OLIVEHURST PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

Strategic Plan

2026 – 2031







OUR MISSION

To provide superior, environmentally sensitive services to responsibly enhance our community.

WATER | WASTEWATER | FIRE PROTECTION | PARKS & RECREATION | STREETLIGHTS

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Board of Directors

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District Staff

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Brianne Ritchie, District Clerk/Executive Assistant

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Introduction

A Strategic Plan is a top-level planning document for an organization to set clear direction over all operational aspects of its mission. It serves as a framework for decision making over a five-year period. It is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions that shape what a District plans to accomplish by selecting a rational and balanced course of action. A public agency like the Olivehurst Public Utility District also benefits from setting clear direction. The District's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Focus Areas set the overall structure of this Strategic Plan. The foundational elements of this Strategic Plan were developed by the Board in workshop settings. Within the framework of that structure and the business environment, strategic focus and goals were developed to sustain and improve the District over the next five years. At its highest level, this Strategic Plan seeks to strengthen and build upon opportunities while addressing areas of concern, all aimed at an optimized future for the District.

This plan also identifies actions, activities, and planning efforts currently underway that are needed for continued success in operations and management of the District and provides for periodic reviews and updates.



Strategic Planning Definitions

Mission Statement: A declaration of the District's purpose which succinctly describes why the District exists. All activities of the District should be in support of the Mission Statement. The Mission Statement also reflects the values to which the Board of Directors is dedicated. The Board of Directors adopts the Mission Statement. The Mission Statement is reviewed every two years but is generally constant over the long term.

Vision: The Board of Directors adopts the Vision, stated and organized in the form of Strategic Focus Areas. The Vision will be reviewed every two years and will typically change more frequently than the Mission Statement to reflect the direction the Board wants to take the District over the five-year time horizon of the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Focus Areas: The broad and primary areas of District operations, planning, and management that are addressed and supported by the Strategic Plan goals. These essentially serve as the outline and organization of the Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors adopts the Strategic Focus Areas. The Strategic Focus Areas are reviewed annually but are intended, absent major new issues, to be relatively constant over the life of the five-year Strategic Plan.

Focus Area Objective/Strategy Statement: A concise statement associated with each Strategic Focus Area that describes the objective for that area and how it will be achieved.

Strategic Focus Goals: The goal statement is supported by a narrative that more fully explains the nature of the goal and the issues that the goal intends to address. The Strategic Goals are prepared by District staff and accepted by the Board. The Strategic Goals may change from year to year when the annual assessment is made of the progress on each Strategic Focus Area. The Strategic Goals define the line between policy (Board responsibility) and implementation (staff responsibility) and as such are a collaborative effort of both the Board and staff.

Strategic Plan Development

In fiscal year 2025–26, the District retained BHI Management Consulting (BHI) to facilitate and coordinate the development of the District's five-year Strategic Plan. BHI first gathered input from Board members and staff in a series of meetings to provide direct, "ground-level" input to the Board during its planning workshops. The following topics were discussed at each input-gathering meeting:

- Mission
- Vision
- Core Values
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

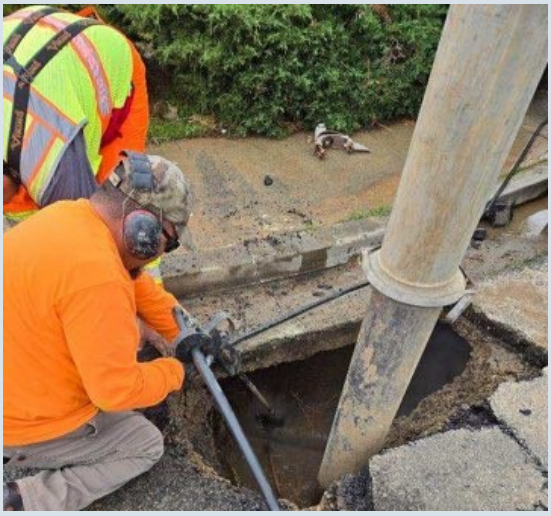
The Board supported this process to allow everyone to participate in building the foundation of the Strategic Plan. The Board workshop was conducted in June 2026. At this workshop the Board reviewed all input; considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the District; revisited the District's existing Mission Statement; and discussed focus areas for the District. The Board identified six Strategic Focus Areas around which to organize the implementation actions that will support the Mission and ensure the success of the District's Vision.

