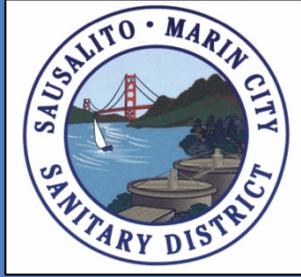


# Sausalito-Marín City Sanitary District

## Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026

Adopted by Board Action April 5, 2021



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## **Governing Board of Directors**

Dan Rheiner, *President*

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## **General Manager**

Jeffrey Kingston



# Strategic Plan 2021-2026

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# Message from the District

On behalf of the Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District (SMCSD) Board of Directors and its Staff, we are pleased to present the District's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. This plan represents an update of the 2020 Strategic Plan, reflecting on the existing District business environment while looking toward the future. The adoption of this plan indicates the importance the District, its Board of Directors, and employees place on seeking continuous improvements in every aspect of the District's operations. The 2021 plan will serve as a framework for decision making over a five-year period. The District intends to review and update the plan annually and welcomes comments and feedback from its stakeholders and other interested parties.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Kingston  
General Manager

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Strategic Plan

### 2021 - 2026

## Mission / Vision

Providing wastewater collection, conveyance and treatment services for our communities thereby protecting public health, the environment and the Bay.

## Core Values

Recognizing that wastewater treatment is a vital component of protecting public health, the environment and the Bay, SMCSO will:

- Meet all regulatory requirements;
- Safely operate an effective wastewater system;
- Efficiently maintain the wastewater system;
- Provide sustainable services for our community;
- Be responsible to ratepayers by managing the District's finances through sound financial and business practices;

- Value staff by providing a high-quality and safe work place and fostering professional growth, teamwork, and job satisfaction; and
- Promote public participation, education and understanding of the services we provide.

## Purpose of the Plan

A strategic plan is a top-level planning document the organization uses to set clear direction over all operational aspects of its mission. Upon adoption, it serves as a framework for decision making over a five-year period. It is a disciplined effort to guide fundamental decisions that shape what the District plans to accomplish by selecting a rational course of action. This plan update incorporates an assessment of the District's present state and requires gathering and analyzing information; institutes goal setting; and assists with making decisions for the future. Input was gathered from relevant sources to ensure accuracy and this plan seeks to strengthen and build upon opportunities while addressing areas of concern.

This Plan also identifies actions, activities, and planning efforts that are currently active and needed for continued success in operations and management of the District and provides for an annual review and update process.

## Strategic Planning Framework

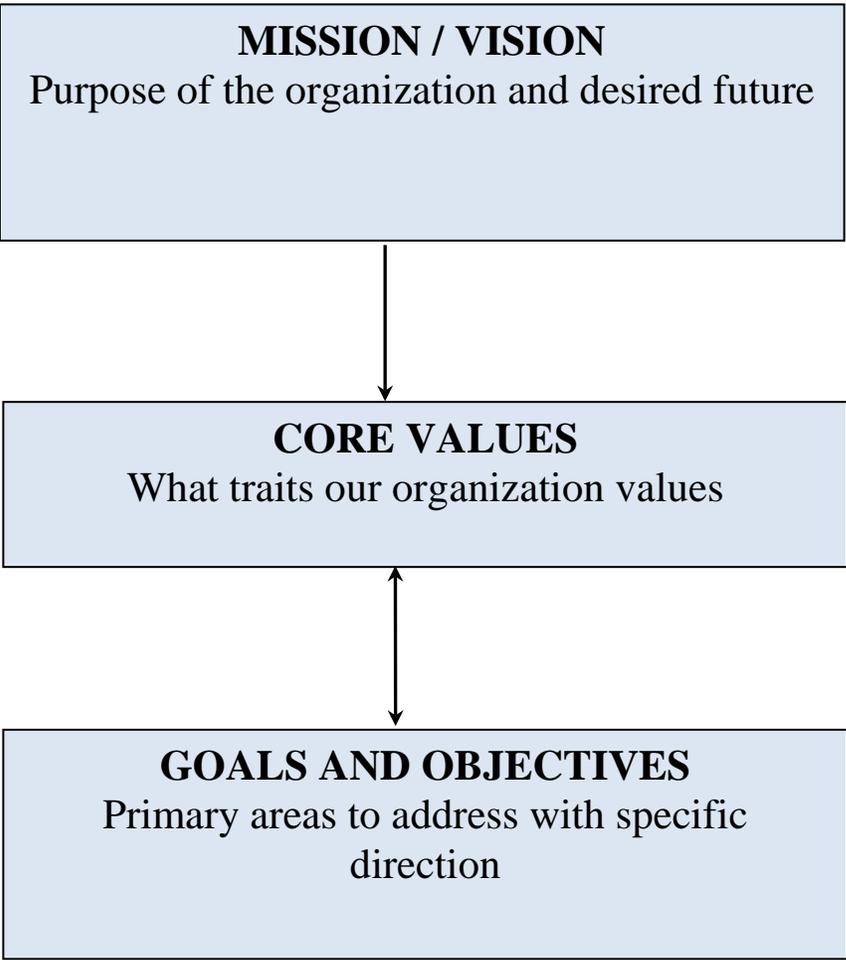
The strategic plan is built as a step-by-step process from a series of components described below.

