

Revised Five-Year Strategic Plan

for the

Regional Water Providers Consortium



Adopted June 2012

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	iii
Consortium Mission Statement and Goals.....	1
Consortium Values	2
Future Vision.....	2
Strategic Planning Background and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis	2
The Key Strategic Challenges.....	6
1. Strategy: Meeting Water Needs	7
2. Strategy: Emergency Preparedness	13
3. Strategy: Building a Better Regional Partnership.....	18
Next Steps.....	23

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCC	Consortium Conservation Committee
CTC	Consortium Technical Committee
EC	Consortium Executive Committee
EPC	Consortium Emergency Planning Committee
IGA	Intergovernmental Agreement
ORWARN	Oregon Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network
RWPC	Regional Water Providers Consortium (Consortium)
RWSP	Regional Water Supply Plan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UGB	urban growth boundary

Revised Five-Year Strategic Plan

The Regional Water Providers Consortium is a group of 22 water providers in the Portland metropolitan area that directly provides water service to approximately 90–95 percent of the urban area. These water providers represent 14 cities and 8 special districts. The regional government Metro, not a direct water provider, is also a member. The total number of dues-paying governmental Consortium members is 23.

The Consortium was formed in 1996 through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and is operated by an established set of bodies, which meet periodically. The intent of this organization is to collaboratively discuss, study, and adopt policy and to implement programs that assist in the efficient provision of reliable municipal drinking water supplies.

At the same time that the 1996 IGA was signed, the water provider members also endorsed the Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP), which was prepared through a jointly managed effort from 1993–1996. The Consortium is the caretaker and manager of the RWSP, which includes incorporating any major revisions recommended to the participant entities. An update of the RWSP was endorsed in winter 2004.

In 2004, several amendments to the Consortium IGA were approved that changed the dues formula to one that reflects the current activities of the Consortium in conservation, emergency planning, and local coordination. A basic tenet of the Consortium in the IGA is that no individual member gives up its ability to act as it sees fit to provide water services to its customers.

Consortium Mission Statement and Goals

The Regional Water Providers Consortium serves as a collaborative and coordinating organization to improve the planning and management of municipal water supplies in the Portland metropolitan region.

Goals

- We provide a forum for study and discussion of water supply issues and opportunities of mutual interest and we communicate the value of municipal water supplies as well as adopted policy and strategies to the public, agencies, and stakeholder groups.
- We promote cost-efficient use of our water resources through a regional water conservation program and wise stewardship and protection of water resources to meet the values of our collective members and the needs of future generations.
- We assist in improving regional emergency preparedness among water providers so that our customers are better served during emergencies.
- We take ownership of and coordinate the implementation and revision of the Regional Water Supply Plan as the agencies directly responsible for providing water supplies to customers.

Consortium Values

The members of the Consortium are committed to the following values:

- Acting in a consensus manner to the greatest degree possible so that the Consortium can speak with one voice on matters that impact every water provider.
- Implementing regional conservation programs collectively to provide a more economical service to our individual customers and to allow the Consortium to speak with one voice on the importance of conservation.
- Protecting and advocating the protection and wise stewardship of existing and potential sources of drinking water.
- Providing reliable and safe water supplies to meet the needs of the metropolitan area for the long term through the actions of individual member entities.
- Providing technical and educational support to individual members for their use in the provision of water supplies and programs at the subregional level.
- Providing emergency preparedness services that enable more effective response by individual entities and backup to each other during emergencies.
- Building partnerships to explore options, implement mutually beneficial programs, and operate systems while retaining individual decision making authority and accountability to customers.
- Recognizing the need to demonstrate positive value to each participant member and its customers.
- Sharing information about water systems to better serve customers and communicate with customers the value of programs delivered by Consortium and its individual members in helping to meet water needs.
- Ensuring that sensitive system information collected by the Consortium is protected from public disclosure as directed by Oregon law and rules, and that such information shared among individual members is also protected.

Future Vision

The Regional Water Providers Consortium (RWPC) continues to be a valuable entity that plays a coordinating role in ensuring that the water resource needs of the Portland metropolitan area are met now and into the future.

Strategic Planning Background and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis

The Regional Water Providers Consortium Board adopted a work program task to develop a Five-year Strategic Plan, which the Board adopted in September 2000. The Five-Year Strategic Plan was developed and recommended by a subcommittee of the Board and staff from the member agencies. The Board should review the Strategic Plan prior to formulating the annual budget and work program each year and should review and update the Strategic Plan at least every five years.

The Board Executive Committee (EC), which was created in early 2001, presented a revised and updated Strategic Plan in 2004. In March 2008, Consortium staff developed a work program for a second revision of the Strategic Plan. The Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) reviewed the update and the EC approved it in September 2008.

A third revision of the Strategic Plan was initiated in August 2011 by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the CTC. The EC discussed and approved the process for the third update in September 2011. Board and CTC members were surveyed in September 2011. Breakout sessions were held at the October Board meeting to discuss the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) section of the current plan as well as the missions/vision/values statements and the three key strategic challenges. The CTC discussed the first draft of the newly revised Strategic Plan at its December 7, 2011 meeting and recommended some changes. A revised version of the Strategic Plan was developed and discussed at the EC/CTC meetings in January 2012 and subsequently by the Board at its February 2012 meeting. The anticipated adoption milestone for this revision of the Strategic Plan is the June 2012 Board meeting.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis

This section presents a brief scan of the external threats and opportunities and the internal strengths and weaknesses that apply to the Consortium and its individual members.

