



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD



TO: Commissioners McRae, Barofsky, Schlossberg, Brown, and Carlson
FROM: Frank Lawson, CEO and General Manager
DATE: July 29, 2024 (Board Meeting August 6, 2024)
SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Review
OBJECTIVE: Discussion/Direction

Issue

It is recent practice for the Board and management to review the relevance of the strategic plan annually, typically inclusive of the annual capital and financial planning process.

Background

Throughout 2017, the General Manager and Commissioners developed a new strategic plan for the organization, with the Board's approval on August 1, 2017. Since its original approval, the Eugene Water & Electric Board 2018-2028 Strategic Plan has been updated four (4) times.

In 2018, Commissioners directed the General Manager to modify the strategic plan to specifically include GHG contribution to climate change and include both physical and psychological safety in our Values.

In 2020, Management presented information to Commissioners on strategic status and progress, including a year-end assessment of projects and a summary of customer confidence as assessed using two independent survey methods. Due to the utility's focus on COVID-period operations, the Commissioners felt comfortable continuing to use the existing plan for strategic guidance, and no revisions were incorporated.

In 2021, with two new Board members and a third who had not participated in the original development of the strategic plan, Management and the Board agreed to explore strategic updates and/or enhancements and included revising the plan in the annual goals. In October 2021, after several work sessions and discussions, the Board approved revisions to the 2018-2028 EWEB Strategic Plan, including the identification of distinct priorities for the water and electric utilities, acknowledgement of the turbulent planning and operating environment, and expanding resiliency to include financial and workforce components. More definitive milestones were added within the 2-year and 4-year horizons including the strategic role of modernization of EWEB's information systems,

In 2022, the Board and management updated references to EWEB Enterprise Solutions (EES), added an initiative to evaluate and understand the impacts, benefits, costs, and risks of supply contract options with BPA, and revised wording associated with EWEB's organizational values. The revisions to the values included clarifying safety, health, and wellness, emphasizing the "ongoing" requirement of reliability, and including culture-related characteristics within the Community value.

In 2023, more specific rationale was added to elements contained within the "Mid-Game: Positioning for Flexibility (2021-2024)" period of the plan, especially those concerning likely outcomes of the integrated resource planning process and future energy resources. Additionally, incorporating Board positions on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Board Policy SD23) was incorporated.

Discussion

The strategic plan provides guidance to effectively develop and manage policies, establish priorities, and inspire the actions necessary to position the organization to achieve desired outcomes over the long term. Based on evolving industry trends, changing climate, new technology, developing markets, political and

regulatory flux, natural and human threats, shifting diverse community expectations, and anticipated major organizational decisions, the plan was developed to span a period of approximately ten (10) years.

Since approval, the strategic plan has been guiding actions and decisions, including the setting of annual operational and strategic goals, milestones, and measurement metrics consistent with Board Policy BL4 Delegation to the General Manager and BL5 Evaluating the General Manager's Performance.

Major decisions have been guided by the plan, including the organization's mission and values, including those associated with emergency water sources, advanced metering, customer service policies and programs, information and delivery systems, asset decisions (e.g. Leaburg Hydroelectric Project decommissioning and action plan), Integrated Resource Planning, and water resiliency projects (e.g. base-level storage and Willamette Treatment Plant). The plan has aided to build customer confidence through improved performance, cost controls, simplicity of customer interactions, and transparent community communications. The plan will continue to help the organization build the components necessary to address ongoing organizational resiliency, and effective and sustainable delivery of our critical services to the community.

Revisions for Board Consideration

Unlike previous annual review recommendations, staff is recommending that the strategy be revisited in its entirety in 2025/2026. Emerging pressures within the regulatory environment, along with forecasted challenges that have the potential to create service threats, resource scarcity, and significant economic impacts warrant foundational discussions and investigations of the path(s) forward. However, management proposes the following enhancements to the existing plan for the Board's consideration.

1. Clarify that strategy positions the organization to "*fulfill*" a mission and "*pursue*" a future vision. By providing links to the mission and vision, future strategic plans can be developed separately, but in support of a Board Policy-based mission and vision. It is common practice to develop mission, vision, values statements separately to guide strategic and operational plans, which is why EWEB developed Board Policy SD1.
2. Highlight and distinguish that EWEB's primary purpose involves "delivery" of drinking water and electricity. "Electric Services" is too broad and under-defined.
3. Recognize that compliance is a fundamental component of the ongoing effort to "Foster Customer Confidence".
4. Highlight the transition from watershed *recovery* to watershed *protection*, as this work transitions over the next years.
5. Discuss the difference between values based on the Community at-large and references to "Customer-Owners" often becomes interpreted as singular, and therefore polarizing. As defined in SD23, the Board's definition of "Community" becomes more inclusive.

Recommendation/ Requested Board Action

Management recommends the Board provide feedback on the applicability of the present plan, review management's recommended revisions, and identify any gaps or suggestions for discussion and potential incorporation. Action may be taken at the August meeting to incorporate suggested revisions.