Mission/Vision Statement: A declaration of an organization's purpose, why the organization exists. Ideally, all activities of the District should be in support of the mission statement. It is a statement that articulates what the organization would like to achieve over the term of the plan.

Core Values: Guides what the organization values when faced with options and alternatives for our future. Values are set by the Board, govern attitudes and behaviors and generally remain constant over time.

Goals and Strategic Objectives: These are the broad, primary management areas of District operations and planning that need to be addressed and are supported by strategic goals to ensure optimum progress. Specific objectives are defined to accomplish the goals.

## How the Plan Elements Relate to Each Other



## 2. DEVELOPING THE PLAN

### Strategic Plan 2021-2026

## Organizational Environment

### DISTRICT OVERVIEW

The Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District (SMCSD) is governed by an elected five-member Board of Directors and provides wastewater conveyance and treatment service to the City of Sausalito and wastewater collection, conveyance and treatment service to unincorporated areas within the District's boundaries including Marin City. Wastewater conveyance and treatment service is also provided on a contract basis to Tamalpais Community Services District (TCSD) (which includes Muir Woods National Monument) and to the National Park Service (NPS) (Forts Baker, Barry and Cronkhite, Marine Mammal Center and Cavallo Point Resort). The District operates and maintains a complex infrastructure system, thereby protecting our community's public health, the environment and San Francisco Bay. It serves approximately 10,000 Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) and a population of approximately 18,000. Based upon a comprehensive financial plan, the District adopted a 5-year sewer rate plan on July 8, 2019 to properly fund operations and capital improvements.

## **OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE**

The District operates and maintains, on behalf of all ratepayers, a wastewater treatment plant designed to fully treat wastewater under: Primary (I), Secondary (II) and Tertiary (III) treatment levels up to 1.8 million gallons per day (MGD) during average dry weather flow. During wet weather flow, the plant is designed to hydraulically handle up to 12.0 MGD and is capable of treating up to 9.0 MGD of full secondary treatment and up to 3.0 MGD of tertiary treatment. The conveyance system consists of eleven sewage pump stations, and approximately eleven miles of pipelines. The District owns and operates 7 stations and operates and maintains, under a service agreement, 4 stations on behalf of the City of Sausalito. The District's treatment plant site, which is located in Fort Baker, renewed its property lease agreement with the National Park Service and it continues until 2049. There are thirteen full-time positions currently authorized by the District. In addition, there is an intern program where up to two positions may be funded as temporary part-time (non-benefited).

## **CAPITAL**

The District continues to implement its 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which originally started in FY 2011/12 by identifying \$54 million for wastewater conveyance and treatment infrastructure improvements. The District primarily funded the capital improvements program by issuing revenue bonds through a financing agreement. Funding for the program consists of cash funded capital generated by sewer service fees and bonds issued in the amount of \$33,630,000 with an annual average debt service of \$2,153,000 until 2042.

