



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Water Resources Department

725 Summer St NE, Suite A

Salem, OR 97301

(503) 986-0900

Fax (503) 986-0904

MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Thomas M. Byler, Director
Kim Ogren, Manager, Water Resources Development Program

SUBJECT: Agenda Item A, September 5 and 6, 2018
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Strategic Planning

I. Introduction

During this agenda item, the Department will provide an update on what has happened in strategic planning since the June Commission meeting, engage the Commission in a discussion of key plan elements and outline next steps.

II. Background

As described in greater detail in previous staff reports, the Department identified three reasons for doing strategic planning:

1. To prioritize our work;
2. To continue to improve as a positive and productive workplace; and
3. To improve our internal and external communications.

To accomplish the three objectives identified, the Department identified three "tracks" to pursue in order to build a strategic plan:

1. Work prioritization – Identify the focus areas for strategic implementation over the next five years.
2. Core values and core competencies – Identify the core principles that drive our work and the knowledge or expertise in a given area, discipline, or service: it is what we do and the skills or functions that make us unique.
3. Employee initiatives – Determine what efforts or actions to take to better enable employees to accomplish their work. This can include efforts like training, tools, technology, and improvements to communication.

A status of each of these three tracks is provided below. The Department's tentative timeline for adoption of the strategic plan by the Commission is November 2018.

III. Strategic Priorities

Nested within the broader framework of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, the Department developed the following draft categories for strategic priorities, considering input from the Commission along with input from stakeholders and managers:

- Help Oregonians address *current* water needs/challenges
- Help Oregonians prepare for *future* water needs
- Improve Oregonians' understanding of water resources
- Partner with others to advance water conservation and instream protections
- Build and maintain an effective, high-functioning workforce

The Department is in the process of identifying key outcomes or results it wants to produce in the next five years under each of the draft categories for strategic priorities. In identifying outcomes it wants to pursue, the Department can prioritize its work on the programs and actions that will help it achieve those outcomes. The Department's intent is to identify measurable results in order to allow the Department to track progress in achieving its priorities.

At the Commission meeting, the Department will share some of the potential outcomes/key results and engage the Commission in a discussion to help narrow and refine that list. Conversations with stakeholders and agency partners will help refine the draft strategic priorities as well.

IV. Core Values and Competencies

A new Core Values Committee is working to roll-out and incorporate the core values into the Department's work. The committee is taking a three-pronged approach. First, they will raise awareness about the values. Second, the committee will work to develop a shared understanding of these values across the Department. Finally, the committee will promote accountability to these values in both managers and staff.

The core competencies work has been paused while the Department focuses on strategic priorities and employee initiatives.

V. Employee Initiatives

The third "track" of strategic planning is employee initiatives. This track focuses on identifying what employees – both managers and staff – need to do their work. This includes tools, training, and technology.

To identify potential employee initiatives, the Department worked with Ron Sarazin of Olympic Performance, Inc., to host an employee survey and discussion groups with staff. Participation was optional and employees could participate in both. The Department sought input from all employees on suggestions for staff and manager development, as well as recommendations on how to improve communication. The Department also welcomed other suggestions for employee initiatives more broadly.

Approximately 25 staff and 11 managers participated in the employee initiatives discussions. Fifty-nine employees participated in the survey. All five Department divisions were represented in both the discussion sessions and survey. During the Commission meeting, the Department will provide a high-level summary of topics identified from the discussion sessions and survey. In short, the themes included: staffing, transparency, team building, staff development and training, manager development and training, organizational culture, and communication.

VI. Conclusion

The Department continues to move forward with strategic planning and intends to finish all three tracks and present a strategic plan to the Commission for approval in November 2018.

Tom Byler
503-986-0910

Kim Ogren
503-986-0873