Key members of District staff worked with BHI to develop the Focus Area objectives, strategy statements, actions, and initiatives that support each area. Using this process, the Strategic Plan was assembled in a way that supports the success of the Board's Vision and strategy for the District over the next five years.

The implementation actions proposed by staff were then reviewed with the Board to confirm that they properly addressed the Board's Vision. The Board formally adopted the Plan on November 2026.

Maintenance and Management of the Plan

A key part of the strategic planning process is a review every two years to update and manage the Plan. These reviews allow for regular maintenance of the Plan so that it reflects the District's actual progress and changing needs. Each review will be documented and followed by either a Plan supplement or an updated Plan. A five-year planning horizon will be maintained, with each review developing a new fifth year of actions, projects, and initiatives.



Mission Statement and Strategic Focus Areas

Strategic Focus Areas

Strategic Focus Areas represent the vital areas of the District's operations and management that must be addressed in the Strategic Plan. They are created by the Board of Directors, are derived from the District's Mission and Vision, and link the implementation work to both. They are linked to action and results through the Strategic Goals written for each area and the Strategic Work Plan. Over the five-year period covered by this Plan, these areas ensure that all aspects of District operations are well supported and move forward in a way that reflects Board priorities and creates balanced implementation.

The Strategic Work Plan, which contains the supporting actions and initiatives organized and prioritized by year, is presented with each Strategic Goal and is also consolidated in Table 1 – Strategic Plan "At a Glance." Business plans and employee goals can be derived from the Strategic Plan but are not part of it; they are tactical, developed on a one- to two-year timeframe, and handled within the District's management structure.

Over the next five years, the District will focus on the following six areas:

1.0 OPUD Growth
2.0 Positive Public Interface
3.0 Recreation and Parks
4.0 Sustainable Long-Term Fire Protection
5.0 Fully Depreciated District Facilities
6.0 Organizational Stability

Strategic Priorities

All six Focus Areas matter, but they are not equal. The District cannot pursue thirty-one goals with equal intensity over five years, and the Board has therefore identified three priorities that will receive first claim on staff time and discretionary funding:

Sustainable fire protection funding (Focus Area 4). The Department cannot continue to operate on grant funding. Securing a permanent funding source is the single most consequential decision facing the District in this Plan period.

Replacement of fully depreciated assets (Focus Area 5). Water and wastewater facilities at the end of their design life are a service-reliability and regulatory risk. Rates, reserves, and asset management must be aligned so that replacement is funded before failure.

Workforce continuity (Focus Area 6). A small organization depends on a few key people. Compensation, succession planning, and knowledge transfer protect the District against the loss of any one of them.

The remaining Focus Areas—Growth, Positive Public Interface, and Recreation and Parks—are maintain-and-improve priorities. Goals in those areas will proceed as resources allow and will not displace work on the three priorities above. If revenue falls short of projections during the Plan period, goals in the maintain-and-improve areas will be deferred first.

Strategic Focus Area 1 – OPUD Growth

OPUD growth can come in many forms: District boundaries, population, infrastructure, and services, to name a few. Growth can also come in residential, commercial, and industrial development. With purposeful growth comes operational and economic efficiency, and the OPUD Board and staff are committed to the watchful stewardship of our ratepayers' and taxpayers' money.

Growth must also pay its own way. New connections add demand on systems already near the end of their design life (see Focus Area 5), so capacity and connection fees will recover the full cost of the capacity new development uses; existing ratepayers will not subsidize new customers. Growth that clears that test strengthens the capital program: at current rates, 188 new homes a year add roughly $23,000 annually to water capital reserves and $30,000 to wastewater reserves, or about $115,000 and $150,000 per year after five years of sustained growth.



IN THIS FOCUS AREA

1.1 Streamlining Permit and Inspection Procedures
FY 2026-27

1.2 Being "Developer Friendly"
Ongoing

1.3 Reducing Homeowner Fees When Possible
Annually

1.4 Seeking Grants for Infrastructure
FY 2029-30 first award; quarterly updates

1.5 Partnering With Other Agencies
Ongoing

1.6 Managing Growth and Capacity
FY 2026-27

1.7 Funding the Pipeline
FY 2027-28; ongoing

1.1 Streamlining Permit and Inspection Procedures

WHY IT MATTERS

By lessening the burden of OPUD permit applications, plan review, plan comments, and inspections, we can encourage residential, commercial, and industrial builders to come to our community.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Review our procedures, compare them to other local agencies' procedures, and streamline the process where necessary.
- An annual review will be undertaken to be certain the procedures are up to date and as streamlined as possible.

