

**2017-2018**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
Adopted 2017



Making every drop count since 1918



# ***Flowing Forward***



**Coachella Valley Water District**  
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**Board of Directors**

John Powell Jr., president  
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**General Manager**

Jim Barrett





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# Our Mission

To meet the water-related needs of the people through dedicated employees, providing high quality water at a reasonable cost.





## Message from the General Manager

I am pleased to present to the community this 2017-18 Strategic Plan that will help guide Coachella Valley Water District's leadership and staff as we strive to meet your water-related needs.

In May 2017, the CVWD Board of Directors adopted its fourth Strategic Plan. Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide an organization, what it does and why. It is a plan for today and for the future.

The 2017-18 Strategic Plan presented here builds upon the important process started four years ago and helps define the District's priorities. This year's plan identifies 23 Strategic Initiatives, which are the projects that will help us achieve the plan's overall goals.

Development of the Strategic Plan was a collaborative and transparent process that included all five elected members of the Board of Directors and 48 employees representing every department within the District. Under the guidance of a professional strategic planning firm, this group met for a day-long workshop that was open to the public.

Originally, 34 initiatives were proposed and evaluated based on importance and whether they were measurable, realistic and provided a high return on investment. These were then prioritized into the final 23 Strategic Initiatives outlined in this document.

The focus of this document is two-fold. It first looks at last year's accomplishments and then moves to the current year's expectations. Strategic planning implies that some organizational decisions and actions are more important than others are, and that much of the strategy lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important to achieving organizational success.

The final product will shape future decisions and help us meet the water-related needs of the community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Jim Barrett**  
General Manager

## Coachella Valley Water District at a glance

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) is a special district established in 1918 by the state legislature and governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected to four-year terms by District voters.

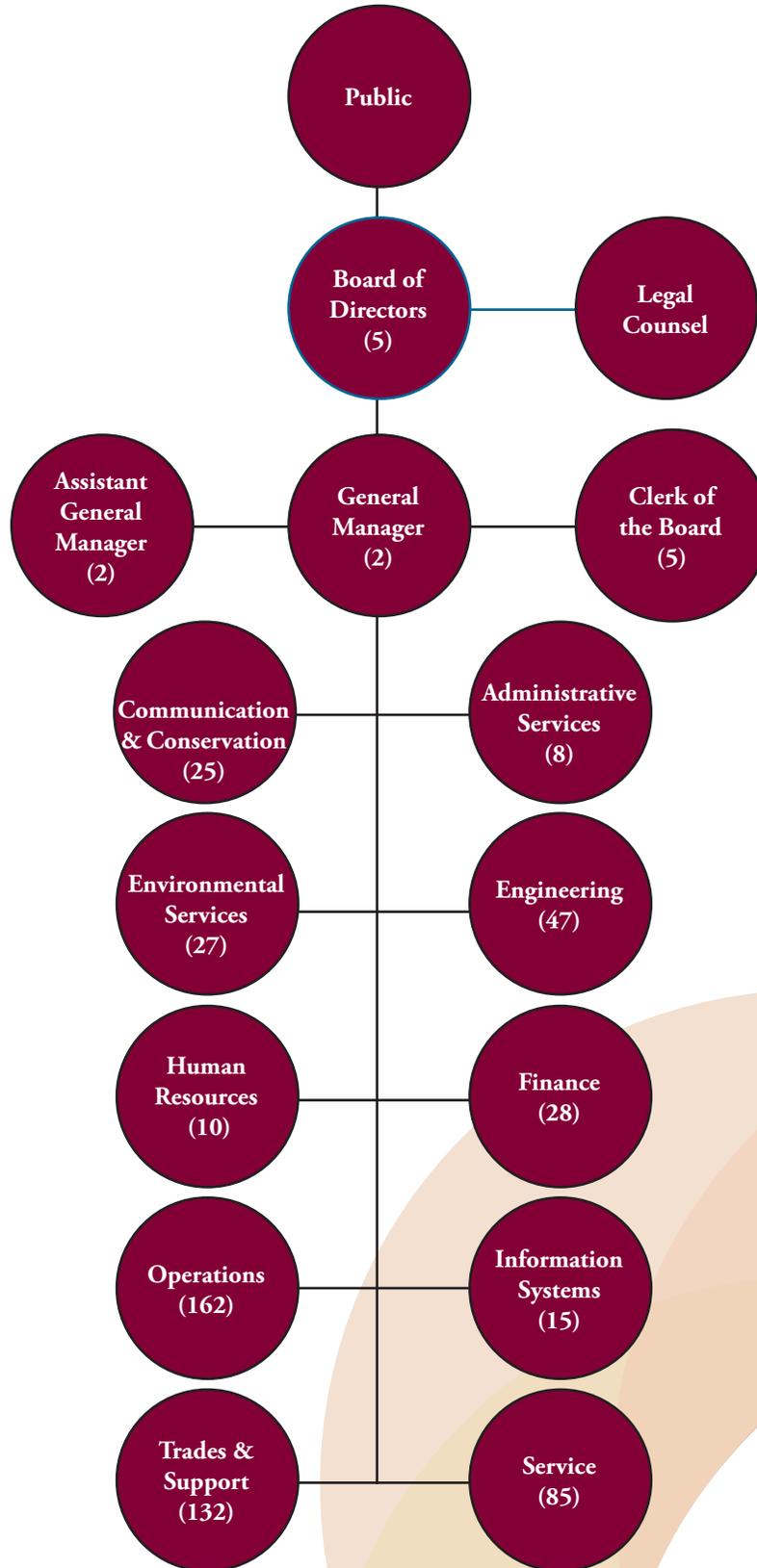
Today, CVWD has grown into a multi-faceted agency with nearly 550 employees helping to provide a variety of water-related utility services to more than 290,000 people in the Coachella Valley. (The California Department of Finance, 2017 reports a valleywide population of nearly 365,000 full-time residents.)