The Wet Weather Flow Upgrade Project is complete and addresses new discharge regulations, manages peak wet weather flows, and improved treatment plant performance and reliability. The Upgrade Project increased the plant's secondary treatment capacity from 6.5 MGD to 9.0 MGD and increased tertiary treatment capacity from 1.0 MGD to 3.0 MGD firm capacity with a potential of up to 6.0 MGD during high flows. Completion of the Wet Weather Upgrade project this year, in combination with other infrastructure projects completed over the past 10 years, substantially completes the original 10-year CIP plan.

Remaining Bond funds will fund other CIP projects currently in progress. These projects include the Coloma Street Pump Station Replacement and the Generator Reliability Improvements Projects which will improve overall system reliability and capacity. The new Coloma pump station will have a flow capacity of 4.2 MGD increasing system conveyance capacity at a critical point mitigating potential sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) during peak storm events.

The Generator Reliability Improvements Project replaces aged generators in the District's service territory, adds generators to two small pump stations and procures a portable backup generator to further ensure reliability of the entire collection system, including City of Sausalito pump stations operated and maintained by the District. The Generator project was further prioritized due to Pacific Gas & Electric's (PG&E) "Public Safety Power Shutoff" (PSPS) events which have required continuous operation of generators for prolonged periods up to 4 days.

Additional projects in the District's CIP have been prioritized to incorporate efficiency and redundancy at all major conveyance and treatment facilities. Priority projects include rehabilitation of the treatment plant's existing clarifier and rehabilitation of the conveyance system's Beach Force Main. The existing clarifier, which has been in consistent use since its construction in 1953, will require a complete replacement of its collector mechanism and improvements to odor control. The Beach Force Main Rehabilitation Project will allow critical force main redundancy with the Alexander Avenue force main which conveys waste water from the Main Street pump station to the treatment plant.

## **ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE**

The District accounting and finance functions continue to improve. In 2019 the District hired Perrotti & Carrade, an independent public accounting firm, to review its financial management practices and they made 12 recommendations to improve and streamline these functions. In 2020/2021, the District implemented the final recommendations which included transitioning to a cloud-based accounting software and new bank with an efficient online platform. The District continues to utilize specialized outside resources for financial management and accounting support.

The development of a financial plan and sewer rate study was completed in 2019. The rate study complied with the requirements of the Proposition 218 process and in July 2019 the District adopted an updated 5-year sewer rate plan for fiscal years 2019/20 through 2023/24. The updated rate plan ensures adequate revenue is available to support the District's operations, maintenance, capital improvements and debt. The District anticipates a potential shortfall of commercial revenues due to the restaurant closures and business effects of COVID-19.

In addition to a strong financial plan, the District has a fully funded reserve policy in place and its financial outlook is positive. The financial stability is validated by a rating from Standard & Poor of AA+ and Fitch of AA; reduced liabilities by paying off two capital loans totaling \$3 million; and a strong cash position. The revenue bond payment is the District's remaining debt.

The District complies with the 2013 Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) required employee pension cost-sharing. It has funded a large sum to the California Employers Retirement Benefit Trust (CERBT) Fund addressing the unfunded post-employment retirement medical benefit. In addition, the California Public Employees Retirement System provides an annual report characterizing the pension long-term liability assisting the District to understand and plan for its funding. The District annually reviews the CalPERS pension unfunded liability and potential funding utilizing the California Employers Pension Prefunding Trust (CEPPT). Similar to California Employers' CERBT in which the District already participates, this fund allows employers to plan for the future and with flexibility to determine the amount of investment contribution and risk tolerance.

The Audit for year ending June 30, 2020 was successfully completed in a transparent manner with the auditor reporting no findings and no modifications. A complete copy of the 2020 Audit may be found on the District website.

# Challenges and Opportunities

The District faces many significant future operational, capital and regulatory requirements. These challenges will need advanced planning of external and internal factors to ensure the organization is prepared. Some of the known and anticipated challenges and opportunities are the following:

**Consolidation** - Currently, the District operates and maintains the City of Sausalito's four pump stations on a contract basis. The District and the City are considering consolidation of the City of Sausalito Sewer Collection System operations, maintenance and capital with the District. Phase I – Feasibility Study of the sewer collection system consolidation has been completed. Phase II – Operational Plan is in draft and includes the future approach and resources needed for the operations, maintenance, and capital improvements of the City's sewer collection system. Many factors considered in this consolidation include financial, staffing, asset condition, capital improvement, equipment, easements and access to sewer lines.