Target: FY 2026-27, with annual review thereafter

1.2 Being "Developer Friendly" Without Compromising District Standards

WHY IT MATTERS

Aid to developers, such as fee deferral, responsiveness to requests, and quick turnaround of OPUD permit applications, promotes goodwill and encourages development within the District.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Assess permit applications, perform infrastructure inspections, strive to process requests quickly, and keep the Board informed of the methods at its disposal to promote development.
- Keep our development meetings short and focused to produce results.

Target: Ongoing

1.3 Reducing Homeowner Fees When Possible

WHY IT MATTERS

Developers generally pass Mello-Roos-type fees along to homeowners, or absorb them to sell homes at competitive prices, which cuts into their profit. Additionally, homeowners doing due diligence compare these fees between developments and tend to select homes with fewer or lower fees.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- The District can help control and reduce some of these fees through bond refinancing and reduction of park maintenance fees, to name two methods.
- The District will review these fees at least annually to seek ways to reduce them when possible.

Target: Annually

1.4 Seeking Grants For Infrastructure

WHY IT MATTERS

OPUD has areas within its Sphere of Influence (SOI) that are slated for commercial and industrial growth but lack water and wastewater infrastructure. This action focuses on commercial and industrial areas, but improving or adding infrastructure in residential areas can promote growth as well. Grant funding is available at the federal and state levels for various types of projects.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Seek new grant opportunities where available and continue to pursue existing grant opportunities toward the desired outcome.
- Some grants require matching funds; combined with funds from our Capital Improvement Plan, we can tackle many projects in this manner.

Target: First grant application submitted by FY 2029-30; quarterly committee and Board updates as to progress

1.5 Partnering With Other Agencies

WHY IT MATTERS

Partnering is likely the most important action item in supporting OPUD growth and will provide the largest benefit. Whether working with the County to streamline the permit and development process or working with the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to locate and secure grants, there are great benefits to working as one team.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Establish quarterly (or monthly, if warranted) meetings with the County, Yuba-Sutter EDC, and other pertinent local agencies to brainstorm and promote District growth.
- Also provide regular updates to the OPUD Board regarding progress.

Target: Ongoing, with quarterly committee and Board updates as to progress

"Roughly 50 percent unused capacity is an asset — but it will not last if growth continues at recent rates."

Focus Area 1 · Goal 1.6



1.6 Managing Growth and Capacity

WHY IT MATTERS

The District's water and wastewater systems currently carry roughly 50 percent unused capacity. That headroom is an asset, but it will not last if growth continues at recent rates, and the next treatment plant investment is measured in years of planning and tens of millions of dollars. The Board needs a clear answer to two questions: how fast does the District want to grow, and what level of committed capacity triggers the start of the next plant expansion?

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Adopt a growth and capacity policy that sets the District's expected pace of growth, defines the committed-capacity thresholds that trigger planning, design, and financing of the next plant investment, and assigns staff to report against those thresholds.
- Capacity status will be reported to the Board annually alongside the Capital Improvement Plan update.

Target: Growth and capacity policy adopted in FY 2026-27; capacity status reported annually thereafter

1.7 Funding the Pipeline

WHY IT MATTERS

The regional pipeline is the single largest growth-enabling project in front of the District, and its funding depends on partners whose commitments are not yet certain, including the County's share. If growth slows or new housing sits vacant, connection-fee revenue will lag the debt service and construction schedule. The District must lead this effort rather than wait for it.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Implement the current funding path for the pipeline and stress-test it against a slow-growth scenario so the Board understands which funding structure protects existing ratepayers if development stalls.
- Staff will lead active engagement with Yuba County, the City of Wheatland, Beale Air Force Base residential development, the Enterprise Rancheria and Fire Mountain Casino, and AKT Development to secure partner commitments, and will bring a downside-scenario funding plan to the Board.

Target: Pipeline funding plan with slow-growth scenario to the Board in FY 2027-28; partner engagement ongoing with quarterly updates

Strategic Focus Area 2 – Positive Public Interface

There are many ways in which OPUD can improve its relationship with the community it serves, such as enhancing communication strategies for non-English-speaking customers, better communicating with customers who are not homeowners, and developing better brand visibility. OPUD is committed to building a strong relationship with its community by seeking and recognizing the community's needs and adapting accordingly.