Attachment(s)

2018-2028 Proposed 2024 Edits (Mark-Up) - EWEB Strategic Plan

Markup for consideration at
August 6, 2024, Board Meeting.

*Eugene Water & Electric Board
2018-2028 Strategic Plan
(2022 Update)*

Originally adopted by the EWEB Commissioners on August 1, 2017

Approved Revision: July 10, 2018

Approved Revision: October 5, 2021

Approved Revision: October 6, 2022

Approved Revision: June 6, 2023

1.0 Purpose

This strategic plan provides guidance to effectively develop and manage policies, establish priorities, and inspire the actions necessary to position the organization to ~~achieve desired outcomes~~ fulfill our Mission and pursue our Vision including the setting of annual operational and strategic goals, milestones, and measurement metrics consistent with Board Policy BL4 and BL5.

2.0 Introduction

The Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB), founded in 1911, is Oregon's largest customer-owned utility presently serving approximately 200,000 people in Eugene and part of the McKenzie Valley. Each year, EWEB is responsible for delivering approximately 8.5 billion gallons of drinking water and 2.4 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity. EWEB is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners elected by the citizens of Eugene.

3.0 Strategic Priorities

Drinking water and electricity are essential commodities that are becoming more precious. Managing forecasted volatility and scarcity, climate impacts, and the increasing occurrence and threats of both discrete and gradual disruptive events will drive EWEB strategy for the next few decades. With the goal of sustaining the delivery of safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible drinking water and electricity ~~services~~, the most immediate challenge facing EWEB is effectively planning and operating in a turbulent environment, including a changing climate, new technology, developing markets, political and regulatory flux, natural and human threats, and evolving diverse community expectations.

4.0 Strategy

Over the next decade, EWEB will need more resilient and sustainable infrastructure, finances, people, and processes, requiring customer participation in new programs designed to mitigate supply volatility and scarcity, improve resiliency to disruptive events, optimize infrastructure investments, and aid in water and electricity supply decisions. Although the community expectations for drinking water and electricity delivery occur in the same dynamic environment, each utility's situation is unique and requires distinct strategic ~~elements~~ priorities.

Water

For reliability and resiliency, EWEB will need to scope and construct a drinking water treatment plant on the Willamette River, while simultaneously ~~restoring~~ protecting the McKenzie watershed. By taking a comprehensive “source to tap” approach to water quality and reliability and given that significant investments have been made over the past decade at the Hayden Bridge Treatment Plant, EWEB's priority ~~now~~ shifts to strengthening base-level water storage, in-town transmission infrastructure, and the design and construction of the Willamette drinking water treatment plant.

Electric

Prior to 202~~6~~⁸, EWEB will need to reassemble an electric supply portfolio for the long-term economic, environmental, and social benefit of our community. These electricity supply decisions can be improved by effectively aligning time-of-use consumption, distributed generation, demand response, and efficiency programs with the increasingly dynamic future clean energy resources and evolving storage technologies.

With significant electricity delivery infrastructure commissioned in the 1960s and 1970s, even as electrification and loads increase EWEB will need to attenuate and manage the “ballooning” need to replace this concurrently aging equipment while

increasing resiliency to potentially disruptive events. Electricity investments will be managed by prioritizing high-customer-impact assets and those systems that increase resiliency to community-critical locations.

It is expected that the strategy will evolve and progress in the following tenants and phases over the next few years.

4.1 The “Opening”: Foster Customer Confidence (Ongoing)

Our relationship with customer-owners will influence their eventual voluntary participation in future water and electricity programs that optimize consumption levels and timing, impacting resiliency, infrastructure investments, and supply choices. Customer confidence is cultivated by good “performance”, which is the fulfillment of our compulsory obligations in ways consistent with our organizational values. *The objective of this facet of the strategy is to cultivate customer confidence by continuously improving our performance in the following areas:*

- a. Safety & Security – e.g., *psychological safety; protection of life, assets, property; dam safety, cyber/data security*
- b. Delivery – e.g., *water quality, electric and water reliability standards*
- c. Cost/Efficiency (Affordability) – e.g., *rate escalation consistent with societal levels of inflation,*
- d. Service/Responsiveness (Community) – e.g., *ease of interactions, turnaround times, transparent communication, disruptive event response, Board Policy SD3 (Customer Service Policy)*
- e. Environmental Responsibility – e.g. *watershed recovery/protection, Board Policy SD15 (Climate Change Policy)*
- e.f. Compliance – e.g. *Carbon/RPS, Dam Safety, Carmen-Smith License Fulfillment, PUC, Oregon Health Authority, OSHA, etc.-*

4.2 The “Mid-Game”: Positioning for Flexibility (2021-2024)

Creating operational and consumption flexibility tools, including demand response capabilities, will improve our ability to negotiate and manage supply contracts, integrate clean-energy resources, develop backup and emergency systems, and respond to unanticipated events. *The objective of this phase is to build resilient foundational pieces that facilitate ongoing organizational effectiveness, including the following elements:*

