



# Five-Year Strategic Plan

## Fiscal Years 2020-2025



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## OUR PURPOSE, MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

### Our Purpose

To make life better for people by delivering water for life.

### Our Mission

To provide customers with high-quality water and services at a reasonable cost while promoting the preservation of watershed lands and aquifers.

### Our Vision

To be an innovative environmental services organization that sustains life, strengthens our communities and protects natural resources for future generations.

### Our Values

#### **STARS: Service, Teamwork, Accountability, Respect, Safety**

**Service:** We provide prompt, courteous service to both our customers and our coworkers. We continually strive to make the customer experience better for all.

**Teamwork:** We build on each other's strengths. Through efficiency and innovation, we work together, operating as a team, in a spirit of mutual trust and openness, to achieve success.

**Accountability:** We are responsible for our actions. We are honest and ethical. Integrity is at the heart of everything we do.

**Respect:** We treat with respect everyone with whom we come in contact while doing our jobs. We promote diversity and embrace individuality.

**Safety:** We are a safe workforce. Safety is owned by each and every employee. We all benefit when safety is part of our daily lives.

## BUILDING TOWARD THE NEXT 170 YEARS

Water is a key element of a prosperous, healthy community. It is a symbol of our region's bounty and a resource that people depend on. The Regional Water Authority (RWA) takes great pride in the delivery of this life-sustaining product and the services that provide public health protection, fire suppression, support for local economic growth and maintenance of the overall quality of life we enjoy.

Over the last 10 years, using our 2009 and 2014 Strategic Plans as our roadmaps, the RWA has accomplished much. We are now financially stronger and more efficient, continue to provide excellent customer service and are a better place to work.

Guided by the principles of Conscious Capitalism, our more than 270 employees work hard every day to fulfill our higher purpose to make life better for people by delivering water for life. We have always recognized our higher purpose and our responsibilities to the communities we serve. Today, our higher purpose guides our decision making across the organization to balance stakeholder interests by being more conscious of why we do what we do, and how it benefits all of our constituent stakeholders.

In our 170-year history, our pioneering spirit and bold actions have established a reputation for service and innovation built upon a strong foundation of quality people, operational excellence, infrastructure investments and vigilant environmental stewardship. Today, we are building a foundation for the next 170 years and passionate about our journey to transform into a 21st-century environmental services company for our customers. This plan lays the foundation for that journey.

Yet, to realize a future that is more customer and stakeholder focused and supports a sustainable environment through new innovation, technology and service offerings, our technical leadership must be coupled with new standards of service to our customers and for organizational excellence.

To that end, we have identified four themes, or guideposts, that are central to our Fiscal Year 2020-2025 Strategic Plan: Customer, Employee, Process and Financial. They provide a shared sense of direction and engagement as One Team, One RWA.

As part of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan process, we invited all employees to share their ideas to help move the organization forward. Three half-day workshops and a drop-in breakfast were held over two days in September, 2018. Employees were also offered opportunities to contribute ideas and suggestions to a "scrawl wall" and through a web-based ideation tool. More than 140 ideas were shared by nearly 100 employees.

Our strategy framework outlined in this Strategic Plan is based on the Balanced Scorecard and serves as a living document and guide for action. It will set the stage for implementation plans that will take our four themes from concepts to actions and to ensure our success now and into the future.

## FORWARD FOCUSED

*We will excel in key areas to achieve our purpose, mission, vision and overall strategy to transform the RWA from a traditional water utility into a conscious 21<sup>st</sup>-century environmental services company.*



### Forward Focused on Innovation

- Reinvent RWA's process management by building on our foundation and leadership position, and making **innovation and continuous improvement** integral to all aspects of our operations.
- Support a more sustainable environment by embracing innovation and modern technologies, and by extending **new service offerings** to our customers.
- Significantly increase our **revenue diversity** through differentiated new business opportunities and solutions.



### Forward Focused on Our Impact

- Transform RWA into a 21st-century environmental services company to better serve our customers and community by introducing **new standards of service** to ensure organizational excellence.
- Serve as a regional model of **purposeful, responsible regional water management** by ensuring our Mission, Vision, and Values guide water management decisions and influence how we conduct ourselves.
- Protect the personal safety of our employees and contractors by transforming our safety culture to one that focuses on prevention and **achieves zero preventable injuries**.