IN THIS FOCUS AREA

2.1 Enhancing Communication Strategies with Non-English Speakers
FY 2026-27

2.2 Informing/Educating the Community about Water
FY 2027-28 launch; FY 2029-30 full rollout

2.3 Improved Brand Visibility
FY 2027-28; ongoing

2.4 Public Information and Customer Service
FY 2028-29

2.5 Regional Voice and Advocacy
FY 2027-28 through FY 2028-29

2.1 Enhancing Communication Strategies with Non-English Speakers

WHY IT MATTERS

OPUD serves an area with a large minority population, many of whom do not feel comfortable coming to the District to discuss their issues. By better communicating with community members who do not speak English as a first language, OPUD can address issues that may otherwise go unnoticed. This can build trust within a minority population, leading to a better relationship with the community as a whole.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- We are currently working with a consultant who specializes in minority outreach.
- With their input, we will review our current communication strategies and compare them with those of other agencies that serve a large minority population.
- This will ensure that OPUD serves its entire community at the highest standard.

Target: FY 2026-27

2.2 Informing/Educating the Community about Water

WHY IT MATTERS

Informing and educating the community can help build a positive relationship in many ways. Community surveys have shown that some customers do not trust the quality of the water enough to drink it. By educating the public on the process water takes to reach their homes, we reassure our customers that our water is of high quality and meets all regulatory requirements. Other education efforts can focus on water conservation and its importance to our region.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Review and update any existing educational material and look into developing new programs, and partner with other local agencies to determine the best methods of outreach.
- Establish a water conservation program and already have an employee working toward a Water Use Efficiency Practitioner license.
- Use the space available to us to educate the community on these topics.
- This will include the water and wastewater treatment plants, where tours will be given to the public when time permits.

Target: Water Conservation Program established in FY 2027-28 and fully rolled out by FY 2029-30; multiple ongoing projects.

2.3 Improved Brand Visibility

WHY IT MATTERS

OPUD is the only water purveyor in its service area. However, customers are often unsure who provides their water and therefore do not know whom to contact with problems. This is especially true within the minority population. By making our customers more aware of our "brand," we build relationships and trust.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Documents that are regularly sent out will be reviewed to ensure they make clear who we are.
- Promotional items such as OPUD-branded water bottles are a low-cost but effective way to advertise the agency.
- During the summer, the OPUD pool sees a large number of customers and provides a great place to advertise ongoing efforts.
- In conjunction with education efforts listed above, OPUD will make itself more known within the community.

Target: Advertising campaign launched in FY 2027-28; multiple ongoing projects.

2.4 Public Information and Customer Service

WHY IT MATTERS

Customer service is one of the most important aspects of any agency. We are always working on improving customer service. Enhanced customer service should help give OPUD a more positive image in the community.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- This includes a much-needed remodel of the Business Office, where we will open a second customer window and lower the counter so that customers can sit while working with staff to establish new service, pay a bill, or change their mailing address.
- We have expanded the use of customer communication platforms such as the OPUD website, OPUD Facebook page, and the information window in the OPUD bills.
- One of our goals is to provide interactive forms on our website, so that customers can fill them out and send them directly to staff.
- Another goal is for customers to be able to view and pay their bills online.
- Continued use of these multifaceted communication channels gives us the opportunity to reach more of our customer base and receive early feedback on upcoming changes or events.

Target: FY 2028-29

"Customers are often unsure who provides their water — and therefore do not know whom to contact."

Focus Area 2 · Goal 2.3



2.5 Regional Voice and Advocacy

WHY IT MATTERS

OPUD is one community with many voices, and it is heard best when it speaks with the region rather than alone. A newly seated County Board of Supervisors, County departments, and the Enterprise Rancheria and Fire Mountain Casino all make decisions that shape the District's service area, and special districts currently have no seat on the Yuba County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), which rules on annexations, spheres of influence, and consolidations that directly affect OPUD.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Build working relationships with each new Supervisor and with County leadership, coordinate with the Casino on shared interests, and market the full range of District services—water, wastewater, fire, parks, and streetlights—to every constituent group so residents understand who serves them.
- Working through the California Special Districts Association and the other independent special districts in the County, we will pursue special district representation on Yuba LAFCO.

Target: Supervisor and County briefings completed in FY 2027-28; LAFCO representation pursued through FY 2028-29; constituent marketing ongoing

Strategic Focus Area 3 – Recreation and Parks

Our parks and recreational facilities are a valued community asset but tend to be underutilized in some areas. Our goal is to leverage the parks and recreational facilities we have to realize the maximum benefit to the community.