The primary fields of service are:

- 1** Domestic/drinking water treatment and distribution to approximately 108,000 homes and businesses. All of the drinking water supplied by CVWD comes from the groundwater basin.
- 2** Irrigation water importation and distribution. The 123-mile Coachella Canal provides Colorado River water to local farmers and golf courses in the eastern Coachella Valley.
- 3** Wastewater collection and treatment. The District owns and operates five wastewater reclamation plants that receive a combined average of 17 million gallons of wastewater per day.
- 4** Recycled water distribution. Treated wastewater is distributed to golf courses and other customers for landscape irrigation.
- 5** Groundwater management. CVWD replenishes the groundwater supply at three different facilities in the Coachella Valley. At two of the locations, the effort is collaborative with Desert Water Agency (DWA).
- 6** Regional stormwater/flood protection. The District protects nearly 600 square miles from flooding through a system that includes 16 stormwater protection channels.

# Organizational Structure



Note: Numbers within the chart reflect actual staffing levels as of June 30, 2017.

## Community profile

The Coachella Valley extends approximately 45 miles in Riverside County, southeast from the San Bernardino Mountains to the Salton Sea. The Valley is approximately 15 miles wide and surrounded by scenic, rugged mountains along most of its length.

The Valley is located within the Sonoran Desert with average daily highs ranging from 71 to 107 degrees and average nightly lows from 44 to 80 degrees. Most of the nearly 3.5 inches of annual rain received falls in December through February with some rainfall also being received in August as monsoonal weather patterns move in from the south