External Threats

- Low public awareness of public water infrastructure and policies in general including the nature of how systems work, the services provided, and the reliability of the systems coupled with high public expectations that water service will always be available.
- Local, state and federal regulation, particularly water rights issues, as these affect water resources and public infrastructure responses, including rate capacity, to address needed infrastructure maintenance and projects needed to address future growth, regulatory requirements, and potential climate change impacts.
- Uncertain growth without adequate thought and planning for adequate water facilities to meet the added need.
- The impact of economic conditions that lower regional water demands and increase the complexity of funding water systems.
- Climate change impacts and the ability to know how to incorporate adaptation strategies into decision making in the face of uncertainty about the nature of the specific impacts.
- Emerging contaminants in drinking water regulation and the high public expectations and perceptions regarding drinking water contaminants.
- Emergency events and disasters including lack of preparedness by the public.
- Reduced federal funding for grants.

External Opportunities

Figure 1 shows the external opportunities that could be favorable to the organization.

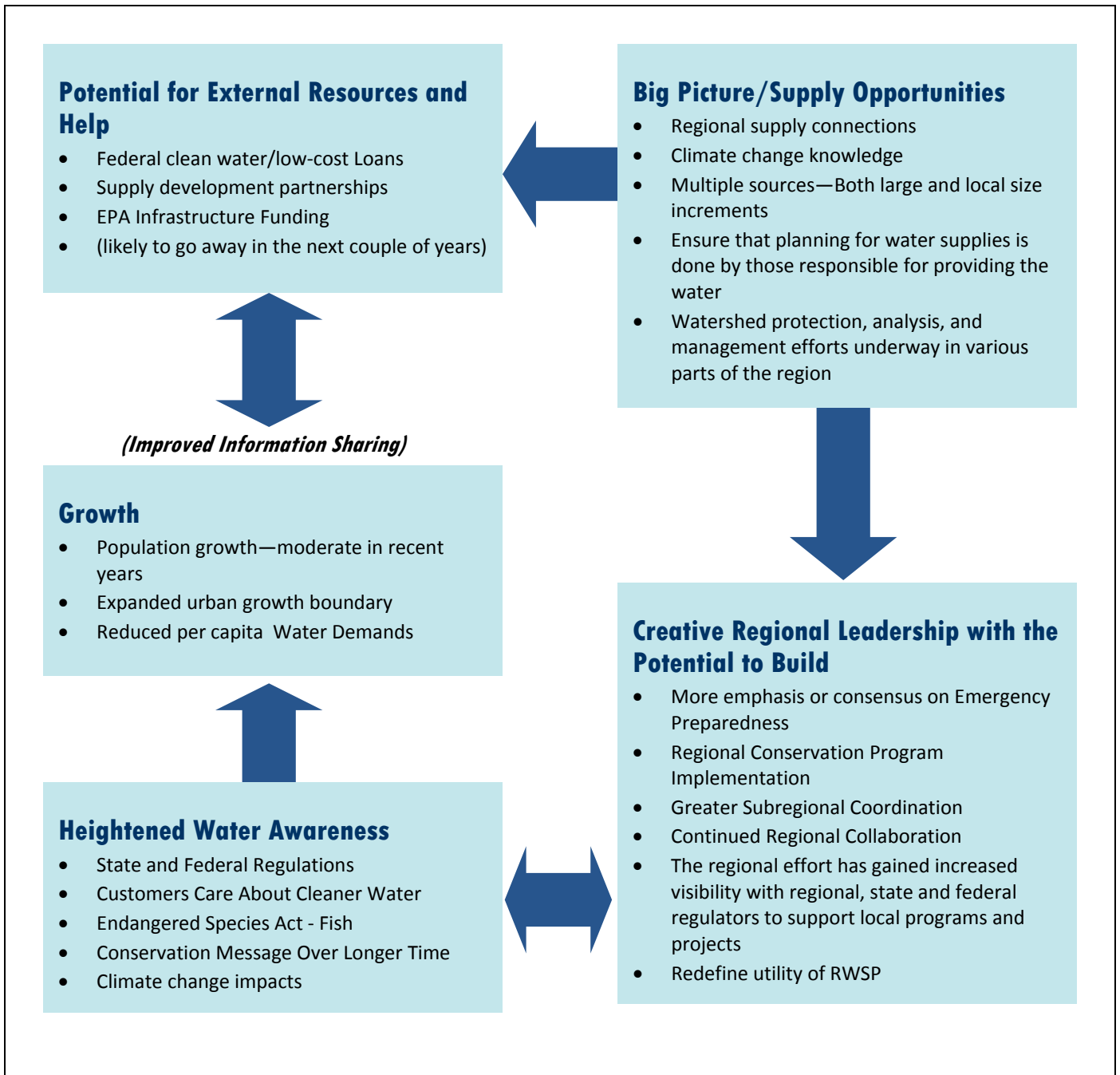


Figure 1. External Opportunities

Internal Weaknesses

- Lack of participation by Consortium members, including capabilities of the individual members to participate at equivalent levels.
- Different interests, expectations and governance structures among members.
- Lack of public and member awareness of the activities of the Consortium.
- Cumbersome size creates difficulties in logistics and administration.
- Lack of effective strategies for knowledge transfer for new member staff and officials.
- Competition for scarce fiscal resources to pay for Consortium programs particularly as entities deal with aging infrastructure, changes in the economy, and regulatory mandates.
- Lack of data and water-sharing agreements among providers.