IN THIS FOCUS AREA

3.1 Partnerships and Sponsorships
Ongoing

3.2 Capital Investment in Our Parks and Recreational Facilities
Ongoing; quarterly updates

3.3 Continue High Level of Maintenance
Ongoing

3.4 Implementation of Community Park Feasibility Study Recommendations
FY 2028-29

3.5 Protecting Core Amenities and Activating the Youth Center
FY 2027-28; ongoing

3.1 Partnerships and Sponsorships

WHY IT MATTERS

Partnerships, such as those with First 5 Yuba and Yuba County Health and Human Services, help provide funding for irreplaceable recreation opportunities within the community. The OPUD aquatics program is a great example of how partnerships can benefit the community. Sponsorships can also play a large role in developing new and existing recreational opportunities.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Continue to seek partnerships with other local agencies, community organizations and community members to develop and enhance our parks and recreational facilities and programs.
- Identify needs for sponsorship within the community and provide all the support within our ability.

Target: Ongoing

3.2 Capital Investment in Our Parks and Recreational Facilities

WHY IT MATTERS

As times change, so do the types of recreational activities the community is interested in, as well as the regulations that govern park and recreational facility safety. To keep pace, we must make capital improvements to our parks and recreational facilities. Our parks and recreational facilities must be both safe and appealing to the community to draw them in and promote maximum use.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Endeavor to keep up to date on safety improvements and innovative new types of equipment and facilities to keep the community interested in our parks and recreational facilities.
- Intelligently work with staff and our parks consultants to provide the most efficient use of capital funding for our parks and facilities to meet our goals.
- Continue to seek grants to construct, update and modernize our parks and recreational facilities.

Target: Ongoing, with quarterly committee and Board updates as to progress

3.3 Continue High Level of Maintenance

WHY IT MATTERS

Currently, our parks and recreational facilities are among the best maintained in the area. In order to realize the maximum benefit of these facilities we must continue to maintain them at the level we are currently or higher.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Continue to seek more efficient ways to maintain our parks and recreational facilities so that we sustain, and where possible increase, the current level of service.
- We must continue to annex new subdivisions into our parks maintenance Community Facilities District (CFD) where appropriate.
- Continue to evaluate various methods such as outsourcing parts of our maintenance for potentially more maintenance in the parks: even above our current service level.

Target: Ongoing

3.4 Implementation of Community Park Feasibility Study Recommendations

WHY IT MATTERS

We are near the end of the process for conducting a feasibility study relating to our 25-acre community park in Plumas Lake. The study focuses on what type of recreational improvements we can make at the park site after the required infrastructure improvements are made based on the current amount of funding for the park available. Infrastructure improvements include site entrances and exits for safe egress, County frontage improvements such as sidewalks and curb and gutter, drainage, and utilities. The key question is how much funding will remain for recreational improvements after these requirements are met. The OPUD Parks Master Plan cost estimate for the community park is based on roughly 14,000 homes; the area currently has about 2,200 homes and only a small portion of the funding needed for the complete park.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Continue to work with our parks consultant and the community to determine the most efficient route to take in providing some recreational benefit at the community park site.
- To ensure we realize the maximum recreational benefit at the community park site, it is important to involve the community.
- A community workshop in the early stages will give residents a voice in, and buy-in to, the recreational improvements we can fund.

Target: FY 2028-29

"Keeping the pool open through the summer requires creative programming and partners, not just District dollars."

Focus Area 3 · Goal 3.5

3.5 Protecting Core Amenities and Activating the Youth Center

WHY IT MATTERS

Not every amenity can be funded at the same level. The Board will define which parks, the pool, and which programs are core to the District's identity and quality of life and will commit to funding and protecting those first. Keeping the pool open through the summer is the clearest example: it requires creative programming and partners, not just District dollars.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Identify core amenities and the funding needed to sustain them, market District recreation activities more actively, and pursue public-private partnerships and sponsorships to keep the pool open—including targeted promotions such as free admission for the first 50 children on 100-degree days.
- With construction of the youth center complete, we will issue a request for proposals to attract program partners and user groups to operate in the facility.
- Also take a seat at the table as the State plans its new State Park in the area so that District residents benefit from it.

