

Portland
Water
District

Strategic Plan

2025



In 2023, the Portland Water District initiated a strategic planning process by first examining the Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals statements, which had not been done in nearly 20 years. The statements were reviewed, updated, and modernized to reflect current trends and cultural shifts. The process and updated statements establish guiding principles to inform decision-making and a framework to drive PWD towards its vision. In 2024, as part of the budgeting process, a strategic planning session was held with the management team to discuss industry trends, the new statements, and to brainstorm goals and initiatives which are outlined in this document and the budget book.

MISSION *Our purpose, what we do*

Protect public health, safety, and the environment by providing customers with high-quality, reliable, and affordable water services.

VISION *Our future goal and aspiration*

With our customers' best interests as a guide, we will use innovative approaches to become a trusted provider of industry-leading water services.



VALUES *Guiding principles, beliefs, and what is important to us*

Customer Focused

We engage, listen, and respond to customers by providing high-value services that our customers want.

Reliable & Sustainable Services

We provide reliable services through sustainable means because we understand our customers and the environment depend on us.

High-Value Services

We provide high-value services at a reasonable cost without compromising quality.

Continuous Improvement

We continuously review and improve our activities to enhance the customer experience and provide high value.

Protect Health, Safety, and the Environment

We work safely and provide services to our customers that safeguard public health and safety, while protecting the environment.

Workplace Quality of Life

We promote a safe work environment that values diversity and inclusiveness, collaboration, openness, respect, and fair treatment, while embracing continuous improvement and efficiency. The environment nurtures a diverse, caring, and flexible workforce with job satisfaction and employee engagement.

Skilled and Efficient Workforce

We seek to maintain a skilled workforce that delivers high-value services reliably and efficiently. We do this by encouraging people to expand their skills, embrace lifelong learning, and continuously improve.



TRENDS

External factors and conditions affect an organization's operations, performance, and decision-making processes. These factors are beyond the control of the organization but have a significant impact on its ability to achieve its goals and objectives. Understanding the operating environment and trends within our industry and community are crucial for strategic planning.

Key components of an organization's operating environment include:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Market conditions | Technological landscape |
| Economic factors | Social and cultural trends |
| Political and legal environment | Environmental factors |
| Supplier and partner relationships | |

Five key trends that affect PWD's operating environment are detailed below.

Changing Workforce

People are changing their attitudes both to work and at work. Organizations like PWD must meet the changing expectations to attract and retain good people. Work-life balance, flexibility, and meaningfulness of work are more important to people than in the past. Organizations are often walking a tightrope balancing budgets while trying to retain key people. In a recent seven-country survey by the management consulting firm McKinsey, 39% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied and planning to leave their jobs in the next 3-6 months. The survey also showed the value of having satisfied workers. The top three reasons for staying at an organization include compensation, meaningful work, and workplace flexibility, and the top three reasons for leaving include career development, leadership, and compensation.



Cost and Inflation

Anyone who has been to the store in the past few years knows that the price of goods and services has gone up dramatically. Some goods and services have become more scarce, affected by factors such as the supply change. While inflation has abated from a high of around 9% to around 2.6% with 'core' inflation at 3.3%, many goods and services are much more expensive and harder to get than they were in the past. PWD pays much more for items like pipe and chemicals than in the past, and in some cases double what it did as recently as five years ago.

Climate Change

Global and local average temperatures continue to increase. The Gulf of Maine, for example, is warming at a rate of just under 1 degree every decade, according to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. PWD is directly impacted by the warming. It creates more rainfall and more intense storms, leading to shifting water use patterns and impacts to infrastructure like wastewater pump stations.

Technology

New technology like AI (artificial intelligence) is changing work, automating some tasks and significantly altering others. PWD is employing AI in many areas like helping determine pipe replacement priorities and metering.