Internal Strengths

- An institutional history since about 1990 of working together and since 1997 as a water provider consortium with a track record particularly in the areas of regional conservation and emergency preparedness.
- Visibility has increased with state and federal regulatory agencies.
- Trust is building over time as decisions have been made throughout the region that build on collaboration begun in part through regional activities.
- Effective leadership within the region and in the Consortium.
- Have had good staff support.
- There is power in numbers.
- Economies of scale to conduct programs that mutually benefit all members.
- Based on collaboration not coercion. Involvement by elected decision makers increases the ability to act and plan collaboratively in the region.
- Diversity in membership (by entity type and size).
- Multiple water resources in the region.
- Implementation of mutually beneficial regional programs by the Consortium has increased the value of the Consortium to members and increased customers' awareness of the work of the Consortium and regional water providers.
- Coordination and communication among water providers to respond to and recover from an emergency.
- Acquisition of equipment and tools to provide safe water to the public during an emergency.
- Knowledge of the regional water system and interconnections.

The Key Strategic Challenges

The key strategic challenges that were identified based on the above analysis of the environmental scan, stakeholder surveys, and Consortium work sessions held during revisions and updates are grouped into three specific areas and expressed as questions:

1. How do we facilitate the provision of water supplies as a region?
2. How do we deal with emergencies on a regional basis?
3. How do we continue to build the Consortium into a valued organization that helps water providers meet water needs and meet emergencies?

Each of these key strategic challenges is made up of a number of specific strategic goals. Each challenge is listed as a specific regional strategy, all of which are linked to form a direction for the Consortium over the next five years.

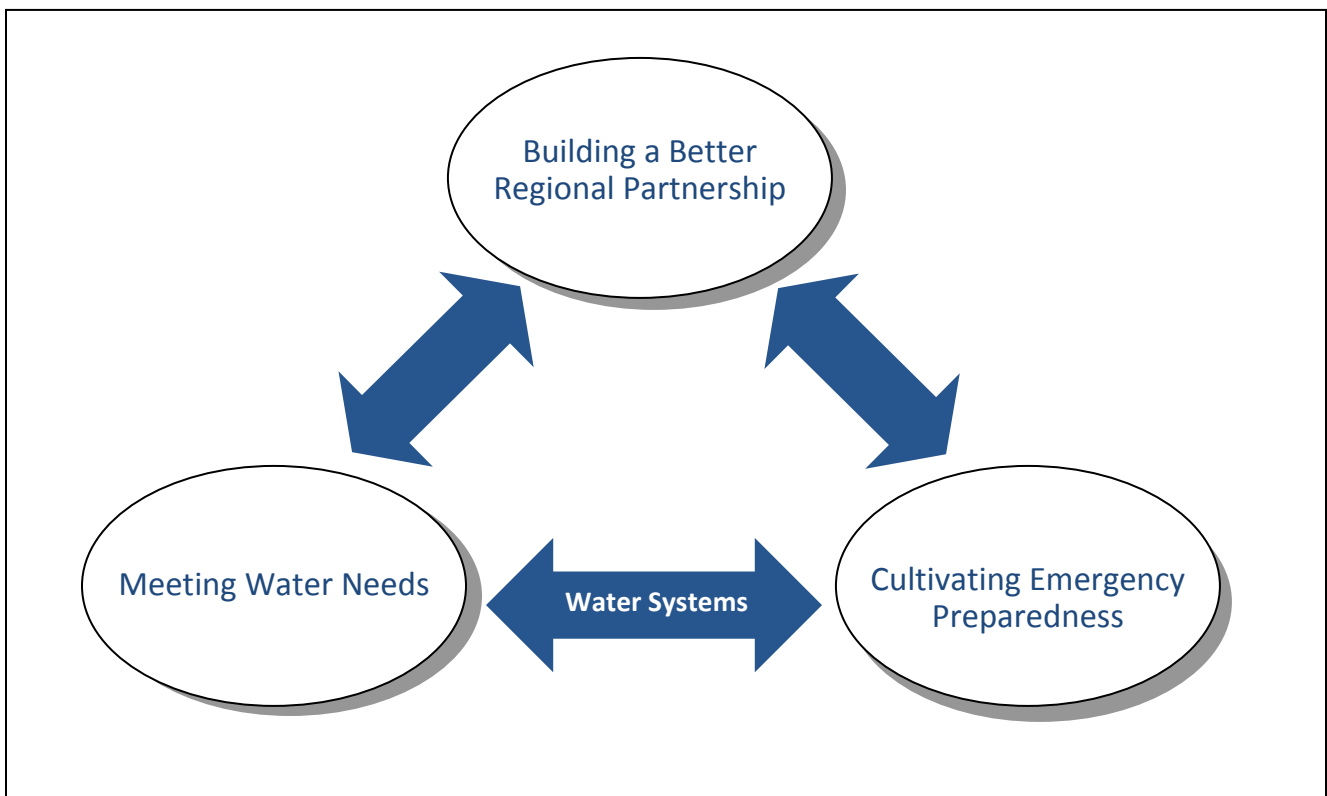


Figure 2. Key Strategic Challenges for the Consortium

1. Strategy: Meeting Water Needs

The challenge: How do we facilitate the provision of water supplies as a region?