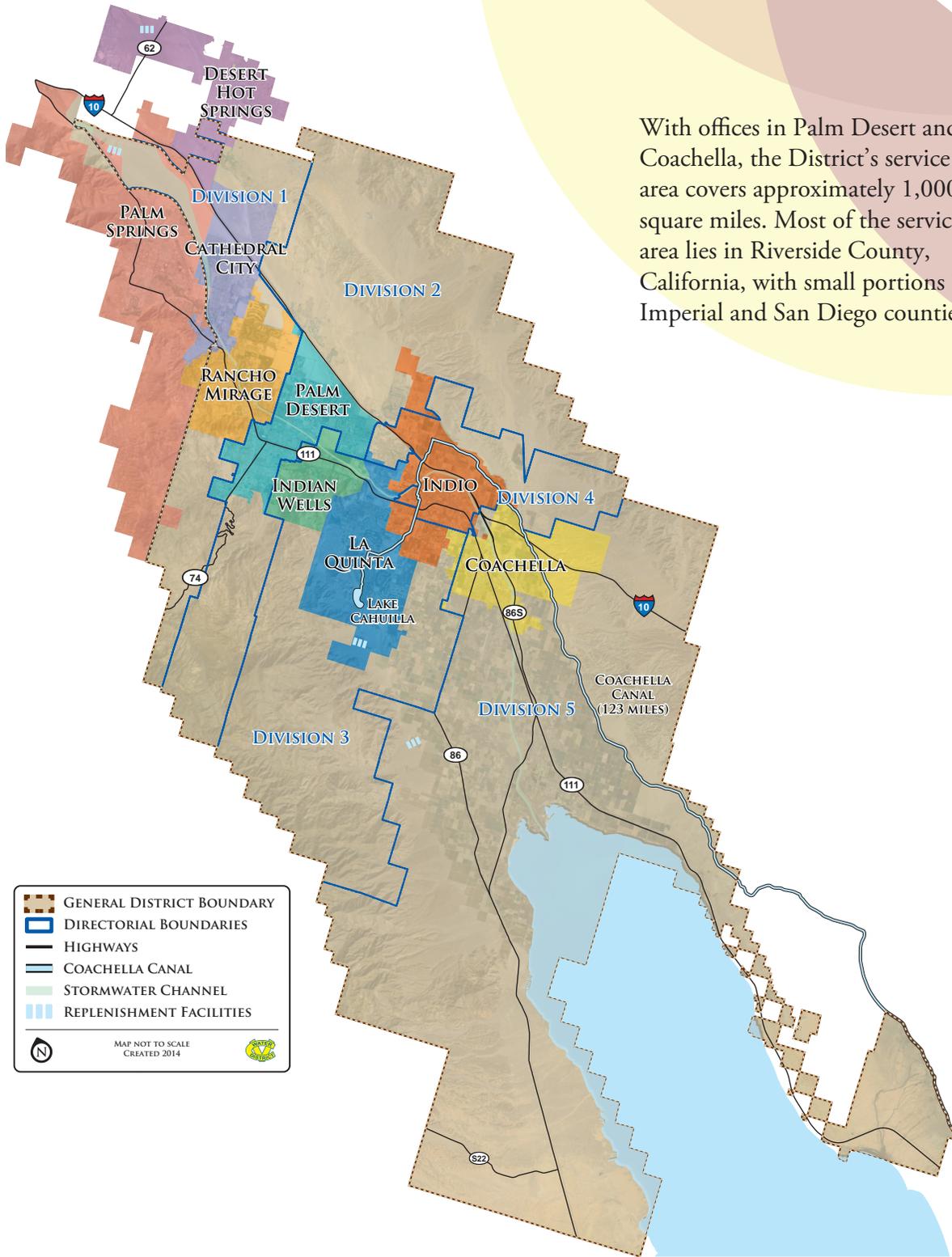
The elevations on the Valley floor range from 1,600 feet at the northwest end of the Valley, to 250 feet below sea level at the southeast end of the Valley.

The Valley's year-round population is approximately 364,987 (California Department of Finance, 2017) but this figure increases significantly during the months of November through May with an influx of "snowbirds" escaping the cold winters of Canada, the Pacific Northwest, and the Northeastern United States.

The Valley is recognized as the golf, tennis and polo capital of the West. It plays host to many internationally known recreational sports, music events and attractions that support tourism and the local economy.



# Boundary Map



With offices in Palm Desert and Coachella, the District's service area covers approximately 1,000 square miles. Most of the service area lies in Riverside County, California, with small portions in Imperial and San Diego counties.

## Issues of Concern

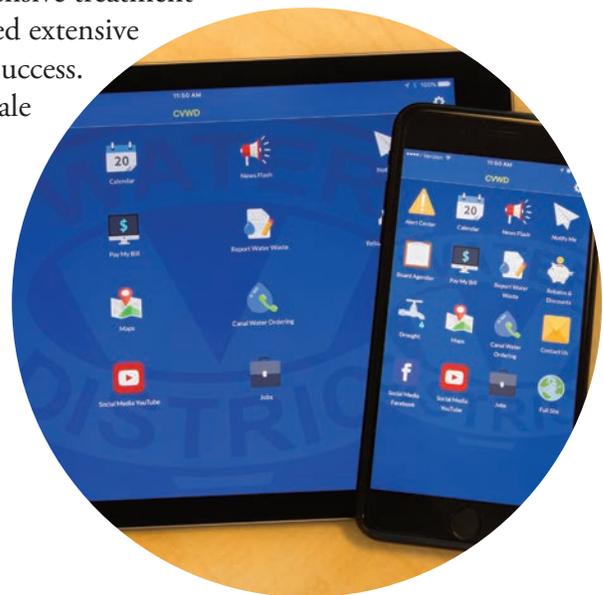
There are several significant issues currently facing the District that influenced the development of the Strategic Goals. The District paired these issues with the Effective Utility Management (EUM) attributes (in parenthesis) as a reference point for determining priorities. Among the current issues are:

- 1 On July 5, 2017 the District submitted a request to the U.S. Supreme Court that it reviews the legality of the ruling in favor of Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians suit against Desert Water Agency (DWA) and the District that was filed in 2013. The suit claims senior reserved groundwater rights and seeks to permanently stop DWA and the District from withdrawing groundwater from the aquifer in the western Coachella Valley, and replenishing the aquifer without treating the water first. (Water Resource Sustainability).
- 2 In May 2014 the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) approved a 10 parts per billion (ppb) maximum contaminant level (MCL) for Chromium-6 to become effective as of July 1, 2014. At the same time, responsibility for implementation of the MCL was transferred to the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water. Complying with the new MCL will have wide-ranging impacts on District operations and infrastructure. A comprehensive study was completed to determine the most cost-effective approach. Ion exchange, although expensive, was the method determined to be the best solution for the District.

In May 2017, a judge ordered the state to establish a new MCL, taking into consideration the economic feasibility of compliance. Coincidentally, while researching the most cost-effective treatment method, a new and potentially less expensive treatment method was discovered. The District has performed extensive tests using the new treatment method with great success.

In August the District is expected to start a full-scale demonstration of this new treatment method in the Sky Valley area. (Product Quality and Water Resource Sustainability).

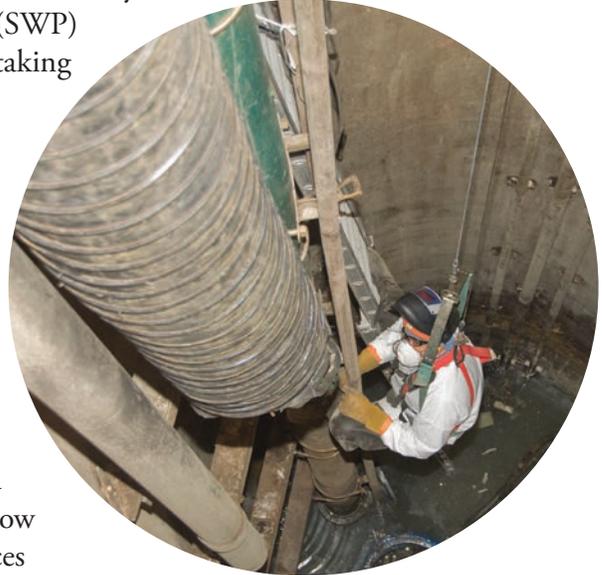
- 3 On April 7, 2017, Gov. Jerry Brown declared the 2014 statewide drought emergency over. In 2015 the governor had issued an executive order mandating new water-use restrictions and conservation goals. While the drought is officially over, Gov. Brown stated, “Conservation must remain a way of life.” Because the Valley is located in a desert, by definition, drought is normal and CVWD has a long history of effective groundwater management planning to ensure future water supplies. The *Coachella Valley Water Management Plan* details several strategies and projects to eliminate overdraft of the aquifer, including increased conservation, utilization of recycled and imported water for golf and farm irrigation and continued groundwater replenishment.



## Issues of Concern (cont'd)

One of CVWD's key tools for groundwater sustainability, in addition to conservation, is imported water for groundwater replenishment and source substitution. Because of the heavy snowfall received in Northern California in the 2017 water year (October 1 - September 30), State Water Project (SWP) allocations have been set at 85%. CVWD is also taking advance deliveries of water from Metropolitan Water District (MWD) that will be stored in the Coachella valley's groundwater basin until such time as it is needed by MWD. (Water Resource Sustainability and Community Sustainability).

- 4 Through the foresight of our predecessors in the Valley, CVWD is one of only two California water agencies that holds rights to both the Colorado River and the State Water Project. However, droughts within California and the Colorado River basin are stark reminders of how vulnerable imported water supplies are to the forces of nature, and that these supplies need to be protected and optimally used. (Water Resource Sustainability).



- 5 Although the bulk of the domestic water system is relatively new, ongoing repairs and replacement projects are required. The Coachella Canal irrigation system is nearing 70 years old, with many of the 485 miles of underground irrigation lines in need of repair or replacement. The District is the main agency that provides stormwater protection for the Coachella Valley and several areas remain unprotected. (Infrastructure Strategy & Performance).

## Budgeting

Although the District continues to enjoy a healthy financial condition in 2017-18 (total annual budget of \$369.9 million, divided into \$263.0 million for operating budget and \$106.9 million for capital projects), budgetary constraints were still considered during the Strategic Plan development.