Target: Core amenities and funding plan adopted in FY 2027-28; youth center RFP issued in FY 2027-28; State Park participation ongoing

Strategic Focus Area 4 – Sustainable Long-Term Fire Protection

The Olivehurst Fire Department has struggled over the past decade to provide the high level of service the community desires. In recent years we have operated on federal SAFER grants, but these are not sustainable long-term. We have also asked the community for additional funding by assessment, which was voted down. To provide full-time fire service in Olivehurst, we must find a sustainable funding source for the department. The following ideas and action plans address sustainable funding. Not every idea may yield the results we seek, but this is a complex issue that requires creative thinking and exploration of every option.

IN THIS FOCUS AREA

4.1 Working with Other Local Agencies
Ongoing

4.2 Consolidation
FY 2030-31

4.3 New Customers
Ongoing

4.4 Recoup Medical Call Charges
FY 2028-29

4.5 Special Tax
FY 2029-30

4.6 Public Safety Master Plan
FY 2027-28

4.1 Working with Other Local Agencies

WHY IT MATTERS

Examples of this action plan include working with other local agencies, such as the County, to provide funding from projected public safety tax revenue or to renegotiate the allocation of property tax revenue.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Contact other local agencies to discuss various alternatives available.
- It may also help to form committees containing OPUD Board members to meet with the other agencies.
- Start with a target budget for full-time operation of the department so that all involved in the discussions have a clear understanding of our funding shortfall.

Target: Ongoing

4.2 Consolidation

WHY IT MATTERS

Consolidation of the local area fire departments (Olivehurst, Linda and Wheatland, for example) has been discussed and studied exhaustively over the past decade. All discussions and studies indicate that consolidation makes sense for many reasons: it is more operationally efficient and saves taxpayers money through economies of scale; it would standardize service levels within the area; it would help financially struggling departments; and larger organizations have more bargaining power when it comes to new laws and regulations.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Talks have already begun between Olivehurst and Linda Fire and we have had preliminary talks with Wheatland regarding consolidation.
- So far, all parties are interested and see the benefits.
- The District's aim is to lead any consolidation on its own terms rather than have one proposed to it, and we propose to continue the talks via ad-hoc committee(s) and to bring updates to the Board as necessary.
- Additionally, EDC has informed us that there may be grant funding for any studies required related to the consolidation.

Target: FY 2030-31

4.3 New Customers

WHY IT MATTERS

New customers could include commercial, industrial and even residential. Serving more facilities and residents can have some of the same effects as consolidation in that it would increase operational efficiency due to economy of scale and help our financially struggling department. The MOU between OPUD and the Enterprise Rancheria for services at the Fire Mountain Casino is a good example of this idea.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Continue to work with developers, other local agencies and community members to promote the department's abilities and do what we can to streamline the process for locating new commercial, industrial and residential development in the Olivehurst Fire Department service area.
- This idea ties in closely with the OPUD Growth focus area (see 1.5, Partnering With Other Agencies).

Target: Ongoing

4.4 Recoup Medical Call Charges

WHY IT MATTERS

This would be a possible method for sustainable funding related to charging for medical emergency calls since the large majority of calls for the department fall under this category. Many local fire departments are currently charging these fees which are typically billed to insurance companies. By California statute, municipalities are allowed to recover costs incurred by responding to emergencies.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Identify and contact consultants who specialize in assisting municipalities in the setup and administration of these fees.
- Contact and visit local departments that currently have this type of fee in place.
- Seek input from other local agencies and the community.

Target: FY 2028-29

4.5 Special Tax

WHY IT MATTERS

A special tax could provide sustainable funding for years to come. A special tax is placed on the ballot in an election year and must receive two-thirds voter approval to pass. Although assessments requiring only a simple majority have failed in the past, a special tax measure focused solely on the Olivehurst Fire Department may be received differently.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Identify and contact consultants who specialize in the preparation and strategizing of special fire taxes.
- Together with some of the other ideas we could propose a special tax that is minimal and show the community that it makes sense.
- It is possible we could find a consultant who would work for a minimal or no fee unless the measure passes based on their previous success.

Target: FY 2029-30

"Invest in our own fire footprint or lead a partnership on our own terms — either path requires a plan."

Focus Area 4 · Goal 4.6

4.6 Public Safety Master Plan

WHY IT MATTERS

The choice in front of the District is whether to invest in its own fire footprint or to lead a partnership on its own terms before consolidation is proposed by others. Either path requires a plan. The Department's needs go beyond funding: an effective emergency notification system (including sirens), station infrastructure and the possibility of a new station, joint training with neighboring departments, and the pay and benefits necessary to keep a full-time force intact.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Develop a Public Safety Master Plan that sets out the staffing, compensation, facilities, equipment, notification, and training needs of the Department over the Plan period and identifies who benefits from and should share in funding each element.
- The Enterprise Rancheria and Fire Mountain Casino are a primary partner in that plan, and the District will work to be written into the Casino's own public safety plan so that service obligations and funding are aligned.

