Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District

Strategic Plan Update
2025 – 2030

Adopted by Board Action
April 1, 2025

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Governing Board of Directors

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William Ring, *Vice President*, *Director*
Donald L. Beers, *Director*
Barbara Rycerski, *Director*
Shirley Thornton, *Director*

General Manager

Jeffrey Kingston

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District Message

On behalf of the Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District Board of Directors and its Staff, we are pleased to present the District's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. This plan is the result of an annual review and update of the District Strategic Plan in an effort to plan for 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. The FY 2025-2030 plan serves as the framework for decision making over a five-year period. The District reviews and updates the plan annually and always welcomes comments and feedback from its stakeholders, Staff, Board of Directors, and other interested parties.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Kingston
General Manager

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INTRODUCTION
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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 May 7, 2024 to properly fund operations and capital improvements.

Mission / Vision

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

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Core Values

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

- Meet all regulatory requirements;
- Safely operate an effective wastewater system;
- Maintain an efficient wastewater system;
- Provide sustainable services for our community;
- Be responsible to ratepayers by managing the District efficiently;
- Value staff by providing a high-quality and safe workplace fostering professional growth, teamwork, and job satisfaction;
- Promote public participation, education, and understanding of the services we provide.
- Continuously plan for the future to maintain reliable and cost-effective service.

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PLAN DEVELOPMENT
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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. The 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.

Organizational Environment

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The District operates and maintains, on behalf of the community and 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

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weather flow. During wet weather flow, the plant is designed to hydraulically handle up to 12 MGD and is capable of treating up to 9 MGD of full secondary treatment and up to 6 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 pump stations and operates and maintains, under a new service agreement, 4 pump stations on behalf of the City of Sausalito. The District's treatment plant site is located in Fort Baker with a property lease through 2049 with the National Park Service.

CAPITAL

The District maintains an ongoing five-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) which is updated annually by Staff and then submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. Projects are developed to address aging infrastructure, changing regulatory requirements, and to improve operational efficiencies. Projects are then prioritized for operator safety, system reliability, and return on investment. All projects included in the current CIP are currently rate funded through the sewer service fees.

Capital Projects continue to be added to the District's CIP to upgrade and incorporate efficiency, safety, and redundancy at all major conveyance and treatment facilities. The following projects are currently in the construction phase:

- Rehabilitation of the treatment plant's existing clarifier
- Electrical upgrades to the plant
- Rehabilitation of the conveyance system's Beach Force Main
- Rehabilitation and relocation of the treatment plant's sludge dewatering screw press

The existing clarifier, which has been in consistent use since its construction in 1953, requires a complete replacement of its collector mechanism and improvements to odor control. The Beach Force Main Rehabilitation Project will implement critical force main redundancy with the Alexander Avenue force main which conveys wastewater from the Main Street pump station to the treatment plant. Rehabilitation of the Beach Force Main will also allow for force main inspections and reduce energy costs at the Main Street pump station.

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Rehabilitation and relocation of the treatment plant's screw press improves biosolids handling reliability and operator safety. This project also reduces operator time in processing biosolids.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

The District continues to plan finances with short-term accountability and a long-range outlook. It completed a five-year rate study and adopted new sewer service rates for FY 2024/2025 to 2028/2029 through the Proposition 218 process to ensure adequate revenue is available to support operation and capital costs and be equitable for all of our customers. In addition, the District continues to work with the City of Sausalito with an updated service agreement in place for the Operations and Maintenance of their pump stations.

A fully funded reserve policy, solid bond ratings and a strong cash position create a positive outlook for the District. Due to a fully funded reserve and strong financial position, the District continues to address the pension and medical liabilities with the implementation of the *CEPPT and *CERBT trusts. In addition, the pension and medical liabilities have been added to the Reserve Policy and will be partially rate-funded as these amounts were included in the rate study.

The District continues to monitor and optimize its investments between Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) and United States Treasuries. For a better return on investment due to changing interest rates and the availability of higher low risk returns, a portion of the Capital Reserve is in U.S. Treasuries at JP Morgan Chase.

The Audit for the year ending June 30, 2024 was successfully completed in a transparent manner with the District's new auditor, Nigro & Nigro, reporting no findings and no modifications. A complete copy of the 2024 Audit may be found on the District website.

