



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Water Resources Commission

**FROM:** Thomas M. Byler, Director

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item G, November 19, 2020  
Water Resources Commission Meeting

### Strategic Plan Update

#### I. Introduction

This agenda item updates the Commission on efforts to implement the 2019-2024 Oregon Water Resources Department Strategic Plan.

#### II. Background

The Strategic Plan was developed in conjunction with the Water Resources Commission, Department staff, and stakeholders as a complement to Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy, and to further refine the Department's priorities. Through the course of plan development, a key theme emerged for the Strategic Plan: the need to modernize our systems, processes, procedures, technology, data, and tools to tackle the water resources issues of today and tomorrow. The Plan identified the following strategic priorities for its five-year period:

- Modernize our management of Oregon's surface water and groundwater resources to meet instream and out-of-stream uses
  - Advance responsible groundwater and surface water management
  - Modernize water transactions systems and processes
  - Increase protection of public safety and health
  - Improve instream protections and increase water conservation
- Work to secure Oregon's instream and out-of-stream water future in the face of increasing water scarcity
  - Understand Oregon's expected future water supply
  - Equip basins to plan for their water future
  - Invest in Oregon's built and natural water infrastructure
- Foster a forward-looking team dedicated to serving Oregonians with integrity and excellence
  - Maintain technical excellence and improve customer service by investing in training
  - Improve agency communications

### **III. Plan Implementation Update**

The Department initiated Strategic Plan implementation in 2019, with a goal of undertaking four specific projects, while also ensuring that the Strategic Plan was a key driver in our decision-making for initiating other projects, and in the development of our budget package requests. The four projects initially identified included:

1. **Core Values.** Department staff identified five core values: Service, Teamwork, Technical Excellence, Forward-Looking and Integrity. The core values help guide staff interactions with each other and with the public. The project goal is to raise awareness, develop a shared understanding, and promote integration and accountability as staff put the core values into practice.
2. **Credit Card Payments at Front Desk.** The goal of this project is to enable the Department to accept credit cards at the front desk.
3. **Automatic Status Updates.** This project is to develop of a system that will automatically email status updates to applicants of various water right transactions.
4. **Project Management.** This project's goal is to develop a better process for tracking, managing, and approving projects through a portfolio management approach.

Staff will update the Commission on the status of the above projects as well as others that were subsequently initiated. Staff will also brief the Commission on the extraordinary operations adjustments the Department has made in 2020 due to public health restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. While these operational changes were made quickly out of necessity and have delayed some of the Department's other work, we have learned a great deal about how we can modernize the agency's future operations while maintaining services and program productivity. At the meeting, staff will discuss what we have learned and how it has influenced Strategic Plan priorities going forward.

### **IV. Summary**

Since the adoption and ratification of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, the Department remains committed to undertaking work to implement projects consistent with the plan. Staff will continue to provide periodic updates to the Commission on project progress.

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