Changing Portland Metro Region

PWD's service area is fundamentally changing. The cost of housing and median household incomes are going up dramatically. PWD's service area contains some of the most expensive communities for housing in the state with two having an average home value over \$1 million. Many of these communities are also seeing median household incomes above \$100,000 per year. These numbers were difficult to imagine just a few years ago, but with the influx of out-of-state buyers, things have dramatically changed. This has impacted PWD in many ways, such as making it harder for employees to live and find housing in the Portland area.

PORTLAND WATER DISTRICT, WHO WE ARE

The Portland Water District (PWD) is an independent, quasi-municipal organization chartered in 1908 and is governed by a publicly elected Board of Trustees. Today its mission and scope has grown to protecting public health and the environment by providing high-quality water services to over 200,000 people in 11 communities in Greater Portland.

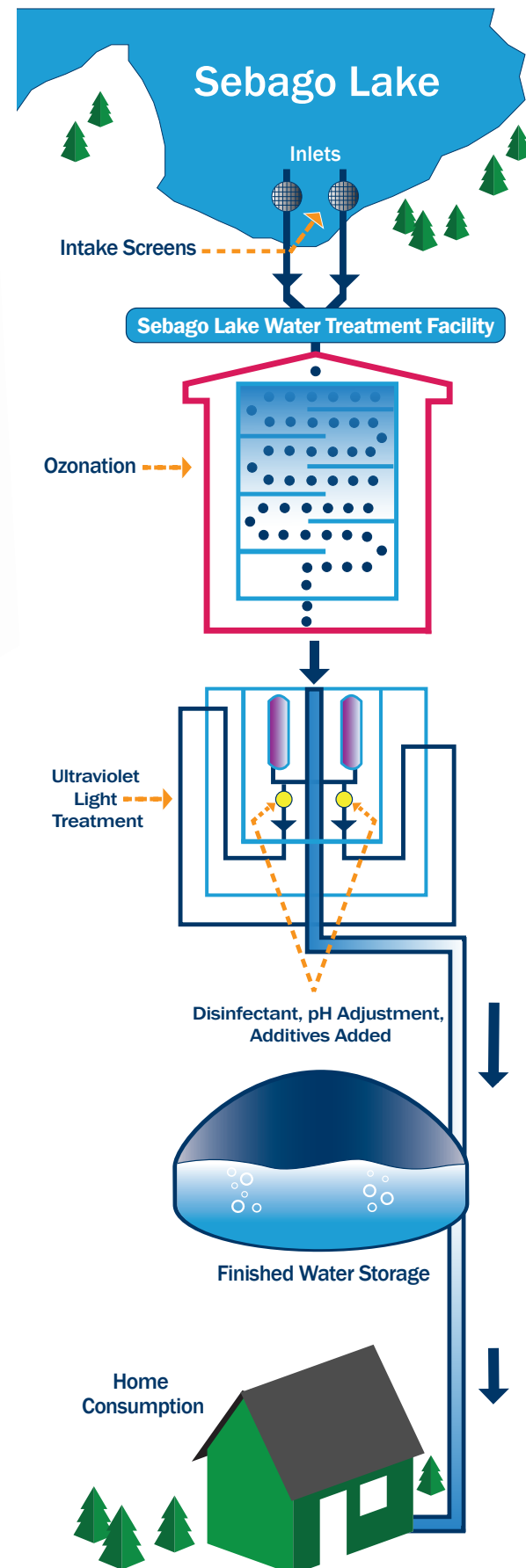


DRINKING WATER

Sebago Lake serves as the primary water source for nearly all PWD customers, except a small portion served by wells in Steep Falls. We take great pride in serving water sourced from Sebago Lake, Maine's second-largest and deepest lake. Surrounded by forests, the lake is exceptionally pure and of such high quality that it is exempt from the filtration requirements set by the Safe Drinking Water Act. Only about 50 out of 13,000 surface water supplies across the country are able to serve unfiltered water.

Protecting the source is the first step to ensure high-quality drinking water. PWD actively engages in numerous environmental protection efforts to preserve the quality of Sebago Lake and its watershed.