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Challenges and Opportunities

The District continues to be challenged with many significant future operational and capital needs driven by the ever-changing regulatory requirements. These challenges will need advanced planning of external and internal resources to ensure the organization is prepared. Some of the known and anticipated challenges and opportunities are described in the following:

Reliable System Operations – Priority projects to further improve system safety, reliability, regulatory compliance, and efficiency include but are not limited to:

- Replacement of the District's Marin City Pump Station will improve collection system reliability and operator safety. The new station will eliminate confined entry and improve reliability through the implementation of submersible pumps.
- Rehabilitation (Phase 2) of the District's unincorporated area collection system targets reduction to Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) and includes a complete system assessment for long-term reliability.
- Rehabilitation of the District's Beach Force Main, which delivers flow from the Main Street pump station to the treatment plant, will improve reliability, reduce electric costs, and allow for inspection and maintenance of the existing force main.
- Force main inspections will ensure pump station efficiency and pipeline reliability. Several inspections are planned over the next 5 years.
- Additional challenges include continuing to reduce impacts to the community from odors, further improving site access and safety, and eliminating sources of I&I.
- The effective execution of our Capital Improvement Plan remains critical for reliable system operations, meeting regulatory requirements, and protecting public health and the Bay.

Technology – The District is continuously looking for ways to improve or update existing technology. It 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. Reliable modern technology is a key component to the success of the District.

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- Programmable logic controllers (PLC) are used to operate each individual process throughout the plant. Data available from the PLC is transmitted to a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. SCADA is a computer-based system used for gathering and analyzing real-time data to monitor and control critical treatment plant and remote pump station processes. SCADA data is used for regulatory reporting and validating system compliance. District staff is currently working to upgrade the District's SCADA system. Firewalls and password protected devices help protect the District from cyber-attacks. Critical resources, including the SCADA system, are placed on a separate computer network which is not connected to the internet to provide an additional layer of security from cyber-attacks.

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 disinfected plant effluent to the San Francisco Bay. This permit was renewed in early 2024 and will expire in 2029.
- Nutrient Watershed Permit
    - The third nutrient watershed permit was adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in 2024. This updated permit will require the District to reduce the dry season total inorganic nitrogen loads in the final effluent by 40% as compared to measurements taken in 2022. For the first time in the history of the nutrient watershed permit, numerical limits will be imposed. During a 10-year implementation cycle, the limit will be 180 kilograms per day (kg/day) and afterward the limit will be 69 kg/day. In the short term, Operations Staff will need to develop an operational plan to comply with the first numerical limit in the permit. Long term, the District will need to implement modifications to existing treatment processes and/or explore the addition of new treatment processes to meet the 40 percent reduction. Additional testing of ammonia and nitrate-nitrite will be needed to monitor compliance with these limits.

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- Regulatory Reporting Requirements
    - Discharge Monitoring Report – *EPA (Monthly & Annual)
    - Biosolids Report – *EPA (Annual)
    - Sanitary Sewer Overflow Reports – *SWRCB (As Needed)
    - Self-Monitoring Report – *SWRCB (Monthly & Annual)
    - Laboratory Accreditation – *CA ELAP (Biannual)
    - Portable Generators/Vehicles Emissions – *BAAQMD (Annual)

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

Reduce System Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) – Aging infrastructure contributes to infiltration and inflow of groundwater, especially during major storm events. This results in unnecessary flow into the system at a rate more than 10 times the dry weather flow, leading to increased operation and maintenance costs. Continued public and private investments to repair sewer collection lines and private laterals is necessary to reduce system I&I. Efforts to reduce I&I include:

- Inspection and Maintenance – Identify sources of I&I through CCTV inspections, smoke testing, dye testing and evaluating flows during wet weather. As a result of inspections, pipes can be spot-repaired, replaced with HDPE pipe to eliminate pipe joints, and manholes can be sealed with coatings or liners.
- Eliminate Illegal Connections – Identify and remove illegal connections, such as sump pumps, downspouts, or stormwater drains that are improperly connected to the collection system.
- Capital Improvements – Repair damaged or aging pipes and manholes. Use the latest technologies such as pipe bursting and pipe lining to eliminate joints and prevent I&I.

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Several other agencies deliver flow to the District including the City of Sausalito, the Tamalpais Community Services District, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The District continues to monitor flows received during large storms and works with all partnering agencies to reduce I&I delivered to the District's system.

The District offers grant funding for private owners to assist them with sewer system upgrades to reduce seawater and stormwater infiltration.

Water Quality – Laboratory – The District maintains a certified laboratory staffed by trained and certified personnel. The laboratory performs analysis for a majority of the conventional pollutants specified in the NPDES permit and contracts with commercial laboratories to perform analyses that are not cost-effective to self-perform. In the calendar year 2024, the laboratory performed 3,924 discrete measurements for both regulatory reporting and process control purposes. The laboratory is in the process of renewing its accreditation in 2025, with a third-party assessment scheduled for May 2025. To maintain reliable laboratory service under regulations, fulfill the compliance monitoring requirements, and provide the process control data to inform operational decisions on plant operations, the District will need to increase the redundancy of laboratory work by adding personnel on a temporary or full-time basis. On a longer term, the goal is to have a second staff member with a Grade II laboratory certification. A high-performing laboratory is a required mission-critical function of the District.