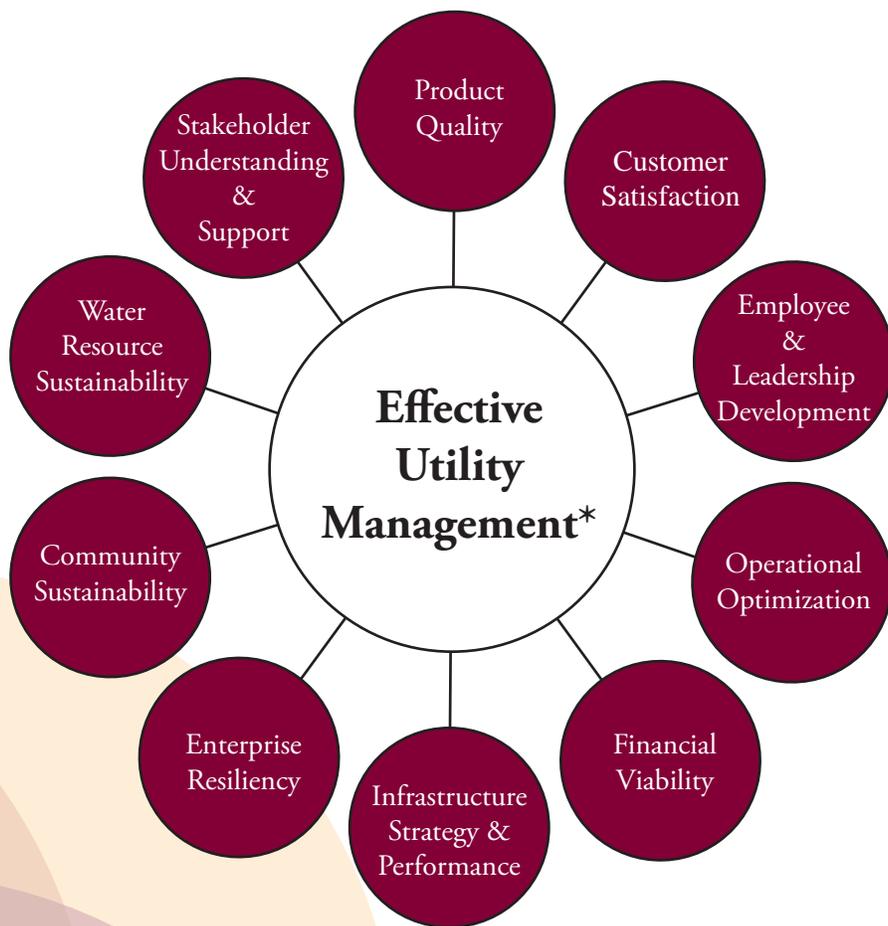
The 2017-18 Strategic Planning process was very successful, generating 34 distinct projects. Realizing the timing and budgetary constraints for the 2017-18 fiscal year, a total of 23 projects were identified as ones rising to the top of the priority list, and are presented on pages 19-25 of this document. The other 11 projects have been retained, and will be revisited in the future.

Pages 12-18 of this document show fiscal year 2016-17 strategic initiatives/projects and respective accomplishments. When a project was not completed in its entirety during the fiscal year, a note indicating its carryover status has been made.

## What is a Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan is a tool that defines what is critical to the District's success and the initiatives necessary to guide the District toward its achievement of goals. Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide an organization, what it does and why.

The strategic goals were developed within the framework of Effective Utility Management (EUM), which was developed by the major water and wastewater organizations in the United States. Effective utility management helps water and wastewater utilities select priorities for improvement, based on the unique needs of their communities. The framework addresses operations, infrastructure, customer satisfaction, community welfare, natural resource stewardship, and financial performance.



\*The 10 attributes of an effectively managed water utility, as developed by leading industry associations, reflects 2016 revisions.

## CVWD's Strategic Goals

The District considered external issues and internal challenges before identifying and committing to the broad goals below, which are designed to move the District forward in executing its mission. The strategic goals the District has selected cover six specific areas of focus.

### 1 Employee Workforce Development

Measurements of success in this area include assessing employee turnover rates and job satisfaction, and setting targets for training and opportunities for advancement.

### 2 Financial Stability

Measurements of success in this area include assessing budget health, adhering to proper accounting policies and procedures and ensuring rates cover necessary costs.

### 3 Water Supply Sustainability

Measurements of success in this area include developing strategies to manage all water supplies to meet the community's needs, especially long-term and during drought years.

### 4 Exceptional Customer Service

Measurements of success in this area include assessing the number of complaints received, setting targets for desirable customer service levels and soliciting/incorporating customer feedback.

### 5 Water Quality and Environmental Leadership

Measurements of success in this area include drinking water compliance rates, measuring service interruptions and sewer overflows.

