that support sustainable development as defined by its local community.

Task 6.2 The Board will prioritize programs and initiatives with the greatest environmental benefit to the community and its ratepayers.

Summary

This Plan was developed as part of a collaborative effort between the Burney Water District’s Board of Directors and its General Manager. The purpose of this document is to guide the management, direction and priorities of the District over the next five years. This Plan is a living document and it is anticipated that it will be refined and amended during that time however; the fundamental goals described are expected to remain consistent. It is the Board’s intention that this Plan will support its efforts to deliver on its commitment to provide services to its community and remain fiscally viable in the future.

Appendix

Matrix of Goals and Tactics

Schedule for Implementation, Roles and Projected Costs

	Task 5.0 Customer Communications				Task 6.0 Environmental Stewardship	
Goals	5.1 Develop a Comprehensive Communications Plan	5.2 Develop a BWD Website	5.3 Establish Customer Service Protocols and Train Staff	5.4 Provide Educational Materials re: BWD Operations	6.1 Adopt Policies that Support Sustainability	6.2 Prioritize Programs that Support Sustainability
Develop procedures and protocols for all aspects of Board actions, District management, operations and maintenance.	✓		✓			
Achieve fiscal stability via a balanced budget to ensure the long-term viability of the District.					✓	✓
Create a positive work environment for staff at all levels.	✓				✓	
Develop a proactive, funded approach to infrastructure maintenance and emergency preparedness.					✓	✓
Provide rate-payers transparency in all operations, programs and management of the District.	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Develop viable partnerships to improve and enhance District services and operations.	✓				✓	✓
Explore all viable options for cost savings grant/funding/financing OPS TO BENEFIT DISTRICT					✓	✓

Implementation Lead, Schedule and Estimated Costs

	Lead	2011/12	Est. Cost	2012/13	Est. Cost	2013/14	Est. Cost	2014/15 2015/16	Est. Cost
TASK 1.0									
1.1 Adopt Management Focus	Board	✓				✓			
1.2 Adopt Norms	Board	✓				✓			
TASK 2.0									
2.1 Water / Sewer Rate Study	GM Consultant	✓	\$ 5,000					✓	TBD
2.2 Annual Fiscal Review	GM Finance	✓		✓		✓		✓	
2.3 Cost of Living Adjustment	GM Finance	✓		✓		✓		✓	
2.4 Pool User Study	GM Consultant			✓	\$ 5,000				
2.5 Park User/ Feasibility Study	GM Consultant			✓	\$ 2,000 ¹				
2.6 Energy Savings	GM Consultant	✓							
2.7 Grant Research Funding	GM Staff Board Partners	✓		✓		✓		✓	
TASK 3.0									
3.1 Water Master Plan/CIP	GM Consultant	✓	\$ 5,000						
3.2 Sewer System Management Plan	GM Consultant			✓	\$ 5,000				
3.3 Staff Cost Savings Ideas	GM Staff	✓		✓		✓		✓	
3.4 Develop Partnerships	GM Staff Board	✓		✓		✓		✓	
TASK 4.0									
4.1 Performance Evaluation	GM Board	✓							
4.2 Annual Review	GM Board	✓		✓		✓		✓	
4.3 Team Building	GM	✓		✓		✓		✓	
4.4 Cross Training	GM Staff	✓		✓		✓		✓	
4.5 Education Programs	GM Staff	✓		✓		✓		✓	
4.6 Employee Intranet	GM Staff	✓	See task 5.2						
4.7 Proactive Communications	GM	✓		✓		✓		✓	
TASK 5.0									
5.1 Develop a Comprehensive Communications Plan	Consultant	✓	\$ 2,500						
5.2 Develop a BWD Website	Consultant	✓	\$ 500						
5.3 Establish Customer Service Protocols and Train Staff	GM Staff	✓		✓		✓		✓	
5.4 Provide Educational Materials re: BWD Operations	GM Partners	✓		✓		✓		✓	
TASK 6.0									
6.1 Adopt Policies that Support Sustainability	Board	✓		✓		✓		✓	
6.2 Prioritize Programs that Support Sustainability	Board	✓		✓		✓		✓	
TOTAL ANNUAL INVESTMENT			\$ 13,000		\$ 12,000				

¹ Cost to cover hard costs for student efforts, travel and printing.