CONTEXT

The Regional Water Providers Consortium was formed by an IGA initially signed by 26 water providers and Metro in 1996–1997. After consolidations, departures, and additions, in 2008 the size of the Consortium was 24 entities representing 25 different water providers (some of which also sold wholesale water to other entities) that are responsible for providing water supplies to about 90–95 percent of the Portland metropolitan area in Oregon. The entities signing the original Consortium IGA also agreed to endorse the Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) developed in 1996.

The primary purposes of the Consortium are listed in the IGA as follows:

- To provide a collaborative clearinghouse function for water supply planning and development that fosters regional coordination;
- To serve as the central custodian for Plan documents, including computer models and other local decision-support functions;
- To review and recommend revisions to the Plan, as appropriate;
- To provide a forum for the study and discussion of water supply issues of mutual interest to Participants and to collate the responses of Participants to such issues;
- To provide a forum for review and discussion of water resource-related issues that may relate to application of the state-wide land-use goals, comprehensive plans, regional plans, or land-use regulations;
- To allow for public participation in Consortium activities;
- To conduct regional conservation programs;
- To facilitate emergency preparedness for water suppliers in the region.

Since the first year of the Consortium operation beginning on July 1, 1997, there have been work tasks adopted annually that have focused on issues associated with public involvement, source water protection, emergency preparedness, transmission and storage, regional conservation program implementation, and updating the Regional Water Supply Plan. Issues associated with entities making decisions about how to meet their near- and long- term supply needs have arisen during this time.

In addition, the Consortium added the implementation of regional conservation programs to its function in 2000. This function now involves over 60 percent of the fiscal resources of the Consortium on a year-to-year basis. Since 2000, the Consortium's conservation programs have continued to grow through the commitment and efforts of the Consortium Conservation Committee (CCC) working together in the planning, development, participation, and execution of diverse conservation programs for the region. The CCC represents the interests of the Consortium member entities working together as a regional group and with a unified conservation voice. The CCC meets once

a month to share ideas, network, engage in conservation work discussions, program updates and work plans. This monthly meeting is an opportunity for members to discuss and participate in subregional programs with other interested member entities and staff. Collaboration is the key to success. The CCC has worked together to develop successful water conservation programs that serve diverse members' needs.

The Consortium Board and the CTC discussed the nature of the planning role for the Consortium during 2003 and provided direction for changes in this role—some of which resulted in language changes to the IGA. The role of the Consortium was again discussed in 2006 at a strategic planning discussion. At the present the primary purpose of the Consortium is to conduct mutually acceptable regional programs that support the programs of local entities, but not direct the provision of specific water supplies to meet the needs of the region.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders are the entities that make up the Consortium. These entities include 14 cities, 8 water districts, and 1 regional government. Other stakeholders include customers of the various entities, special interest groups, and other governmental agencies, including the State of Oregon Water Resources Department and the Oregon Health Authority Drinking Water Program, which directly regulate water providers.

CONSEQUENCES IF NOT ADDRESSED

- If the strategic challenge is not adequately addressed then there are likely to be members of the Consortium that will not see value in continuing membership and that may withdraw. If the member entities totals less than 15, the Consortium no longer exists under the formation IGA.
- The value in a collaborative organization is often contingent on retaining enough members to effectively justify the time and expense associated with maintaining such an organization. Consortium members have been concerned with focusing on the appropriate issues of value to the individual entities. A loss of focus on the key issues important to providing effective water service for the individual members is likely to result in loss of membership and a termination of the Consortium.
- The loss of the forum provided by the Consortium would result in a return to more individual and subregional efforts to meet water supply needs and a loss of collective communication of positions on water programs and issues. The return to more individual area-oriented perspectives is a likely outcome if the Consortium is disbanded as is the loss of a regionally focused conservation program and emergency preparedness program. The strength of these programs lies in the Consortium's ability to educate and inform the public through one voice on these specific water issues, without this collective effort, each entity would be left to do this on their own.
- Absent its planning function, Consortium would likely lose credibility with regulatory agencies and Metro, as part of its charter responsibilities, would be required to have a larger planning role. Metro has expressed a desire to have the Consortium be

responsible for providing Metro with the plans and programs that meet its need to show that adequate water supplies are provided to meet future growth in the region.

- Simple lack of information about the activities and programs of others can result in decision making in a vacuum. Other issues of consequence to individual providers if the Consortium were disbanded include
 - a continuation of suspicion among individual entities
 - lost opportunities to reach regional and subregional arrangements to develop timely system improvements
 - system duplication which could result in a reduction in the service provided by some entities and/or added costs to customers
 - the region may lose opportunities for more responsible environmental resources management through conjunctive use of water sources and regional programs to conserve water

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Recognize the importance of conservation in meeting regional water needs by continuing to implement regional conservation programs where economies of scale and regionally consistent conservation messages and benefits can be achieved. The regional program will achieve the following strategic goals:
 - A. To promote coordination among water providers in planning and implementation of water conservation outreach efforts.
 - B. To raise information and awareness in water conservation efforts for the region.
 - C. To educate the public on water issues and conservation efforts/tools for the region.
 - D. To provide provider member coordination, cooperation, training and participation in water conservation outreach efforts for the region.
 - E. To develop, update and enhance water conservation education outreach materials for provider members and the public they serve.
 - F. To coordinate and communicate water conservation programs on a regional basis via events, website, media outreach and interviews, and educational materials.
 - G. To develop and implement a region-wide school education outreach program.
 - H. To encourage and support coordination and communications among water providers and other stakeholders.
 - I. To support and be linked to other similar conservation groups.
 - J. To maximize economies of scale in the development and delivery of all water conservation programs.
 - K. To foster cooperation, support and consensus among water providers in communicating regional water conservation messages.