### 6 Infrastructure Investment and Management

Measurements of success in this area include assessing age and value of assets and developing a replacement programs.



**GOAL 1: EMPLOYEE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT****Objective 1:** Maintain competitive salaries & benefits

- ✘ Initiative 1: Develop metrics to monitor the pay-for-performance program.  
Status: Complete.

**Objective 2:** Succession planning and knowledge management

- ✘ Initiative 2: Conduct training program for supervisory & leadership skills for non-supervisors.  
Status: Completed 2017 program and preparing for 2018 program.

**Objective 3:** Employee engagement

- ✘ Initiative 3: Design & administer an employee opinion/needs survey.  
Status: Complete.



**GOAL 2: FINANCIAL STABILITY****Objective 1: Follow industry-recognized rate making practices**

- ❖ Initiative 4: Complete cost of service studies (COSS) for water system backup facilities charge.

Status: Consultant is working with Engineering staff on capacity data.

- ❖ Initiative 5: Complete COSS for canal capacity.

Status: Presented to the Board.

- ❖ Initiative 6: Complete COSS for non-potable water.

Status: Complete.

- ❖ Initiative 7: Complete COSS for sanitation fund.

Status: Complete.

- ❖ Initiative 8: Complete COSS for sanitation capacity charge.

Status: Consultant is working with Engineering staff on capacity data.

- ❖ Initiative 9: Refine Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budgeting process to improve execution.

Status: Complete.



**GOAL 2: FINANCIAL STABILITY****Objective 2: Maintain organizational fiscal health**

- ❖ Initiative 10: Complete bond rating process.

Status: Removed from list; no longer needed. The District determined that using low interest State Revolving Funds would benefit both the District and rate payers.

**Objective 3: Ensure integrity and transparency of financial process**

- ❖ Initiative 11: Develop internal control policies.

Status: Some policies still pending: grants, financial, budget, internal controls and capitalization.

- ❖ Initiative 12: Maintain reserve target level.

Status: Complete.



**GOAL 3: WATER SUPPLY SUSTAINABILITY****Objective 1:** Enact more aggressive conservation

- ❖ Initiative 13: Perform quality control evaluation and improve data quality for water budgets.

Status: Complete.

**Objective 2:** Expand non-potable water program

- ❖ Initiative 14: Develop and implement Non-Potable Water Master Plan.

Status: Complete.

**Objective 3:** Update and comply with Water Management Plan

- ❖ Initiative 15: Develop infrastructure solutions for disadvantaged communities.

Status: Complete.

**Objective 4:** Protect water supply and optimize usage

- ❖ Initiative 16: Develop mechanisms for fully utilizing imported water supplies.

Status: Complete.

- ❖ Initiative 17: Keep Board of Directors informed about state imported water developments, activities and opportunities.

Status: Complete.



**GOAL 4: EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE****Objective 1: Optimize customer experience**

- ❖ Initiative 18: Implement new website portal for paying bills.  
Status: Complete.
- ❖ Initiative 19: Implement selected bilingual outreach & education recommendations.  
Status: Complete.

**Objective 2: Improve internal communications**

- ❖ Initiative 20: Centralize CVWD's ordinances, resolutions & historical public entity agreements.  
Status: Document with attorneys for review. Planned completion date is mid-August.
- ❖ Initiative 21: Centralize CVWD's policies (multi-year project).  
Status: Established subcommittee to review, revise and update policies as needed.
- ❖ Initiative 22: Identify and engage ad hoc domestic water customer focus groups.  
Status: Complete.

Accomplishments



**GOAL 5: WATER QUALITY & ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP****Objective 1: Comply with water quality regulations**

- ❖ Initiative 23: Develop Long-Term Safe Drinking Water Quality Master Plan.

Status: Master plan completed in concept. Final plan will be complete by end of October 2017.

- ❖ Initiative 24: Prepare Highway 86 for pipeline construction.

Status: Two outstanding permits needed (State Water Board and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers). Design constructibility review in progress. Anticipated design completion date is mid-August.

**Objective 2: Perform effective environmental resource management**

- ❖ Initiative 25: Submit Garfield Street Constructed Habitat Project Workplan.

Status: Complete.

**Objective 3: Optimize energy use**

- ❖ Initiative 26: Complete Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Facility Feasibility Study.

Status: The time-line has been modified due to changing needs. Construction, if needed, to start in FY 19.



**GOAL 6: INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT & MANAGEMENT****Objective 1: Develop Asset Management/Capital Improvement Plan/  
Preventive Maintenance Program**

- ❖ Initiative 27: Hire GIS mapping consultant for stormwater & irrigation facilities.