**Environmental Regulations** – The regulations governing District operations related to water quality, air and solid waste disposal continue to evolve. The District operates under requirements from Federal, State and Local Agencies including: a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to discharge, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) compliance orders and biosolids reporting; State of California Water Resources and Control Board reporting requirements for SSOs, Discharges and Laboratory accreditation and; Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) limits on Hydrogen Sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) emissions and Marin County Hazardous Materials & Waste regulations, to name a few. Of particular significance are regulations on the elimination of treatment blending caused by peak wet weather flows, prevention of sanitary sewer overflows, landfill diversion of biosolids and constraints on effluent nutrient levels. The Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted the Nutrient Watershed Permit on May 8, 2019. The purpose of this permit is to track and evaluate treatment plant performance from all NPDES dischargers so that it will help them in future decision making. These

challenges will drive our capital planning and allow for targeted investment in effective future facilities.

**Reliable System Operations** – Our conveyance system and treatment plant continually require investment in infrastructure, equipment maintenance/replacement and process upgrades. The Treatment & Wet Weather Flow Upgrade project was completed in early 2020. The completion of the Upgrade Project was a major milestone for the District in addressing capacity, reliability and improved water quality. After the completion of the Clarifier Rehabilitation Project in 2021, the upgrades to the plant will be complete, thereby improving process and equipment redundancy and reliability.

The next challenges we face are primarily focused on the collection and conveyance systems with some of the most critical projects already in construction in 2021 and others in design. These projects include but are not limited to:

- Construction of the Coloma pump station to improve reliability and to increase conveyance capacity in preparation for climate change and to maintain conveyance capacity during peak storm events; and
- Improvements to emergency power at all pump stations to ensure reliability of the entire conveyance system during peak storms and/or potential PG&E PSPS events.
- Incorporation of force main redundancy from the Main Street pump station to support cleaning and maintenance of the force mains and to improve operational reliability.

Additional challenges include reducing community impacts from odors and improving site access and safety. The efficient and effective execution of our Capital Improvement Program remains critical for reliable system operations, meeting regulatory requirements and protecting the Bay.

**Reduce System Infiltration and Inflow (I&I)** – Excess flow originating from damaged or faulty pipes and laterals contribute to infiltration and inflow. Continued public and private investments to repair both sewer lines and private laterals are necessary to reduce system I&I. Major challenges to achieve a “closed system” in order to reduce or eliminate I&I

include: aging pipes and laterals which are susceptible to failure, salt water intrusion from high tides, illegal pumping of storm water into the sewer system and ground settlement or subsidence which causes pipe failures. All of these factors add unnecessary flow into the system and lead to increased operation and maintenance costs. The District proactively maintains, repairs and evaluates its collection system on regular intervals. Plans are scheduled, as part of the CIP, to evaluate and improve all collection system piping including Marin City. All project designs, including pump station and treatment plant improvements, are evaluated and designed for changing code and requirements to plan for sea level rise, storm surge and new environmental conditions due to climate change. The District communicates with, advises and provides grant funding for private owners to assist them with sewer system upgrades to reduce seawater and stormwater infiltration.

**Communication / Technology** – The District uses modern technology infrastructure to monitor and control the wastewater conveyance and treatment system. This requires continuous monitoring of the system during and after work hours, through normal and extreme weather, on a year-round basis. The District’s treatment plant and conveyance system achieves its performance and reliability with a trained and certificated staff and the use of current technology and automation. Timely access to relevant data for operations, scheduling and decision making is critical. All essential District systems and equipment are locally or remotely monitored at all times by operations and maintenance staff. The use of a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system allows for the centralized and decentralized monitoring of the treatment plant and conveyance system to include pump station functions. Wastewater Flow and chemical dosing are measured and monitored by SCADA. This informs Operators ensuring effective decision making and operation of the system. The SCADA monitors the use of a chlorine solution for wastewater disinfection treating bacteria and the application of a bisulfite solution to neutralize the chlorine prior to the treated effluent being discharged to the Bay.