- L. To offer membership to other water providers in the region that might benefit from the regional media market and from economies of scale.
2. Be a collaborative clearinghouse and provide decision-support tools for water supply planning on a consensus-based approach as needed, in keeping with the Consortium IGA that leaves water supply development and management to the individual members. On issues of mutual consent, the Consortium should facilitate the ability of the region's water providers to speak with a unified voice on water issues that affect everyone.
3. Develop a process for discussing the intent of continuing to update the Regional Water Supply Plan, including assessing the role of the RWSP in current Consortium activities and programs and the benefits for implementation of the state-adopted Integrated Water Resources Strategy. Consider the format for revising the RWSP and develop a framework for how the Plan can be changed to best meet the needs of the Consortium and the individual members. Implement the outcome of this discussion by 2014.
4. Work on identifying added messaging the Consortium could consider to communicate the value of water to customers including but not limited to: the important role of water providers in protecting public health (i.e. meeting drinking water standards, fire protection, and resource stewardship), the need to be prepared for emergencies, and providing resiliency for the vital public need to have water supplies to support communities and the economy. Develop a program proposal to address this identified need as a part of the fiscal year 2013–14 Budget and Work Plan.
5. Be a catalyst for participation as a group of water provider entities in the legislative arena by continuing to interact as a body to determine areas of mutual advantage and to represent adopted Consortium policy. Continue to proactively participate in regional, state, and federal program activities. Consider links to existing water organizations to increase effectiveness. Examine any new organizational arrangements for the Consortium that might increase its ability to respond in a timely and consensus-based manner.
6. Reevaluate the Source Water Protection Strategy last adopted in 1998 to determine whether the Consortium benefits from having a specific strategy. Evaluate existing and future threats to drinking water quality in the region. Rewrite the Strategy if needed. As a part of this review, consider less-formal routes for the Consortium to continue to foster and communicate effective source protection policies.
7. Provide coordination functions with Metro to meet the need for the agency to have a water supply element of its Framework Plan. Work with Metro to effectively participate in urban growth boundary (UGB) revisions and implement the 2040 Growth Concept.
8. Provide information and a forum for the region's water providers to communicate about climate change impacts and adaptation and mitigation strategies. Communicate with state and federal agencies on the importance of adequate data collection on climate patterns, watershed characteristics, and decision-support

modeling to assist water providers in understanding the potential impacts of climate change including how to best incorporate the uncertainties associated with specific climate impacts into the decision making processes of the individual Consortium members.

CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

An effective Water Needs strategy will:

- ✓ Be based on a consensus approach to making decisions at the Board level.
- ✓ Be seen as valuable by all members collectively and individually by addressing both collective and individual issues of interest.
- ✓ Stimulate and inspire proactive measures.
- ✓ Be conducted in such a manner that no entity perceives a threat to its individual actions.
- ✓ Retain and build on the investment already made in regional collaboration and coordination on water supply issues of mutual interest.
- ✓ Retain the ability of water providers to plan and manage how municipal water supplies are provided throughout the region.
- ✓ Assist water providers in understanding how climate change may impact systems and programs.
- ✓ Take advantage of multiple water sources throughout the region.
- ✓ Retain the credibility of the Consortium with regulatory agencies and continue to fulfill the role of providing regional water supply planning for the Metro Framework Plan.
- ✓ Base the amount of work done by the Consortium in any given year on the ability to justify the funds requested and keep the Consortium budget focused on key issues arrived at through consensus.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for public involvement at both the individual provider and at the Consortium level.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resource implications for addressing this strategic challenge and meeting the strategic goals are important considerations for the level of effort that is desired. The Consortium operating budget has been in the range of \$745,000 per year for the years 2008 to 2012. As of 2012, the majority of the budget is spent on regional conservation program implementation and logistical support. The Consortium has also been successful in obtaining emergency preparedness grant funds. Future grant opportunities may present themselves through the state of Oregon, particularly for conservation program planning and implementation. The Board approves the budget and work program on a year-to-year basis; therefore any budget shifts have been

discussed multiple times as a part of Board, Executive Committee and Technical Committee discussions beforehand.

BOARD ROLE

The role of the Consortium Board will be to approve the Five-Year Strategic Plan, annual work plans and budgets, and to approve policy and project strategies that are developed, and to recommend to individual entities any revision of the IGA and the Regional Water Supply Plan. In between Board meetings, the EC has assumed a function to work with the staff and Technical Committees to implement Consortium programs and recommend actions to the Board for consideration. The EC has responsibility for recommending revisions to the Five-Year Strategic Plan.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

- Utilize new ways of engaging staff and elected officials such as subcommittees, workshops, subregional meetings, breakout sessions at Board meetings, linking between Board members, and having the Executive Committee members link with other Board members.
- Review the staffing arrangements for the Consortium and adopt recommendations before the Staffing IGA expires on June 30, 2015.
- Continue to encourage dialogue among Consortium members and Metro as Metro implements the 2040 Framework Plan.
- Work with federal and state agencies to support continuing efforts to identify the impacts of future climate change. Encourage activities to keep Consortium members informed and up-to-date about opportunities for joint collaboration on research, outreach, and building capabilities to address climate change impacts.

2. Strategy: Emergency Preparedness

The challenge: How do we deal with emergencies on a regional basis?

