

Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District

Strategic Plan
2023 – 2028

Adopted by Board Action
May 2, 2023

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Governing Board of Directors

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General Manager

Jeffrey Kingston

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District Message

On behalf of the Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District (SMCSD) Board of Directors and its Staff, we are pleased to present the District's 2023-2028 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 2023-24 plan update 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

INTRODUCTION
Strategic Plan
2023 - 2028

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, 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 work place fostering professional growth, teamwork, and job satisfaction; and
- Promote public participation, education and understanding of the services we provide.
- Continuously plan for the future to maintain reliable and cost-effective service.

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.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT
Strategic Plan
2023-2028

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 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 stations and operates and maintains, under a service agreement, 4 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 has completed its implementation of the 10-year Capital Improvements Program which was generated in FY 2011/12 in response to the District's EPA order. This plan identified $54 million worth of wastewater conveyance and treatment infrastructure improvements. The District primarily funded the capital improvements program by issuing revenue bonds through a Joint Powers Authority and financing agreement. Funding for the program consisted of rate 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 District currently maintains an ongoing 10-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) which is funded through sewer service fees to further improve reductions to I/I, reliability, capacity and safety. The District's CIP is updated and prioritized on an annual basis.

The District has recently completed several key projects which improve overall system reliability and capacity. These include the following:

- The Wet Weather Flow Upgrade Project has been completed and addresses new discharge regulations, manages peak wet weather flows, and improves treatment plant performance and reliability. The Upgrade Project incorporated a new headworks to improve overall plant efficiency and discharge water quality. The inclusion of a headworks also reduces downstream maintenance and chemical disinfection demands. Secondary treatment capacity was increased from 6 MGD to 9 MGD to significantly reduce blending events. Blending events are further reduced through the use of a new equalization storage basin. This 600,000-gallon storage basin also allows for temporary plant shutdowns to perform maintenance or other work. In addition, tertiary treatment capacity was increased from 1 MGD to 6 MGD with enhanced technology to greatly improve discharge water quality and reduce disinfection chemical demands.

- The Coloma Street Pump Station Replacement Project has been completed which increases firm capacity of the District's gravity interceptor by 4.2 MGD at a critical point in the conveyance system to mitigate potential sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) during peak storm events.
- The Generator Reliability Improvements Project has been completed which improves overall system reliability and capacity during power outages. This project also reduces emergency callouts and the need to mobilize portable equipment in preparation for storms and/or planned power outages.

Additional projects continue to be added to the District's CIP to further incorporate efficiency, safety and redundancy at all major conveyance and treatment facilities. These projects include rehabilitation of the treatment plant's existing clarifier, electrical upgrades to the plant, 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 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.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

The District continues to plan finances with a long-range outlook. The 5-year sewer service rate schedule adopted in 2019 ends in 2023/2024. In August 2023, the District begins conducting a new rate study to explore competitive and fair rates for customers while meeting all service and capital needs. This proper rate ensures adequate revenue is available to support the District's operations, maintenance, capital improvements, debt and reserves. In addition, the District continues to work with the City of Sausalito on exploring the consolidation of their sewer collection or implementing a new services agreement.

A fully funded reserve policy, solid bond ratings and strong cash position creates a positive outlook for the District. Due to a fully funded reserve and strong financial position, the District continues to address the pension and health liabilities with the implementation of the CEPPT and

CERBT trusts. The District is researching investment firms and banks specializing in public government agencies to generate a greater rate of return than LAIF for our reserve funds.

The Audit for year ending June 30, 2022 was successfully completed in a transparent manner with the auditor reporting no findings and no modifications. A complete copy of the 2022 Audit may be found on the District website.