Target: Public Safety Master Plan adopted in FY 2027-28; Casino public safety agreement pursued in FY 2027-28

Strategic Focus Area 5 – Fully Depreciated District Facilities

Capital assets and infrastructure ensure delivery of quality services to the District's customers. To ensure the same level of service quality, the District needs to plan for replacement and maintenance of these assets. Planning efforts should include measures to increase revenues and available funding for the replacement of depreciated assets and infrastructure, and provide for expenses, which keep assets operational such as major repairs and overhauls.



IN THIS FOCUS AREA

5.1 Rates that Reflect the Cost of Use and Replacement of Capital Assets
FY 2026-27 rate review; annually

5.2 District Growth
FY 2028-29

5.3 Funding Sources
Ongoing

5.4 Efficient Asset Management
FY 2026-27

5.1 Rates that Reflect the Cost of Use and Replacement of Capital Assets

WHY IT MATTERS

The rates charged to customers need to cover the cost of use and replacement of capital assets and infrastructure, in addition to the operational costs of providing services. Regular rate reviews and adjustable rates allow the District to evaluate if current funding levels meet anticipated needs and make adjustments.

Target: Review the capital replacement reserve allowance in the FY 2026-27 rate review, and review rates annually for inflation adjustments.

5.2 District Growth

WHY IT MATTERS

District growth measures are a component of OPUD's Strategic Plan. The District's existing excess capacity can provide services to more customers. With rates that include a 35% component for capital funding, annual growth of 188 homes at an average water bill of $30 per month adds approximately $23,000 per year to the capital reserve for water assets and infrastructure. At an average wastewater bill of $40 per month, the same growth adds approximately $30,000 per year for wastewater assets and infrastructure. Sustained over five years, this growth would raise annual capital reserve contributions by approximately $115,000 for water and $150,000 for wastewater.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Implement an online billing system to allow for efficient processing of receipts from our growing customer base.

Target: FY 2028-29



5.3 Funding Sources

WHY IT MATTERS

Reserve funds set aside for replacement of depreciated assets can be invested in higher-yield options that are within the District's investment authority.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Actively seek alternative funding sources, such as grants, to match capital projects with funding.
- Use available resources, such as the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation, to identify and secure funding sources.

Target: Ongoing

"Sustained over five years, growth would raise annual capital reserve contributions by roughly $115,000 for water and $150,000 for wastewater."

Focus Area 5 · Goal 5.2



5.4 Efficient Asset Management

WHY IT MATTERS

Retaining assets as near as practicable to an appropriate service condition allows for delivery of quality service to the District's customers. Efficient asset management extends the useful life of capital assets and defers their replacement, allowing District reserves to remain invested longer and grow before they are drawn upon.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Revise the District's investment policy to allow higher-yield options within the District's investment authority.

Target: New investment policy to the Board for approval in FY 2026-27.

Strategic Focus Area 6 – Organizational Stability

Our objective is to employ and retain a qualified and productive workforce. We will do this by utilizing sound policies and personnel practices, offering competitive compensation and benefits, providing opportunities for training, development and professional growth while ensuring a safe and secure workplace.



IN THIS FOCUS AREA

6.1 Recruit and Retain a High Performing Workforce
Ongoing

6.2 Retain Qualified Personnel through a Unique and Competitive Salary/Benefits Package
Ongoing; each compensation study

6.3 Regulatory and Professional Associations
Annually

6.4 Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer
FY 2026-27; annual report

6.1 Recruit and Retain a High Performing Workforce

WHY IT MATTERS

Our goal is to ensure the District remains a desirable place to work. This includes the ability to recruit and retain a high-performing workforce. Staff will periodically obtain market studies to determine compensation and benefit competitiveness relative to local and regional labor markets. We will structure the salary schedule and professional growth opportunities so that employees see a clear and attainable career path at OPUD.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- In order to attract and retain the best talent, we provide opportunities for employees to enhance their job skills and knowledge in their career field.