CONTEXT

Water is one of the most important urban services that supports residential lifestyles and accommodates the needs of industrial/commercial and institutional users. Examples of emergencies that can interrupt water service include events such as wind and ice storms, earthquakes, heavy rainstorms, flooding, landslides, mudflows, volcanic eruptions, contamination, power outages, accidents, facility failures, and acts of terrorism.

The large number and variety of water providers in the region pose challenges and opportunities for effective emergency preparedness. For example, some providers are part of systems that are well interconnected with one or more water sources or systems, while others are isolated and have inadequate, or no, interconnections with other backup supplies.

Another aspect of emergency management includes the ability of water providers to assist each other in the event of an emergency. Emergency events can range from single system events that only affect part of or all of one provider's system, to events that would affect a whole watershed basin with several systems (e.g. the Clackamas basin or Bull Run watershed). The most devastating events (major earthquakes, ice and windstorms, terrorism, or the threat of terrorism) could potentially affect all water systems, crippling both surface and groundwater sources. In some cases, regional water providers have responded to emergencies that have affected entities outside of the Portland metropolitan area. Most water providers have mutual aid agreements or IGAs with neighboring water providers or other agencies to provide equipment and personnel. The development of the Oregon Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (ORWARN) has brought a majority of the region's water and wastewater agencies together to provide mutual aid and assistance.

The Consortium initiated emergency planning efforts in 1998 with various assessments and a planning workshop to determine priorities and set strategic goals. The Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) was established in December 2001 and continues to meet and carry out annual work plans. The main objectives of the Consortium's emergency planning efforts are to improve coordination and communication among providers, offer training and exercises, identify funding opportunities for emergency water supply equipment and planning, facilitate ways to improve interconnections among providers, and offer relevant resources.

The EPC has accomplished many tasks including the development of an annually updated emergency contact list and an Emergency Water Distribution Plan, receiving grants, promoting mutual aid opportunities, and sharing other resources. The EPC monitors relevant legislation, has provided training, and conducts regular tabletop exercises. Most recently, the Consortium completed a regional water system and interconnection study and ArcGIS geodatabase to help improve resiliency in the region,

identify vulnerabilities, and develop emergency operational strategies. Staff participate in the regional emergency programs in addition to other forums to foster better communication and coordination with other agencies involved in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders are the water provider entities that make up the Consortium. Other stakeholders include the region's water customers, other government agencies (such as the Oregon Health Authority) that directly regulate water providers, city and county official emergency management and response agencies, county health departments, and police and fire departments as well as other local government agencies.

CONSEQUENCES IF NOT ADDRESSED

If this strategic challenge is not adequately addressed, then water service in the region may be compromised during an emergency due to the lack of regional emergency planning or experience in responding to an emergency. A coordinated emergency response strategy will most likely lessen the duration and severity of an event for individual providers and ease recovery. Each water provider has been provided tools and has the opportunity to evaluate their individual systems and to take actions or develop programs to reduce vulnerabilities. Complete elimination of all vulnerability is not likely. However, if the region's providers have the ability and framework in place to respond effectively, coordinate on a regional level and rely on each other for assistance during either individual or multiple-system emergency events, then the emergency can be dealt with more efficiently and there is a greater chance that water service can be maintained with less disruption. Having appropriate plans in place also ensures eligibility for public assistance for repairs after an emergency. Since the development of the original Strategic Plan, the climate has changed surrounding emergency planning. Terrorism is more of a reality and tremendous resources have been directed at identifying vulnerabilities, developing emergency response plans, and improving preparedness. This has removed some of the barriers to regional emergency planning. However the region's ability to more effectively deal with emergencies is still affected by the following:

- Outside drivers (e.g. state or federal requirements to have emergency plans or agreements);
- Lack of emergency preparedness on the part of the general public;
- Lack of public support and understanding of need for resources to be proactive to prepare for and improve water system resiliency in the event of an emergency;
- Concern about the ratepayer impacts of implementing programs to deal with devastating events that have not yet occurred;
- Maintaining basic services (e.g. water service, billing, customer service, etc.) while dealing with an emergency event;

- Competition for resources to implement emergency response plans, purchase equipment, and make needed upgrades;
- Lack of needed interconnections to ensure that all providers have reliable back-up supplies;
- Use of multiple types of communication systems;
- Framework (or lack of one) for allocating existing resources where and when they are needed in the region;
- Lack of coordination among water providers, county emergency management and other stakeholders;
- Frequency and severity of events can impact regional readiness among not only water provider staff but also customers. Also, the loss of experienced personnel through retirements and attrition may impact an agency's reservoir of institutional knowledge;
- Concerns about sharing water system information with each other and other agencies involved in emergency planning.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Participate as stakeholder in regional preparedness and coordination efforts and plans.
2. Continue to provide training and exercises to enhance water providers' knowledge and experience in responding to and recovering from an emergency. Continue to exercise regional equipment. Disseminate information on other regional training and exercise opportunities.
3. Utilize and maintain regional interconnections geodatabase to support regional collaboration and decision making on interconnections.
4. Test interconnections and their capacities to facilitate and support reliable backup supplies of water for all water providers in the event of an emergency.
5. Continue to develop, update and enhance resources for water providers.
6. Support all Consortium members to have mutual aid agreements.
7. Identify federal and state funding opportunities for emergency preparedness at the regional, subregional or water-provider level in coordination with other regional funding efforts.
8. Regularly update and exercise emergency preparedness plans. Share plan elements among providers to assist each other with plan preparation and updates.
9. Continue to facilitate and encourage coordination and information-sharing among water providers and other stakeholders to improve communication and emergency preparedness and response. Share information about regionally available

equipment and resources. Participate in conferences and exercises to share information. Utilize the conserveh2o.org website.