The continuous upgrade and adoptions of new technology including a control system with up-to-date servers and capacity; high speed internet connections and reliable Wi-Fi coverage throughout the Plant, upgraded Ethernet capable radio communications, cloud-based computing and storage; smart phone and tablet technology for remote monitoring;

and state of the art sensors/controllers ensure the system is operated effectively and efficiently.

**Water Quality Monitoring/Assurance** – The District possesses a fully certified and staffed laboratory capable of performing most analysis required for permit compliance and all essential plant process controls. The Laboratory produces accurate, timely and certified data used to validate the compliance of plant effluent against the limits in our NPDES permit resulting in well over 6,700 discrete measurements and analytical results per year. The Laboratory also supports O&M personnel by providing valuable information at critical times allowing operators to optimized the treatment processes. The laboratory personnel are trained and certified in areas complimentary to the operators such as Source Control inspection and biosolids handling. A high performing certified laboratory is a mission critical component of the wastewater conveyance and treatment system.

**Operational Benefits of Upgraded Plant** – The recently completed major upgrade project resulted in many tangible benefits.

- The headworks facility, provided the means to remove inorganics from entering the treatment processes increasing the effectiveness of the downstream processes.
- The equalization basins reduce peak flows and stabilize chemical use.
- A second covered clarifier provides process reliability, operational flexibility, ease of maintenance and reduce odors.
- The rehabilitated FFRs equipped with new media and larger pumps improve biological treatment and increase flow capacity reducing high flow blending events.
- The addition of a Disk Filter (cloth based) improves tertiary treatment, and effluent quality by filtering fine particulates and suspended solids resulting in fewer fine particulates in the effluent discharge into the Bay.

The upgrade and optimization of these processes combined with the understanding of their combined benefits give the operators flexibility in adapting and responding to changing conditions. The upgraded plant treatment processes position the District for future regulatory compliance and potential climate change effects.

**Workforce** – The District needs a high-performing team to make all of the system’s components work well. The District annually reviews its organization structure making changes where necessary to assure proper staffing levels reflecting the changing environment and regulatory needs of our agency. We have filled positions with qualified leadership and management personnel to ensure competent and certified staff effectively operate our system. Our work schedules have been adjusted to ensure staffing levels are optimized while maintaining a work/life balance for the staff. There now exists an opportunity to review staffing levels, which may include resuming the intern program, in order to prepare for normal attrition losses as well as from potential consolidation with the City of Sausalito. The District’s pay and benefits; safety culture; and certification program continue to support a healthy and rewarding workplace environment.

**Public Outreach**– Opportunities and challenges always exist to keep our community, constituents and stakeholders informed regarding the District’s decision-making process, plans and operations. District information, activities and projects are published on our upgraded website. This allows staff to utilize a new user-friendly platform providing transparency and accessibility. In addition to the website, public notices, letters, and electronic newsletters are distributed through emailing and postings to public websites. The District participates in a regional approach to community education and outreach by working with a consortium of 6 wastewater treatment plants in Marin County. The District conducts tours of the treatment plant and the conveyance system for the community to educate and inform the public about the mission of the District.

**Emergency Operational Response** –In the event of an area-wide emergency, the District is connected to County and State notification services and responds by assessing and repairing damages to its own system first. If and when resources and staffing become available, the District responds and provides mutual aid to local agencies following mutual aid agreements. Responding to severe storms, PSPSs and government imposed pandemic controls continue to challenge the District’s limited resources.

# 3. THE STRATEGIC PLAN

## Strategic Plan

### 2021-2026

## Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been established to identify what the organization needs to accomplish in the fulfillment of the stated District mission and values:

### **Goal 1            Protect Public Health and the Environment**

Objective 1.1 Optimize plant processes to enhance water quality discharged into the Bay.

Objective 1.2 Identify and reduce infiltration and inflow into the District's conveyance system.

Objective 1.3 Prepare to respond to severe storms of longer duration due to climate change, Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), and government-imposed pandemic controls.