Target: Ongoing

6.2 Retain Qualified Personnel through a Unique and Competitive Salary/Benefits Package

WHY IT MATTERS

Investing in professional growth and training without a plan to retain qualified personnel does not serve the District's operational excellence. If we do not focus on employee retention, staff may accept other employment opportunities.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Maintain a competitive salary and benefits package that is unique in its offerings and encourages employees to consider OPUD a career employer.
- Managers and supervisors will also receive annual management training and meet with employees regularly to listen to their concerns, address issues they may be experiencing, and generally keep the lines of communication open.
- Ensuring that there are open lines of communication between employee and employer allows both personal and professional growth.

Target: Ongoing; market comparison updated with each compensation study.
Measure: Share of positions with total compensation within 5% of the regional market median; annual employee survey results.

6.3 Regulatory and Professional Associations

WHY IT MATTERS

Attendance at these organizations' training events and workshops by both employees and Board members has proven to provide opportunities to network not only with peers but also with regulatory agency representatives.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- The District will continue to support professional development and networking by encouraging participation in professional associations such as the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), California Water Environment Association (CWEA), American Water Works Association (AWWA), and California Rural Water Association (CRWA).
- At the first Board meeting of each year, the District will present a preliminary calendar of training events and attendees, which the Board will review as the initial training plan for the year.

Target: Annually

"Much of the District's institutional knowledge — how the plants run, where the pipes are, how the funds are structured — lives in a few people's heads."

Focus Area 6 · Goal 6.4

6.4 Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer

WHY IT MATTERS

A small organization depends on a few key people, and much of the District's institutional knowledge—how the plants run, where the pipes are, how the funds are structured—lives in their heads. The District needs a five-year plan to capture that knowledge and grow the next bench, with clear ownership so the work actually happens.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Commission a full succession plan for the District that identifies key positions and retirement horizons, documents critical processes and system knowledge, establishes cross-training and development paths for internal candidates, and names the General Manager as owner of the plan.
- Progress on succession and knowledge transfer will be reported to the Board annually.

Target: Succession plan commissioned and adopted in FY 2026-27; annual progress report to the Board thereafter

Table 1 – The Strategic Plan "At a Glance"

Strategic Focus Area / Goal	Completion (Fiscal year)
1.0 OPUD Growth	
1.1 Streamlining Permit and Inspection Procedures	FY 2026-27; reviewed annually
1.2 Being "Developer Friendly" Without Compromising District Standards	Ongoing
1.3 Reducing Homeowner Fees When Possible	Annually
1.4 Seeking Grants for Infrastructure	FY 2029-30 first award; quarterly updates
1.5 Partnering With Other Agencies	Ongoing; quarterly updates
1.6 Managing Growth and Capacity	FY 2026-27; annual reporting
1.7 Funding the Pipeline	FY 2027-28; ongoing
2.0 Positive Public Interface	
2.1 Enhancing Communication Strategies with Non-English Speakers	FY 2026-27
2.2 Informing/Educating the Community about Water	FY 2027-28 launch; FY 2029-30 full rollout
2.3 Improved Brand Visibility	FY 2027-28; ongoing
2.4 Public Information and Customer Service	FY 2028-29
2.5 Regional Voice and Advocacy	FY 2027-28 through FY 2028-29
3.0 Recreation and Parks	
3.1 Partnerships and Sponsorships	Ongoing
3.2 Capital Investment in Our Parks and Recreational Facilities	Ongoing; quarterly updates
3.3 Continue High Level of Maintenance	Ongoing
3.4 Implementation of Community Park Feasibility Study Recommendations	FY 2028-29
3.5 Protecting Core Amenities and Activating the Youth Center	FY 2027-28; ongoing
4.0 Sustainable Long-Term Fire Protection	
4.1 Working with Other Local Agencies	Ongoing

Strategic Focus Area / Goal	Completion (Fiscal year)
4.2 Consolidation	FY 2030-31
4.3 New Customers	Ongoing
4.4 Recoup Medical Call Charges	FY 2028-29
4.5 Special Tax	FY 2029-30
4.6 Public Safety Master Plan	FY 2027-28
5.0 Fully Depreciated District Facilities	
5.1 Rates that Reflect the Cost of Use and Replacement of Capital Assets	FY 2026-27 rate review; annually
5.2 District Growth	FY 2028-29
5.3 Funding Sources	Ongoing
5.4 Efficient Asset Management	FY 2026-27
6.0 Organizational Stability	
6.1 Recruit and Retain a High Performing Workforce	Ongoing
6.2 Retain Qualified Personnel through a Unique and Competitive Salary/Benefits Package	Ongoing; each compensation study
6.3 Regulatory and Professional Associations	Annually
6.4 Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer	FY 2026-27; annual reporting