10. Develop a strategy to improve interoperable communication among water providers and to bridge the gaps among different types of radio systems. Incorporate communications into exercises.
11. Support the use and deployment of regional equipment such as portable water distribution systems, portable water treatment plants, and temporary piping with training and testing of equipment. Update the Regional Emergency Water Distribution Plan as needed. Coordinate and share information with other stakeholders.
12. Support public information messaging that promotes citizen emergency preparedness (e.g. bill stuffers) and provide public information officers with relevant information on emergency water supplies (72-hour kits, etc.) so they are prepared to answer questions when an emergency happens.
13. Coordinate with and educate the Oregon Office of Emergency Management about water provider resources and needs.

CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

An effective Emergency Preparedness strategy will:

- ✓ Raise the awareness of emergency preparedness issues with the water providers and with the public.
- ✓ Coordinate and be integrated with counties and other regional emergency management programs.
- ✓ Build on the experiences of the past and from other areas of the Pacific Northwest.
- ✓ Improve coordination and communication among regional providers and improve service.
- ✓ Encourage and support resource-sharing and prioritization.
- ✓ Foster cooperation and consensus among water providers to accomplish strategic goals.
- ✓ Ensure that sensitive information generated by the Consortium to support emergency preparedness is protected from public disclosure in accordance with applicable state and federal law (e.g. ORS 192.501).

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Additional resources may be required to achieve the strategic goals. This will involve Board approval of annual work programs and budgets relating to emergency preparedness. Grants will be pursued to fund major work tasks especially related to equipment and planning studies, however if grants are not available, the Board will need to identify funding priorities. Additional periodic resources may also be needed

for training programs and exercises, depending on frequency. Most of the other items could be worked into an average base budget.

BOARD ROLE

The role of the Consortium Board will be to support and approve the Five-Year Strategic Plan, create annual work plans and budgets, recommend changes to the Consortium's IGA, and approve policy and any emergency preparedness plan.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

The Emergency Planning Committee recommends continuing to utilize the committee to help accomplish strategic goals, implement work tasks and make recommendations for review by the CTC.

3. Strategy: Building a Better Regional Partnership

The challenge: How do we continue to build the Consortium into a valued organization that helps water providers meet water needs and meet emergencies?

CONTEXT

The Regional Water Providers Consortium was formed for a number of reasons in late 1996. The reasons for its formation at that time included the following:

- Foster efficient service and save customers money through cost-sharing.
- Promote “big picture” approaches to dealing with complex resource issues.
- Promote local ownership and accountability for implementation of regional water supply projects and programs.
- Emphasize collaborative partnerships to help meet needs.
- Provide representation of customer interests on regional water supply issues and decisions.
- Establish a forum for public information and involvement in key regional water resources and supply issues.
- Greater positive impact on state and federal issues of concern.
- Facilitate sharing of technical assistance and support among providers on issues of mutual interest.

Over the years since the decision was made to form the Consortium, a number of these issues have been dealt with by the Consortium. Since its inception, the Consortium has been perceived as having strengths and weaknesses, not the least of which is the nature of the organization as a voluntary collaborative that does not bind in any way the actions of individual members. Some of the challenges facing the Consortium have been identified to include complacency and lack of meeting attendance, differing organizational objectives among providers, the sheer size of the organization, vulnerability to losing members, perception of threat to individual agency plans, and need for improved communication internally and externally.

Some partnership opportunities have taken place since the Consortium was formed. For example, the Willamette River Water Coalition and other entities have actively worked on agreements with federal land management agencies to protect sources (e.g., Clackamas water providers and City of Sandy). Other entities have created new supplies (e.g., North Clackamas Water Commission as well as the Joint Water Commission in Washington County and the Bureau of Reclamation) or interconnections (South Fork, North Clackamas Commission, Clackamas River Water and Lake Oswego), or services (e.g., renewed wholesale contracts with the City of Portland, and agreements between the cities of Sherwood and Wilsonville). However, the ability of the Consortium to facilitate and encourage more partnerships to accomplish meeting water needs and

coordinating emergency preparedness has not fulfilled its potential, nor is it certain at this point that the members want an institutional role for the Consortium over the longer term. The one area that has been the most successful has been in the area of emergency preparedness in which the Consortium has played a role in encouraging members to join the ORWARN agreement and purchase regional emergency water systems. This is an arena that may result in further regional collaboration as further work items under the Emergency Preparedness key strategic challenge are accomplished.

In October 2011, the Consortium Board considered the activities that it would like the Consortium to focus on, and the role in building partnerships was considered to still be valid. The Consortium's role was felt to more one of collaboration, speaking with one voice on issues of mutual interest, and being a forum for discussing problems of a regional or subregional nature.

There also is continuing support for the Consortium's increased education role to enhance knowledge of how water is supplied to the region, the sources, the suppliers, and programs to encourage water-use efficiency and the protection of source waters. Defining the issues of mutual interest and concern to individual members is probably the key challenge for the continuation of the Consortium. A significant challenge within the Consortium functions is that of attendance at regular meetings. This challenge was thought to be not a lack of commitment so much as complacency or satisfaction with the major activities of the Consortium therefore obviating the need to attend meetings.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders are the water provider entities that make up the Consortium. These entities include 14 cities, 8 water districts, and 1 regional government. Other stakeholders include the region's water customers, public interest groups, environmental groups, and other governmental agencies that either regulate water resources or have programs that are affected by or affect municipal water supply systems or programs.