Challenges and Opportunities

The District continues to be challenged with 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:

Reliable System Operations – Priority projects to further improve system reliability, regulatory compliance and efficiency are planned to begin construction in FY 2023/2024. These projects include but are not limited to:

- Rehabilitation of the Beach Force Main (BFM) from the Main Street pump station to the treatment plant provides redundancy to support cleaning, inspections and maintenance in addition to improving reliability, efficiency and operational flexibility. Operating the BFM also reduces electric cost.
- Remodel the existing Operations Building to improve the space needed for an upgraded lab and new control room office. The new lab will be designed to support increasing regulatory requirements and improve safety. In addition, the operators' locker room and break room have been relocated outside of the treatment plant operations area.
- Rehabilitation of the South Clarifier to provide redundancy and to improve primary treatment capacity and water quality. The rehabilitated clarifier will also have enhanced odor control.

Additional challenges include continuing to reduce impacts to the community from odors, further improving site access and safety and addressing new biosolids processing and disposal regulations and requirements.

The effective execution of our Capital Improvement Plan remains critical for reliable system operations, meeting regulatory requirements and protecting the Bay.

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. Reliable modern technology is a key component to the success of district operations. The district is continuously looking for ways to improve or update existing technology. Examples where technology is utilized:

- Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system provides operations with access to real time and historical plant data critical to effluent water quality. SCADA also allows for remote access which is critical to afterhours response.
- Programmable logic controllers (PLC) are used to operate each individual process throughout the plant. SCADA collects process data information from PLC's and interacts to control equipment based on operational setpoints.
- The district uses a local file server connected to facilitate storage and collaborative work of electronic documents and resources. A combination of fiber optic and ethernet connections are utilized for data communications and internet access throughout the plant.
- Remote pump stations communicate through ethernet radios to send data to the operations SCADA system.
- A Wi-Fi system is installed at the treatment plant to maintain connectivity of devices throughout the site. This system provides wireless connectivity to the network-based resources and the email system, as well as an auxiliary connection for mobile telephone communication.
- Data integrity is achieved through both onsite and offsite electronic file storage for critical resources. SCADA program backups and file server backups are performed regularly to maintain continuity of service. 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 will expire in 2023 and the process to renew the permit was initiated in 2022. The renewal of the permit will require significant staff effort and support to ensure that the application or Report of Waste Discharge document is completed in an accurate and efficient manner. In addition, permit renewals pose an opportunity and challenge to the District due to the requirements that can be petitioned for evaluation and modification as well as the possibility of regulating agencies to impose additional burdens, monitoring or other challenges. Of particular significance are potential additional regulations on landfill diversion of biosolids and constraints on effluent nutrient levels.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
    - Discharge monitoring reports (DMR)
    - Compliance orders
    - Biosolids reports
- State of California Water Resources and Control Board
    - Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) reports
    - Self-monitoring reports (SMR) of treated effluent
- California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
    - Ongoing accreditation of the laboratory
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)
    - Limits on Hydrogen Sulfide (H_2S) emissions
- County of Marin Hazardous Materials & Waste regulations.
    - Disposal of hazardous items and waste materials

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

City Sewer System Consolidation - The District operates and maintains the City of Sausalito's four pump stations on a contract basis. The District and the City are exploring the consolidation of the City of Sausalito Sewer Collection System operations, maintenance

and capital with the District. The Phase I – Feasibility Study of the sewer collection system consolidation is complete. The Phase II – Operational Plan which includes the future approach and resources needed for the operations, maintenance, and capital improvements of the City's sewer collection system is complete. These studies considered many factors to support the decision and implementation of consolidation of the City's Sewer Collection System. Some examples are financial, staffing, asset condition, capital improvement, equipment, easements and access to sewer lines. A joint City/District Sewer Committee is addressing the issues and timeline of a potential consolidation of the City's sewer collection system with the District.