Status: RFP released as part of Strategic Initiative 28, however there were no respondents. Staff will post Request for Proposals for Asset Management Program, Phase II.

- ❖ Initiative 28: Complete Asset Management Master Plan.

Status: Staff reviewing final draft Asset Management Master Plan. Implementation of the CMMS software is underway. Staff to post Request for Proposals for Asset Management Program, Phase II.

**Objective 2: Irrigation infrastructure repair and replacement**

- ❖ Initiative 29: Finish development of hydraulic model for irrigation system.

Status: Staff and consultant are analyzing the results for Units 1 through 8. Estimated completion is July 28, 2017.

**Objective 3: Protect other physical assets**

- ❖ Initiative 30: Replace Talavera & Sun City mainline.

Status: Design phases 1 & 2 awarded to Webb Associates. Additional corrosion evaluation required. Will be completed by end of 2017.

- ❖ Initiative 31: Evaluate Mid- & East Valley Replenishment Projects.

Status: Complete.



**GOAL 1: EMPLOYEE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT****Objective 1:** Maintain competitive salaries & benefits

No new initiatives.

**Objective 2:** Succession planning and knowledge management

Initiative 1: Develop Apprentice Program for selected positions.

Expectation: Improved recruitment for skilled technical positions, primarily in Facilities and Maintenance Department.

Estimated Cost: None.

EUMs: Employee & Leadership Development

Initiative 2: Develop & implement Professional Development Training.

Expectation: Provide continual leadership development & growth for supervisors.

Estimated Cost: \$40,000

EUMs: Employee & Leadership Development

**Objective: 3:** Employee Engagement

Initiative 3: Develop strategy to address & implement suggestions from Employee Satisfaction Survey.

Expectation: Address Satisfaction Survey results for areas where significant improvement is needed.

Estimated Cost: \$20,000

EUMs: Employee & Leadership Development

Initiative 4: Develop outreach for Wellness/Benefits to educate employees.

Expectation: Improve wellness and reduce health care costs.

Estimated Cost: None.

EUMs: Employee & Leadership Development

**GOAL 2: FINANCIAL STABILITY****Objective 1: Follow industry-recognized rate making practices**

Initiative 5: Hire consultant to complete audit of all billing records (based on American Water Works Association M36 Manual) over a few years.

Expectation: Simplify rate structure for developer connection. Will provide revenue sufficiency on growth-related projects.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000

EUMs: Financial Viability and Operational Optimization

**Objective 2: Maintain organizational fiscal health**

Initiative 6: Develop fiscal policy for Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funding and long-term spending thresholds (minimums).

Expectation: Use pay-as-you-go/department transfer/debt financing/etc. to provide better direction for staff.

Estimated Cost: None.

EUMs: Financial Viability and Operational Optimization

**Objective 3: Ensure integrity and transparency of financial process**

Initiative 7: Improve CIP execution rate to 70% minimum & develop long-term rates based on execution rate.

Expectation: Improve CIP execution rate to better forecast rates.

Estimated Cost: None.

EUMs: Financial Viability and Operational Optimization



**GOAL 3: WATER SUPPLY SUSTAINABILITY****Objective 1:** Enact more aggressive conservation

No new initiatives.

**Objective 2:** Expand non-potable water program

Initiative 8: Develop Sanitation Master Plan.

Expectation: Include expanding recycled water in east Valley (Septic to Sewer Conversion Master Plan for CVWD Service Area).

Estimated Cost: \$485,000

EUMs: Water Resource Sustainability and Community Sustainability

Initiative 9: Begin to implement Non-Potable Water Master Plan.

Expectation: Maximize use of non-potable water.

Estimated Cost: \$5,000,000

EUMs: Water Resource Sustainability and Community Sustainability

**Objective 3:** Update and comply with Water Management Plan

No new initiatives.

**Objective 4:** Protect water supply & optimize usage

Initiative 10: Develop plan to install facilities to improve Agricultural Drain Monitoring.

Expectation: Include weirs for accurate measurement and safe access on all agricultural drains.

Estimated Cost: \$200,000

EUMs: Water Resource Sustainability, Product Quality and Operational Optimization



**GOAL 4: EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE****Objective 1: Optimize customer service**

Initiative 11: Improve customer experience (provide frequently asked questions, do-it-yourself videos & improved customer service training for staff).

Expectation: Improved customer satisfaction.

Estimated Cost: \$10,000

EUMs: Customer Satisfaction

Initiative 12: Adopt and implement Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System.