CONSEQUENCES IF NOT ADDRESSED

If this strategic challenge is not adequately addressed in concert with the other two key challenges, then the Consortium will not have fulfilled its potential and may even risk being disbanded. The ability of the Consortium members to define their expected outcomes for the Consortium has been difficult due to a number of factors such as the size of the organization, meeting logistics and formats, and adopting year-by-year work programs to focus most of the effort on certain work tasks. The desire of the Board members is to discuss and establish policy and action items that are of value to individual members. The ability of the Consortium to define and rank the issues of key importance has been clouded somewhat by a lack of readiness of all individual members to agree on the level of effort needed to address key action items. The Consortium has had some successes over the 15 years since its inception. Members would like to build on those successes and not focus on the aspects of planning that would be counter to the activities of the individual members. There are also

consequences of having members leave the Consortium that threaten the cohesiveness of the organization and its focus on issues of regional significance.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Spend at least one Board meeting focusing on strategic planning issues as a part of the budget process.
2. Continue to explore meeting formats and frequencies that allow more dialogue with Board members and consider establishing primary target agenda themes for meetings a year ahead of time including legislative themes prior to the biennial sessions.
3. Use communication methods (including the Consortium website) that facilitate interaction at the individual participant level and encourage Board members to link with each other between meetings. Board members are encouraged to communicate with their own decision makers in between meetings, provide updates at the Consortium meetings from selected entities, and ensure that outgoing Board members communicate with new members when possible.
4. Develop a package of materials that would inform new Board and staff members of the role and activities of the Consortium. Develop and maintain effective communication materials that explain the Consortium and its activities including new formats for the annual reports and a general Consortium-specific brochure, both of which can be utilized in both printed and electronic formats.
5. Work with the Executive Committee to develop and refine policy issues, including proposed changes to Board documents or existing policy, the budget and work programs, or other items that that will go to the Board for action.
6. Survey the Board and entity staff in association with the update of the Strategic Plan at least every five years on the effectiveness of the Consortium and suggestions for enhancing its performance; in addition, every year as a part of the preparation of the annual work plan and budget, encourage discussion of overall member satisfaction and Consortium effectiveness.
7. Focus the efforts of the Consortium on meeting its strategic issues as a baseline set of annual activities implemented in the specific work plans and budgets for each year. Utilize voluntary provider staffing on behalf of the Consortium to embark on other issues identified by the Consortium that are outside of this baseline.
8. Review and evaluate the Staffing IGA with the City of Portland in 2015 as required by that IGA.
9. On an as-needed basis, the Consortium Board and CTC Chair will offer to attend provider entity meetings to provide information about the Consortium and to get feedback on the Consortium functions.
10. The Consortium should be a focal point for collaboration between Metro and water utilities to ensure that Metro policies and plans adequately consider the need for water utility facilities both inside and outside the UGB.

CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

An effective Partnership strategy will:

- ✓ Be based on the principle that each entity sees value in the resources devoted to the activities of the Consortium.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of turf protection activities within individual provider entities by providing a nonthreatening forum for the discussion of water supply issues.
- ✓ Be based on a consensus approach for adoption of annual budgets to support the work program and other policy matters that come before the Consortium.
- ✓ Continue to rely on the IGA proviso that each entity is free to take individual actions.
- ✓ Allow for continuous assessment of the Consortium over time to make needed adjustments and changes to improve performance and value.
- ✓ Allow the IGA to be amended as needed to address current organizational concerns.
- ✓ Adjust meeting schedules, formats, and attendance at Board and Technical Committee meetings so that business can be conducted in a timely manner. Utilize subcommittees as needed to address needs for more specialized member involvement.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resources will be required to achieve the strategic goals as noted in the other goals on meeting water needs and emergency preparedness. This will involve Board approval of annual work programs and budgets for each year that the Consortium remains in effect. The issue of climate change may require further analysis for added resource commitments if desired by the Board.

BOARD ROLE

The role of the Consortium Board will be to approve the Five-Year Strategic Plan, annual work plans and budgets, and to approve policy and any specific work plan action items or to make recommendations to local-entity governing bodies for such items as IGA amendments or major revisions of the Regional Water Supply Plan. The Board also should devote time once per year to consider strategic planning issues as a part of the annual budget and work program process.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

- The Board or the CTC may wish to appoint other topic-specific subcommittees to assist in the development of work plan products as was done for the 2012 Strategic Plan Update.
- From time-to-time, the Board may wish to consider different meeting setups, timing, or locations to facilitate more effective communication either among members or with the public. The Board has used breakout sessions in past years and considers this meeting format to be effective in fostering more communication and would like to continue to use this meeting format.

- Any surveys utilized to meet the strategic goals will be brief and easily analyzed; objectives for the survey will be discussed the Technical Committee and any other Board committees.
- Continued support for enhancing the Consortium web page including links to the websites for individual members.
- Utilize the Consortium meeting opportunities to share information about individual member programs and projects to promote more networking and education among members.

Next Steps

The Consortium will operate under this Five-Year Strategic Plan for the next five years. The Strategic Plan should be consulted each year during the development of the annual work plan and budget. The next update is anticipated no later than 2017; however, the Strategic Plan can be revised and updated at any time before then. Should the Board desire to revise the directions and programs of the Consortium or provide more timely language, it should update the Strategic Plan to reflect these changes.