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GOALS & OBJECTIVES
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Goals & 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 Provide Staff and Board with the information needed to communicate a clear and consistent message when approached by the public.

Objective 1.3 Meet the annual Regional Quality Control Board operating permit requirements.

Goal 2 **Discharge Compliance**

Objective 2.1 Continuously meet the District's Regulatory requirements.

Objective 2.2 Plan for the future impacts of regulatory requirements, the renewal of the NPDES permit, 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.

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Objective 2.4 Evaluate new test methods and information technologies to improve the performance and capability of the laboratory in light of increasing regulatory requirements and standards.

Objective 2.5 Continuously improve plant operational strategies to enhance overall plant performance and water quality.

Objective 2.6 Certify and train staff.

Goal 3 Implementation of the Capital Improvement Plan

Objective 3.1 Proactively manage and prioritize annual Operations and Maintenance Plan.

Objective 3.2 Continuously update and prioritize the Five Year Capital Improvement Plan to maintain reliability, capacity and safety of the wastewater collections, conveyance, and treatment systems.

Objective 3.3 Identify and reduce infiltration and inflow into the District's conveyance system.

Objective 3.4 Understand potential impacts to collection, conveyance and treatment systems from potential growth impacts and future community housing needs.

Objective 3.5 Incorporate local, regional and state climate resiliency requirements in the designs and construction of capital projects.

Goal 4 Technology

Objective 4.1 Explore AI-based decision-making systems to optimize and improve all processes, policies, plans and procedures.

Objective 4.2 Create streamlined payment processing to include online and electronic payment platform options.

Objective 4.3 Manage records retention policy ensuring files are stored and disposed of in compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

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Objective 4.4 Leverage SCADA for real-time monitoring, automation, predictive maintenance, and data-driven decision-making to operate more efficiently, reduce costs, and improve environmental performance.

Objective 4.5 Utilize cybersecurity measures to protect critical infrastructure and operational technology systems from cyber threats.

Goal 5 Tributary Agencies

Objective 5.1 Monitor surrounding tributary systems including TCSD, City of Sausalito and NPS to reduce operational impacts.

Objective 5.2 Develop a contractual strategy to encourage reductions to peak flows from tributary agencies.

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

Objective 7.4 Provide public education on wastewater processes and ways they can assist with preventing sewer overflows.

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DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS
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Primary Treatment (I)
The wastewater treatment process that takes place in a rectangular or circular tank allows solids in wastewater to settle or float and be separated from the wastewater.

Secondary Treatment (II)
The wastewater treatment process converts dissolved or suspended materials into a form more readily separated from the water being treated. The process commonly is a type of biological treatment followed by secondary clarifiers that allow the solids to continue to settle out from the primary treated wastewater.

Tertiary Treatment (III)
Any process of water renovation that upgrades treated wastewater to meet specific reuse requirements. May include general cleanup of water or removal of specific parts of wastes insufficiently removed by conventional treatment processes.

Dry Weather Flow
Average actual daily flow during dry weather months.

Wet Weather Flow
Actual flow during or after rain events.

Treatment Capacity
Design capacity for full treatment of wastewater.

Hydraulic Capacity
Design capacity at which wastewater can flow through the treatment plant without overflowing.

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BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
CalPERS	California Public Employees' Retirement System
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CEPPT	California Employers Pension Prefunding Trust
CERBT	California Employers Retirement Benefit Trust
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
DMR	Discharge Monitoring Reports
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EDU	Equivalent Dwelling Unit
ELAP	Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
FFR	Fixed Film Reactor
GGNRA	Golden Gate National Recreation Area
H2S	Hydrogen Sulfide
HDPE	High-Density Polyethylene
I&I	Inflow & Infiltration
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
MGD	Million Gallons per Day
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Park Service
OE3	Operating Engineers Local 3

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O&M	Operations & Maintenance
PEPRA	Public Employees' Pension Reform Act
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric
PLC	Programmable Logic Controller
PS	Pump Station
PSPS	Public Safety Power Shutoff
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
SFEI	San Francisco Estuary Institute
SMCSD	Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District
SSO	Sanitary Sewer Overflow
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCSD	Tamalpais Community Services District

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FY 2025/2026 Organizational Chart