## GUIDEPOST: PUT THE CUSTOMER FIRST

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### Strategic Goal 1: Meet or exceed customer expectations in all we do

#### Objectives

- Prioritize positive customer outcomes; ensure processes and decisions start and end with the customer in mind and are aligned with our higher purpose to make life better for people by delivering water for life.
- Pursue new processes, technologies and solutions to improve how we operate and better serve our customers and community in today's digital age.
- Bolster our customers' understanding and confidence in our high-quality product and services, stewardship of resources and overall brand image as we transform from a traditional water utility into to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century environmental services company.

#### Targets

- 25% of customer base are using self-service options to meet their billing and water use needs by 2025.
- RWA's J.D. Power Customer Satisfaction Index is in the top quartile of water utilities in the Northeast by 2025.

## **GUIDEPOST: ENABLE OUR WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT A STRONG FUTURE**

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### **Strategic Goal 2: Attract, retain and develop high-quality talent and engaged employees throughout the RWA**

#### **Objectives**

- Focus on our people so that employees put safety first, take pride in their work and feel valued for their contributions.
- Empower and authorize employees to take ownership of their responsibilities and to deliver on all commitments made to external and internal customers.
- Promote and support training, continuing education, cross-training and career development that is aligned with the organization's strategic needs.
- Improve mentoring, transfer of knowledge and leadership development.
- Create an environment that encourages innovative, outside-the-box thinking and a willingness to take reasonable risks.

#### **Targets**

- Achieve zero injuries by 2025.
- Create 10 internships for water industry trades and utility management students by 2025.
- Increase workforce diversity in all of our underrepresented job groups, setting and achieving a determined increased in the percentage of minorities and women with the requisite skills that are available in our Reasonable Recruitment Area (RRA) for 3 of the 7 underrepresented job groups by 2025.





## GUIDEPOST: EFFECTIVELY MANAGE AND MAINTAIN OUR CORE BUSINESS

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### Strategic Goal 3: Enhance and increase environmental services to better serve our stakeholders

#### Objectives

- Enhance the quality of life in our communities by leading the development and implementation of innovative resource management tools that include water management solutions, land management practices and strategic partnerships.
- Demonstrate good stewardship and accountability to our customers and community by preserving and protecting our land and natural resources.
- Identify and prioritize diversified strategies for sustainable water management.
- Implement innovative land management policies and practices that serve our community's best interests.

#### Targets

- Recreation programs will be cost neutral by 2025.
- Add two new environmental services to our portfolio by 2025.



## GUIDEPOST: EFFECTIVELY MANAGE AND MAINTAIN OUR CORE BUSINESS

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### Strategic Goal 4: Deliver high-quality water on demand in a cost-efficient manner

#### Objectives

- Make innovation and continuous improvement integral to all aspects of our operations.
- Lead in innovative water management and quality solutions to improve how we operate and better serve our customers and communities.
- Preserve and protect our water resources and demonstrate accountability to customers through careful financial stewardship.

#### Targets

- Perform a condition assessment of 100% of our assets and link to an Enterprise Asset Management System by 2025.
- Develop control strategies that minimize the formation of regulated disinfection by-products to ensure levels are at least 10% below the regulated limits.
- Unaccounted for water will be consistently less than 10% by 2025.



## GUIDEPOST: EFFECTIVELY MANAGE AND MAINTAIN OUR CORE BUSINESS

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### Strategic Goal 5: Embrace innovation and adopt state-of-the-art technology to drive performance

#### Objectives

- Implement more web-based applications, mobile devices and other real-time IT solutions to accelerate self-service customer options and efficiencies.
- Expand use of electronic databases to increase access to information.

#### Targets

- Link 100% of the technology roadmap to Capital & Operating budgets, while increasing capital efficiency by 2025.
- Automate 20% of all manual processes to promote value-added processes by 2025.



### Strategic Goal 6: Continue to strengthen our financial health in order to mitigate water rate escalation

#### Objectives

- Increase non-core revenue sources to help mitigate future rate increases for our customers.
- Reduce costs and continue to strengthen the organization's financial health to ensure adequate reserves and debt service coverage.
- Drive shared ownership of financial outcomes.

#### Targets

- Increase other net revenue by \$3 million from \$6.2 million to \$9.2 million by 2025.
- Achieve 100% funding of pension obligation by the end of Fiscal Year 2023.
- Increase funding status of Other Post Retirement Employee Benefits (OPEB)/Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA) plan to 25% by the end of 2025.
- Reduce RWA debt to capital plant ratio to 80% by 2025.