- a. Advanced Metering & Analytics – e.g., *Meter Data Management (MDM) System, Customer Experience Systems*
- b. Information Technology & Systems – e.g. *modernize legacy systems with EWEB Enterprise Solutions (EES) - Financial & Customer Information System (CIS)*
- c. Integrated Resource Plan – *informs electricity supply contracts, energy services, and EWEB-owned asset decisions, EWEB electric resource management/trading*
- d. Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) – *evaluate and understand the impacts, benefits, costs, and risks of supply contract options with BPA in the context of the Integrated Resource Plan, emerging regional requirements/opportunities (transmission/markets), and business model options.*
- e. Rate Design – *Develop a Five-Year Rate Design Plan that creates pricing agnostic to customer/product choices (prerequisite to new services), consistent with Board Policy SD9 (Rate Setting Policy) and rate making principles*
- f. Resiliency (Electric) – e.g., *disruptive-event mitigation plans, fortify/automate system controls (including telecommunications), replace aging high-impact underground conductors, prioritize links between local generation and essential services (resilient spine), and enhance local capability to provide emergency power for critical community loads should the grid become inoperable for an extended period.*
- g. Resiliency (Water) – e.g., *watershed recovery, base-level reservoirs and inter-connecting transmission, Willamette water treatment plant design.*
- h. *New Energy Services – Plan and design demand-side energy products, including those that leverage distributed energy resources (DERs), demand response (DR), and efficiency products to optimize cost, reliability, resiliency, and carbon impact.*
- i. *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion: Develop and evolve a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Board Policy that integrates with our organizational values, providing a fundamental basis for our actions, behaviors, decisions, and results.*
- j. *Resiliency (General) – develop Labor Market and Workforce Assessment Report, including resiliency and depth assessment in mission-critical positions.*

4.3 The “End Game”: Resilient Delivery (2024-2028)

How effectively EWEB synchronizes customer consumption with the future’s increasingly volatile and scarce water and electric supply resources will determine our success at delivering safe, reliable, affordable, environmentally responsible, and equitable services to our community, including during the occurrence and threat of disruptive events. This synchronization will require the integration of water and electricity supplies (including new and/or distributed sources), fortified links

between supplies and critical consumption hubs (“resilient spines”), and customer participation in programs that optimize consumption levels and timing. *The objective of this phase is to effectively integrate new supply resources, resilient delivery systems (i.e., spines), and flexible customer consumption and includes the following elements:*

- a. Launch New Energy Services – including those that leverage distributed energy resources (DERs), demand response (DR), and efficiency products to optimize cost, reliability, and carbon impact
- b. Information Technology & Systems – e.g. modernize legacy systems with EWEB Enterprise Solutions (EES), continued (work, asset, and human resources)
- c. Negotiate Electricity Supply Contracts – including potential BPA options/alternatives
- d. Determine Investment, Divestment, and/or Disposition of EWEB-Owned Generation Assets
- e. Water Master Plan (2025)
- f. Resiliency (Electric) – e.g., replace aging high-impact underground conductors, prioritize links between local generation and essential services (resilient spine)
- g. Resiliency (Water) – e.g., expand watershed protection to Willamette, base-level reservoirs and inter-connecting transmission, Willamette water treatment plant completion.
- h. Modernize Contracts – Enhance potential partnerships consistent with policies, strategic objectives, and values (e.g. *International Paper, University of Oregon, Sierra Pine (fmly. Seneca Sustainable Energy), etc.*)

5.0 Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision, Mission, and Values statements create the framework to align the organization’s efforts in pursuit of its strategy.

Vision - Our vision is to be a local utility that inspires our customer-owners to invest in and rely on us. EWEB’s vision implies that we will earn our customer-owners’ trust, and thereby their investment and participation in the programs integral to providing sustainable value.

Mission - Our mission is to enhance our community's vitality by delivering drinking water and electricity services consistent with the values of our Community customer-owners, including the people with whom we serve, conduct business with, collaborate, influence, or impact in the fulfillment of our mission. EWEB recognizes that our two primary services are “vital” to the health and welfare of our community, and that our methods are important to our customer-owners.

Organizational Values

Values drive “how” we do things, and provide the fundamental basis for our policies, actions, behavior, and decisions. These values are sacrosanct; they cannot be compromised for convenience, short-term gain, or strategic progress.

SAFE: *We value the safety, physical and psychological wellness, of our workforce and the public, the security and integrity of cyber assets and data, and the protection of our customers’ assets.*

RELIABLE: *We value the ongoing continuous on-demand delivery of drinking water and electricity, and the dependability of our response to our customers.*

AFFORDABLE: *We value and respect our customer-owners’ financial resources by making wise investments and controlling costs and rates.*

ENVIRONMENTAL: *We value the prudent and sustainable stewardship of the environment and natural resources, including preserving our watershed, and our role in reducing the greenhouse gases (GHGs) contributing to Climate Change.*

COMMUNITY/CULTURE: *We value a culture of intentional actions and outcomes, continuous improvement, diverse perspectives, that is trustworthy, respectful, equitable, and inclusive to employees and community members. We are dedicated to our public service, professions, local governance, and commitment to serve our community honestly and with integrity.*