Effective water treatment, extensive laboratory monitoring and sampling, and a proactive approach to maintaining the water distribution system further ensure dependable service and fresh, clean, safe water.



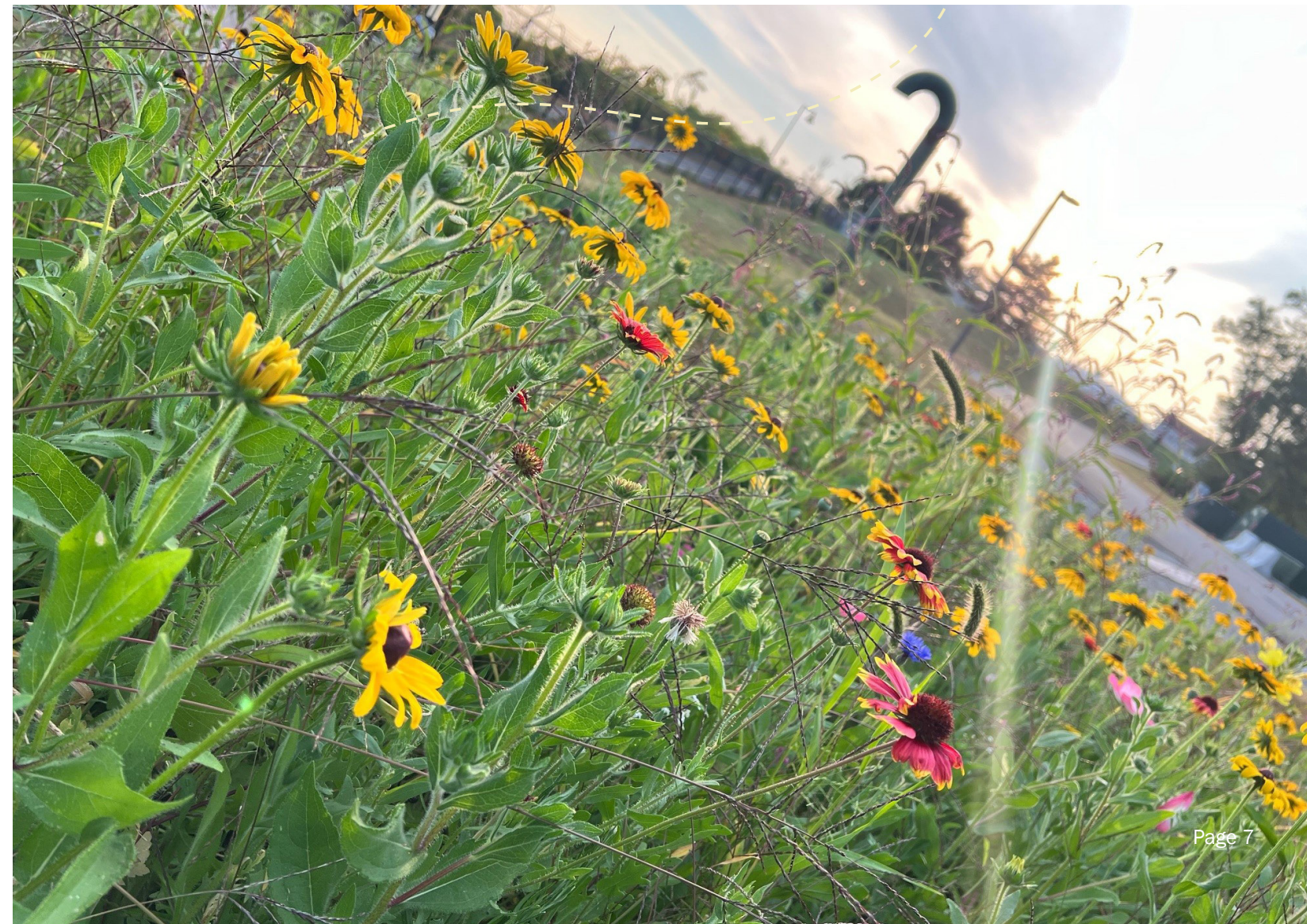
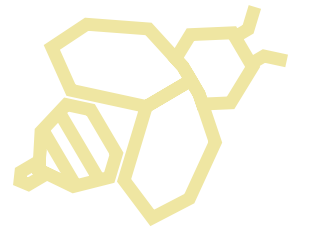
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Our commitment extends beyond providing safe, clean drinking water—it also encompasses the management and treatment of wastewater to safeguard the environment and public health.