Expectation: Improved customer satisfaction.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000

EUMs: Customer Satisfaction and Operational Optimization

**Objective 2: Improve internal communications**

No new initiatives.

**Objective 3: Obtain customer feedback & input**

No new initiatives.



**GOAL 5: WATER QUALITY & ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP****Objective 1: Comply with water quality regulations**

Initiative 13: Complete list of shovel-ready alternative Chromium-6 treatment projects.

Expectation: Develop cost-effective Chromium-6 technologies to minimize cost for ratepayers.

Estimated Cost: \$1,000,000

EUMs: Product Quality, Operational Optimization, Enterprise Resiliency and Water Resource Sustainability.

Initiative 14: Prepare Well Maintenance Prioritization Plan.

Expectation: Improve water quality and reliability to ID11 water system.

Estimated Cost: \$450,000

EUMs: Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Infrastructure Strategy & Performance, Enterprise Resiliency and Water Resource Sustainability

**Objective 2: Perform effective environmental resource management**

No new initiatives.

**Objective 3: Optimize energy use**

Initiative 15: Implement top Wastewater Reclamation Plant 10 (WRP 10) energy audit recommendations.

Expectation: Use Southern California Edison incentives to reduce cost for energy upgrade projects at WRP 10.

Estimated Cost: \$2,600,000

EUMs: Financial Viability, Operational Optimization and Community Sustainability

Initiative 16: Complete shovel-ready plan for the top-ranked alternative energy projects.

Expectation: Achieve energy savings & environmental benefits by implementing solar panels & other alternative energy projects.

Estimated Cost: \$225,000

EUMs: Operational Optimization and Community Sustainability

**GOAL 6: INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT & MANAGEMENT****Objective 1: Develop Asset Management/Capital Improvement Plan/ Preventive Maintenance Program**

Initiative 17: Hire Computerized Management Maintenance System (CMMS)/Asset Management Coordinator.

Expectation: Position will manage CMMS/Asset Management Plan (AMP) implementation; provide improved metrics, reporting system reliability, long-term integrity and cost savings.

Estimated Cost: \$140,000

EUMs: Infrastructure Strategy & Performance, Operational Optimization and Employee & Leadership Development

Initiative 18: Complete Part 1, Phase 2 of AMP on Domestic Water.

Expectation: Effective CMMS data storage will provide improved metrics, reporting, overall system reliability, long term integrity and cost savings.

Estimated Cost: \$750,000

EUMs: Infrastructure Strategy & Performance and Operational Optimization

**Objective 2: Irrigation Infrastructure Repair and Replacement**

Initiative 19: Complete Irrigation Master Plan.

Expectation: Master plan to evaluate irrigation system as a whole, based on hydraulic model, to help prioritize capital improvement projects in a cost-effective manner.

Estimated Cost: \$325,000

EUMs: Infrastructure Strategy & Performance and Operational Optimization

**GOAL 6: INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT & MANAGEMENT****Objective 3: Protect other physical assets**

Initiative 20: Complete design of Talavera pipeline replacement.

Expectation: Improve infrastructure reliability for services within Talavera area.

Estimated Cost: \$24,500,000 over 5 phases.

EUMs: Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Infrastructure Strategy & Performance, Enterprise Resiliency and Water Resource Sustainability

Initiative 21: Complete Irrigation Rules & Regulations.

Expectation: Provide integrity & transparency.

Estimated Cost: \$20,000

EUMs: Infrastructure Strategy & Performance, Community Sustainability and Customer Satisfaction

Initiative 22: Complete land acquisition for North Indio Flood Control Project.

Expectation: Protect area noted from potential flood water damage and decrease insurance rates.

Estimated Cost: Unknown. Cost subject to land value at the time of acquisition.

EUMs: Infrastructure Strategy & Performance

Initiative 23: Complete West Salton Sea Stormwater Master Plan.

Expectation: Protect area from potential flood water damage in order to facilitate development.

Estimated Cost: Phase I = \$171,000; Phase 2 estimate = \$100,000.

EUMs: Infrastructure Strategy & Performance



# CVWD Employee Creed

I am the Coachella Valley Water District. I will conduct myself with the highest degree of Integrity, Humility, Respect, Competence, Commitment, Honor and Professionalism

I will at all times conscientiously carry out my duties; and foster diligence in those I work with. I will strive to be proficient, supportive and committed to the welfare of our customers and my co-workers. I will uphold the policies of the District, and honor its mission. I understand that respect and open communication is essential in all of my daily duties.

This is my Creed. I am CVWD!