Reduce System Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) – Aging infrastructure contributes to infiltration and inflow of ground water, especially during major storm events. Continued public and private investments to repair both sewer lines and private laterals is necessary to reduce system I&I. Primary challenges to reduce or eliminate I&I in order to achieve a "closed system" include: aging pipes and private 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 at a rate more than10 times the dry weather flow leading 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 continue to evaluate and determine the locations to improve collection system piping and pump stations to reduce the effect of I&I. While District facilities are substantially sealed, 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. A primary cause of I/I is experienced from private laterals due to age, tree roots and land settlement. The District communicates, advises and provides grant funding for private owners to assist them with sewer system upgrades to reduce seawater and stormwater infiltration. Our projects are also designed for changing code and requirements to plan for sea level rise, storm surge and new environmental conditions due to climate change.

Water Quality Monitoring/Assurance – 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 which are not cost effective to self-perform. In calendar year 2022, the laboratory performed 4,411 discrete measurements for both regulatory reporting and process control purposes. Changes to the California Code of Regulations pertaining to environmental laboratory accreditation will go into effect in 2024. These new regulations are based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) document on laboratory accreditation, ISO 17025. In order to meet these more stringent requirements, the District will need additional staff to become laboratory certified and allocate more work time from both operators and contractors in support of lab operations. This includes:

- Quality Control
- Quality Assurance
- Documentation
- Training

The laboratory supports Operations personnel by performing process control tests to provide metrics for optimizing plant performance. A high performing laboratory is a required mission critical function of the District.

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. The District continues to have qualified leadership and personnel to ensure the effective operation of our system. With an upgraded plant and system, there is an opportunity to review staffing levels, job classifications and our organization which may include changing job classifications, internal promotion, external hiring and resuming the operator intern program. Our work schedules have been adjusted to ensure staffing levels are optimized to support staff's work/life balance. The District's pay and benefits; safety culture; and certification program continue to support a healthy and rewarding workplace environment, making the District an attractive employer.

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 new 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/public 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, power outages and government imposed pandemic controls continue to challenge the District's limited resources.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN
Strategic Plan
2023-2028

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 Provide staff with information needed to communicate a clear and consistent message when approached by the public.

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

Objective 1.5 Work with the EPA to lift the 2008 EPA Order.

Goal 2 **Continuous Water Quality Improvement**

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

Objective 2.2 Understanding 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.

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.

Goal 3 Efficient and Effective Implementation of the Capital Improvement Plan

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

Objective 3.2 Continuously update and prioritize the 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan to maintain reliability, capacity and safety of the wastewater collections, conveyance and treatment systems.

Objective 3.3 Implement the Capital Improvement Plan 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 government mandated housing and future community housing needs.

Objective 3.5 Work with the community to understand potential growth impacts and impacts resulting from climate change and sea level rise.

Objective 3.6 Assess and address cyber security threats.

Goal 4 Develop High Performing Staff

Objective 4.1 Continue to train and certify all District staff.

Objective 4.2 Maintain a highly skilled, multi-disciplined and efficient organization.

Objective 4.3 Continue a District managed safety program to provide necessary equipment and training to maintain confident and skilled staff. To achieve a successful safety program the district uses a combination of online training and safety consulting services.

Objective 4.4 Maintain competitive staff compensation and benefits.

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

Objective 5.1 Properly budget and fund the Operations and Maintenance functions.

Objective 5.2 Ensure adequate funding for Capital Projects.

Objective 5.3 Continue to work with the City of Sausalito on consolidating or implementing a new service agreement**.**

Objective 5.4 Provide financial transparency with timely annual audits and meet government reporting requirements.

Objective 5.5 Continue to annually monitor unfunded pensions and benefit liabilities.

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 Enhance systems to improve plant operations, business practices and sharing of information.

Objective 6.4 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 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.

Definitions & Acronyms

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

Secondary Treatment (II)
The wastewater treatment process converting 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 processed.

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
GGNRA	Golden Gate National Recreation Area
H2S	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
PS	Pump Station
PSPS	Public Safety Power Shutoff
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
SMCSD	Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District
SSO	Sanitary Sewer Overflow
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCSD	Tamalpais Community Services District

April 2023
Organizational Chart
FY 2023/2024