PWD collaborates with municipalities to ensure comprehensive wastewater services, directly serving communities in Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Gorham, Portland, Westbrook, and Windham. This process is vital in protecting our water resources from pollution and preventing harmful contaminants from reaching local rivers, lakes, and coastal ecosystems.

Additionally, PWD's Industrial Pretreatment Program, the largest in the state, plays a critical role in environmental protection by working with industries that release waste into the sewer system.

Through our efforts in both water and wastewater services, PWD actively contributes to the long-term health of our watersheds, ensuring a sustainable future for the Greater Portland region.



PWD BY THE NUMBERS



96%
Customer Satisfaction



29,217
Customer Service phone calls



140 sq miles
Service Area



1,025 miles
Water Mains



5,285
Hydrants



7.3 billion gallons
Water treated and delivered annually



57,467
Water Services



6,000 acres
Watershed Land, conservation easement



2,500 acres
Watershed Land, owned



15,000
Water quality tests annually



8.7 million pounds
Of pollution prevented from entering Casco Bay



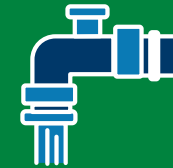
73
Wastewater Pump Stations



5
Wastewater Treatment Plants
(North Windham under construction)



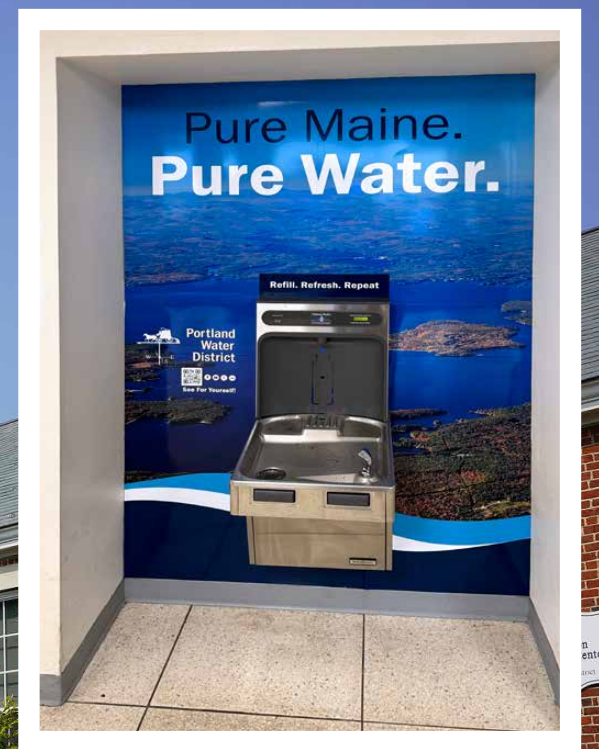
20 million gallons
Wastewater treated per day