Objective 1.4 Work with the EPA and State Board to lift the 2007 EPA Treatment Plant Order and 2008 EPA Collections System.

### **Goal 2            Continuous Water Quality Improvement**

Objective 2.1 Continuously follow and exceed District's Regulatory requirements under: EPA, NPDES, SRWCB, BAAQMD and other agencies.

Objective 2.2 Understanding the future impacts of regulatory requirements, potential new discharge limits and timelines for implementation of solutions.

Objective 2.3 Continue to utilize and improve the District's asset management system to perform regular, proactive and timely maintenance activities to reduce process and equipment failure.

Objective 2.4 Continuously improve the functions and technology of the District's laboratory to ensure compliance with increasing regulatory requirements and standards.

**Goal 3                    Efficient and Effective Implementation of the Capital Improvement Program**

Objective 3.1 Continuously manage and prioritize a 3-Year Operations and Maintenance Plan.

Objective 3.2 Deliver the 10-Year Capital Improvement Program to maintain reliability of the wastewater collections, conveyance and treatment systems.

Objective 3.3 Implement the Capital Improvement Program efficiently by delivering projects on time and within budget based upon the specified scope of work.

Objective 3.4 Understand potential impacts to collection, conveyance and treatment systems from possible new developments in the Marinship, Fort Baker Authority and Marin City areas including considerations for sea level rise and climate change.

Objective 3.5 Improve O&M staff facilities, Plant site access, security and lighting.

**Goal 4                    Develop High Performing Teams**

Objective 4.1 Continue making training and certification of all District staff a high priority.

Objective 4.2 Focus on maintaining an efficient organization that is multi-disciplinary, highly skilled and well-trained.

Objective 4.3 Promote safety, collaboration and professional development.

Objective 4.4 Maintain competitive staff compensation and benefits.

**Goal 5 Provide Financial Stability, Accountability and Value to Ratepayers**

Objective 5.1 Ensure adequate funding for Capital Projects.

Objective 5.2 Continue to properly budget and fund the Operations and Maintenance functions.

Objective 5.3 Study the feasibility of consolidating with the City of Sausalito or implement a new service agreement.

Objective 5.4 Automate financial processes to ensure efficiency and accountability.

Objective 5.5 Continue providing financial transparency with timely annual audits and government reporting requirements.

Objective 5.6 Plan for and manage CalPERS unfunded liabilities related to pensions and benefits

**Goal 6 Responsible Leadership & Management**

Objective 6.1 Engage constructively and proactively to create a collaborative and inclusive work environment.

Objective 6.2 Provide opportunity and support for staff growth and advancement through mentoring and professional development opportunities.

Objective 6.3 Address technology and systems to improve plant operations, business practices and sharing of information.

Objective 6.4 Update and communicate policies and procedures for all staff to understand benefits, opportunities and expectations.

Objective 6.5 Recognize and celebrate exceptional employee achievements and performance.

**Goal 7 Enhance Internal and External Communication**

Objective 7.1 Engage District staff for input on decisions, activities and initiatives in order to benefit from their knowledge of operations and potential consequences.

Objective 7.2 Inform our ratepayers and communities about District initiatives and projects.

Objective 7.3 Provide a transparent and accessible website where current information is available for our ratepayers and communities.

Objective 7.4 Promote public awareness of industry issues and trends related to regulatory compliance.

Objective 7.5 Provide public education on wastewater processes and ways they can assist with preventing sewer overflows.

