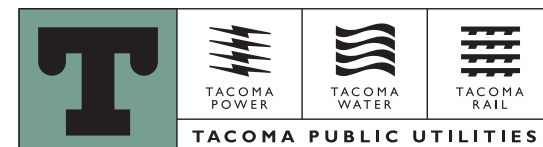


# 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



**TACOMA**  **WATER**  
TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES







## INTRODUCTION

I am excited to share our Tacoma Water 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, which is the culmination of hours of effort by teams from across our utility. Engaging our organization to gather input and develop the plan was a key focus of the project to ensure it represents and responds to new needs and fills gaps at our utility.

We also emphasize being responsive to feedback from our customers, coordination, and alignment with the City of Tacoma 2025 Plan and the strategic plans of other operating divisions within Tacoma Public Utilities.

Strategy development and execution are foundational and provide clear alignment for our organization as we move forward. You play an important role in helping us meet our strategic objectives identified in the plan. Your work also impacts our ability to provide clean, reliable water to our community. I hope you see the importance of your job and use the plan to guide your work. As we work to meet our objectives, I encourage you to provide feedback and share your ideas to help us make our plan more effective and impactful for our customers and workforce. Our workforce is a central component and needs great attention throughout the timeframe of our plan.

Thank you for your input and to everyone who worked to make our plan a reality. I'm excited by what lies ahead and look forward to working with you to turn our plan into reality.

Warmly,  
Scott Dewhirst,  
Superintendent

## VALUES

**We take pride in our work and the service we provide. We have a strong commitment to our customers and employees and strive to display our values in our interactions.**

### **Safety**

We continue to strengthen our safety culture to ensure everyone experiences a safe and healthy work environment every single day.

### **Customer-driven**

Our customers are the heartbeat of our utility, and we show respect for their needs through every interaction and decision. We foster their trust by providing extraordinary service at affordable rates.

### **Employee invested**

We cultivate an equitable workplace where people have the tools and training necessary to feel engaged and empowered to do their best work.

### **Stewardship**

We responsibly plan and manage our business so that the impact we create on our community, the environment, and our internal resources is positive.

### **Adaptability**

We thoughtfully act and change course when opportunities arise.

## MISSION & VISION

Our mission and vision identify why we exist and where we want to be in the future.

### **Mission**

Providing clean, reliable water.

### **Vision**

To be an exceptional community resource empowering employees to deliver life-sustaining value.





## HOW WE DEVELOPED OUR PLAN

Leadership identified two teams representing every section of the utility to help develop the plan. This opportunity allowed a representation of people from across our utility to experience strategic planning, serve as ambassadors for their various sections, and contribute to outcomes.

Our Strategy Engagement Twelve (SET) Team designed activities to engage the organization and help create the plan. They split into small workgroups to accomplish tasks. Our Strategy Working Team (SWT) provided content for the plan, including the utility's mission, vision, values, objectives, and initiatives.

## MEET THE TEAMS:

### Strategy Engagement Twelve (SET) Team

(TOP PHOTO TO THE RIGHT) Front row L-R: Alyssa Flores, KayLyne Newell, Rochelle Gandour-Rood, Josh Craig, Kim DeFolo, Jennifer Laughlin, Gary Fox

Back row L-R: Superintendent Scott Dewhirst, Valerie Sowell, Zac Christin, Jason Scott, Ali Polda, not pictured: Jesse Angel

### Strategy Working Team (SWT)

(BOTTOM PHOTO TO THE RIGHT) Front row L-R: Jeff Bolam, Greg Volkhardt, Jim Goodman, Jodi Collins, Jennifer Airey, Superintendent Scott Dewhirst

Back row L-R: Stuart Vaughan, Ryan Flynn, Mike Petrie, Mike Gray, not pictured: Dan Drennan, Geff Yotter



## THE SET WORKGROUPS



### Planning began in March 2019 with four phases:

1. **Research.** We reviewed documents to help identify trends in the water industry, opportunities for growth and maturity, and best practices. Surveys of employees and customers provided additional data.
2. **Engagement.** Engagement started during an employee breakfast. We asked people to select “the most important item we should focus on over the next five years to support customers and employees.” The top answer: “Operational effectiveness.” Retreats with the SWT team over four months identified key elements. The SET team attended staff meetings in all sections for more ideas about problems to address.
3. **Development.** We wrote the Strategic Plan and the plan for implementing and communicating it.
4. **Final steps.** We conducted reviews, sought approvals, and feedback. We engaged our organization and shared the plan to the utility.



## OBJECTIVES

Three areas of focus identified by the organization include our customers, workforce, and operations. We will work to achieve our vision by:



### **Providing customers increased value.**

We want to provide exceptional service through every engagement and experience.

- Listen to and respect our customers, stakeholders, and community.
- Build and maintain trust through consistent, reliable, transparent interactions and services.
- Share our story.



### **Preparing our workforce for the future.**

We want to help build our utility's strength at all levels of the organization.

- Ensure people clearly understand the roles and expectations of their positions so employees can lead our utility.
- Provide training and development opportunities that will help people excel in their positions.
- Support efforts relating to recruitment and retention, career path development, succession planning, and cultivating an equitable workplace.



### **Improving our systems, processes, and use of resources.**

We want to achieve greater organizational effectiveness.

- Focus on improving how we prioritize and perform our work, collect, and manage data, and use analytics to make decisions.
- Be a steward of the water resources, environment and infrastructure.

## INITIATIVES

Initiatives are specific ways we can close the gap between our current performance and our desired performance. They directly contribute to accomplishing our three objectives.



### **Develop and implement a customer engagement program.**

Understand our customers' needs, respond appropriately, and help them understand the value of the services they receive.



### **Support key technology projects.**

Improve the way we operate and increase customer value.



### **Enhance project management competencies.**

Deliver projects effectively in a consistent manner.



### **Inventory and document core business processes.**

Understand current business practices, improve consistency, and help us prepare for the future.



### **Establish and implement a risk management program.**

Equip us to manage the risks that affect our resiliency and reliability.



### **Create and implement a workforce development system.**

Help people feel safe, engaged, prepared to perform their roles and ready to compete for future opportunities within the organization.



## NEXT STEPS

### 1 Implement the Strategic Plan.

- Managers will select sponsors and teams for each initiative to develop charters showing activities to accomplish the initiatives.
- Managers will approve charters and provide direction and resources to fulfill the work.
- Managers and initiative teams will conduct ongoing strategy reviews to review progress on the plan and identify areas that need adjustment.

### 2 Measure performance.

- Identify indicators that directly relate to our objectives.
- Initiative sponsors and teams create and use individual measures to track progress.

### 3 Communicate.

- Engage the organization while implementing the Strategic Plan.
- Continue to engage and communicate progress using various methods.