115 miles
Wastewater Pipe



New water bottle filling fountain graphics installed at the Jetport

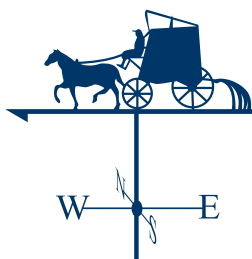


GOALS

Corporate Goal	2025 Objectives
<p>Goal 1 –Public Health and Safety</p> <p>Protect public health and safety by providing services that meet or exceed federal, state, and local health and safety standards.</p>	<p>Strategy: Fully comply with all federal, state, and local regulations, including the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act.</p> <p>Meet all Lead and Copper Revised Rule requirements, including sampling and public notice, and replace two miles of galvanized mains.</p>
<p>Goal 2 – Environmental Stewardship</p> <p>Ensure the sustainability of natural resources by protecting the environment within our shared watersheds and service area.</p>	<p>Strategy: Ensure efficient operations and investments to provide high-quality water services, safeguard local watersheds, protect the environment, and enhance overall experience and aesthetics.</p>
<p>Goal 3 –Reliable & Sustainable Service</p> <p>Provide services in a manner that is reliable and sustainable, so customers can depend on them.</p>	<p>Continue a partnership with the Town of Windham to develop and manage a public wastewater system and prepare for system start-up.</p> <p>Continue investigating long-term solutions for biosolids management, including exploring partnerships and technologies for a Regional Biosolids Management Facility.</p> <p>Upgrade aging aeration and clarifier processes and improve nutrient removal capabilities at the Cape Elizabeth Wastewater Treatment Facility.</p>
<p>Goal 4 –High Value</p> <p>Provide high-value services, which requires engaging and understanding customer needs and priorities; balancing competing goals with the cost of services and customers’ ability to pay.</p>	<p>Design a Westbrook CSO storage facility to manage wet weather overflow as part of the Westbrook CSO Long-Term Control Plan.</p> <p>Continue investments toward 25% land conservation in the Sebago Lake Watershed in partnership with Sebago Clean Waters.</p> <p>Continue East End upgrades of clarifiers, process area, dewatering and handling, and the entranceway.</p> <p>Upgrade Westbrook’s solids conveyances system and mixing reliability to improve overall operations and ensure regulatory compliance.</p>
<p>Goal 5 –High-Performance and Supportive Work Environment</p> <p>Maintain a safe work environment that values diversity and inclusiveness, collaboration, engagement, and respect, while embracing continuous improvement and efficiency.</p>	<p>Complete the Partnership for Safe Water’s self-assessment process, pledging commitment to improve water quality and public health, and determine further optimization efforts.</p> <p>As part of master planning efforts, conduct a condition assessment of large-diameter force mains and transmission mains.</p> <p>Replace major transmission main valves that feed the majority of the system.</p> <p>Renew roughly 3 – 5 miles of water mains to improve service reliability and water quality.</p>

2025 Objectives continued
<p>Strategy: Expand redundancies and improve controls to optimize performance, ensure seamless operations, and maintain critical services.</p> <p>Install 407 Zone Transmission Main (Chute Rd) for improved capacity, redundancy, and fire protection for Windham and Gorham.</p> <p>Continue to investigate and exercise alternative water treatment scenarios as part of emergency planning efforts.</p> <p>Repair and replace ozone power controls, a raw water pump, and chemical storage facilities at the Sebago Lake Water Treatment Facility.</p> <p>Upgrade SCADA equipment at the East End, Westbrook, and Sebago Lake treatment facilities to increase automation and efficiencies.</p> <p>Continue to identify and strengthen protections against potential Cybersecurity attacks. Implement recommendations from the recent audit.</p>
<p>Strategy: Continue to explore and implement innovative ways to connect with customers and enhance customer service offerings.</p> <p>Launch the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meter replacement project.</p> <p>Launch an updated website that includes improved options for customer interaction and service.</p> <p>Continue the Service Value Location Project to locate 40,000 service valves.</p>
<p>Strategy: Attract and retain quality talent while supporting a diverse and evolving workforce. Promote the importance of safety within the workplace.</p> <p>Implement a Human Resources Information System to improve onboarding, recruitment, benefits administration, and metrics.</p> <p>Assess and analyze the effectiveness of current recruitment, retention, and engagement strategies and develop a plan to enhance these efforts.</p> <p>Continue to implement workforce planning, career ladders, and succession planning efforts.</p> <p>Hire and onboard a Safety Specialist, update safety policies, continue safety committee meetings, and reestablish confined space resources.</p> <p>Support 80 hours of training per employee.</p>





Portland Water District

From Sebago Lake to Casco Bay