# Common Acronyms

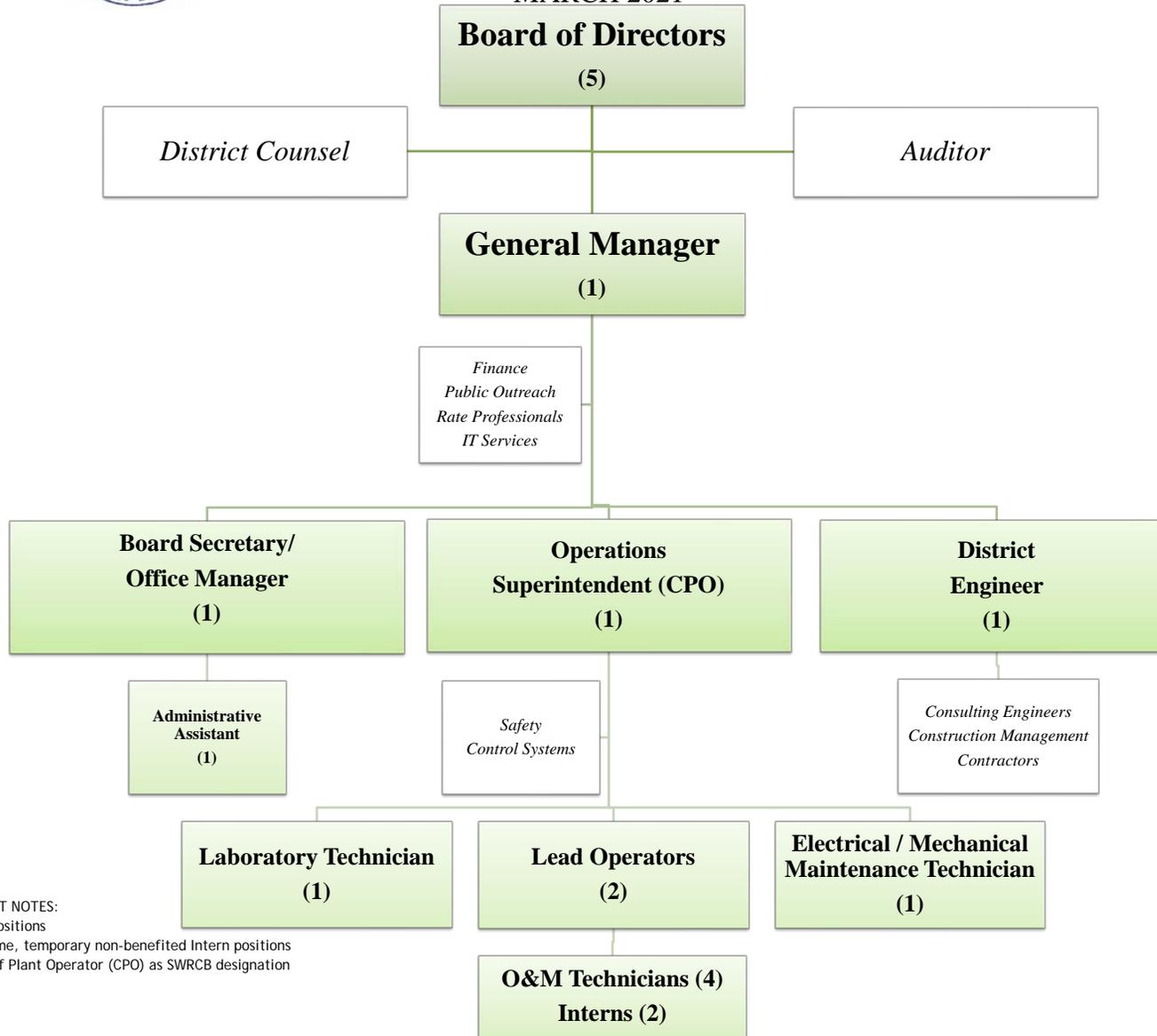
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
CalPERS	California Public Employee's Retirement System
CEPPT	California Employers Pension Prefunding Trust
CERBT	California Employers Retirement Benefit Trust
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EDU	Equivalent Dwelling Unit
FFR	Fixed Film Reactor
H <sub>2</sub> S	Hydrogen Sulfide
I&I	Inflow & Infiltration
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
MGD	Million Gallons per Day
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Park Service
O&M	Operations & Maintenance
PEPRA	Public Employees' Pension Reform Act
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric
PSPS	Public Safety Power Shutoff
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
SMCSD	Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District
SSO	Sanitary Sewer Overflow
TCSD	Tamalpais Community Services District



# SAUSALITO-MARIN CITY SANITARY DISTRICT

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

MARCH 2021



ORG CHART NOTES:  
 \* 13 FTE Positions  
 \* 2 Part time, temporary non-benefited Intern positions  
 \* The Chief Plant Operator (CPO) as SWRCB designation