

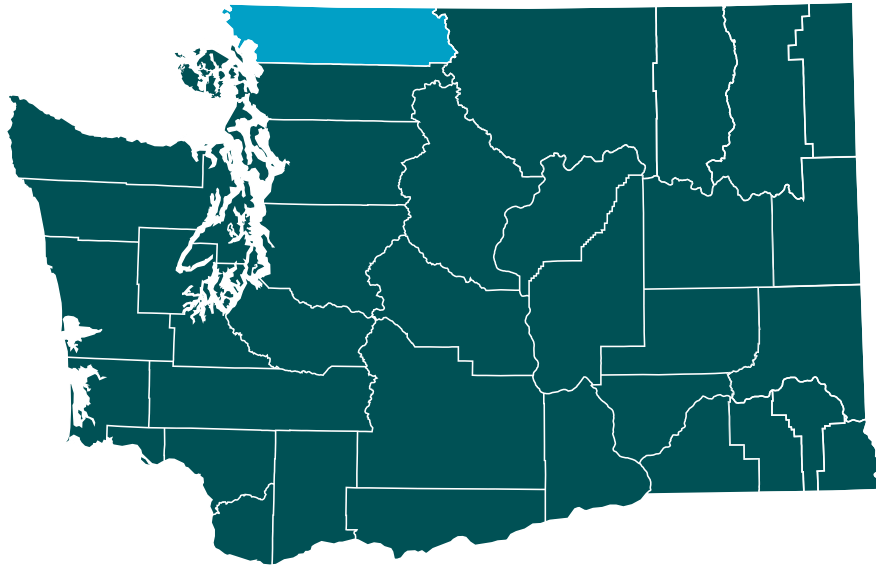
WHATCOM PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

Strategic Plan 2025

PUBLIC UTILITY
DISTRICT No. 1
— of Whatcom County



Whatcom County



The PUD's **Mission** in serving the community

*Whatcom Public Utility District
is a steward of public assets
and resources providing locally
controlled utility services for the
benefit of the community.*



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Fellow Community Members:

In this strategic plan, the Whatcom PUD Commission is setting a new path forward for this organization. Acknowledging that our human resources are our greatest assets—we are asking the PUD staff to join us in reimagining how the PUD can help address the most critical infrastructure challenges facing Whatcom County.

There are no shortage of challenges. As we emerge from a global pandemic, our community is grappling with broadband internet infrastructure that is not sufficient to meet the needs of our community, the damaging impacts of climate change, complex energy markets and clean energy mandates, and new needs to protect our water resources. These challenges are heightening competitive pressures on our major customers and driving new interest in PUD services.

Our business and social environment present challenges as well. We face a disrupted supply chain, inflation, a highly competitive hiring environment, and lingering physical and mental health challenges in our community resulting from the pandemic. How citizens engage with and consume information about local government has changed drastically and many workplaces and educational institutions are now operating in “hybrid” environments.

The 32 goals and strategies outlined in the following pages represent an ambitious, optimistic, and prioritized plan for how our Commission seeks to navigate these challenges and deliver infrastructure and utility solutions to our community. This plan was created with input and in partnership with our General Manager, staff, customers, and community members. The plan explores significant growth in the scope and depth of the PUD.

The Whatcom PUD was formed in 1937—another period of great economic and social upheaval and uncertainty. Whatcom County citizens formed the PUD in pursuit of more local control of their essential utility services. Today, our PUD is recommitting to that pursuit with a keen focus on building resilience in the face of 21st century challenges and opportunities.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Christine Grant
Commissioner Atul Deshmane
Commissioner Mike Murphy



**Commissioner
Christine Grant**
District 1 President



**Commissioner
Atul Deshmane**
District 2 Vice-President



**Commissioner
Mike Murphy**
District 3 Secretary

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is developing true alignment on multi-year priorities and effectively embracing them to link the present to the future.

It is a working document that...

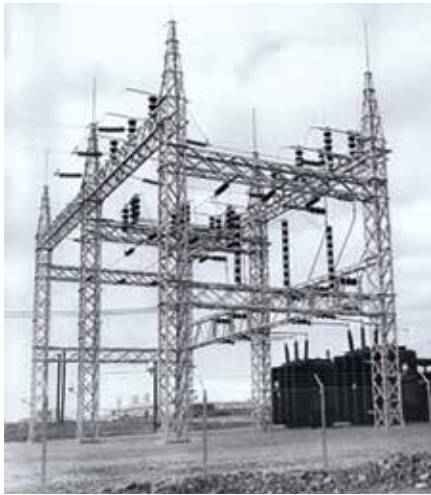
- Reflects essential Commission alignment on key PUD priorities
- Communicates the PUD's intentions to its customers and the community it serves
- Defines success and progress on priorities
- Provides a platform to respond to future opportunities and challenges
- Informs the annual budget process allocating resources to PUD priorities
- Provides clear direction to the PUD's management team
- Supports grant applications and favorable credit ratings

In 2015, the Commission engaged in the development of the first Strategic Plan. Following a series of public workshops with District Commissioners and staff, meetings with several key stakeholders, and the general public, the first plan was adopted. As part of the strategic planning process, the Commission agreed to complete a review of the plan, implementation progress and consider updating the plan each year.

New challenges facing the PUD were identified in 2016, requiring an update to the Strategic Plan. A workshop that year discussed the progress on the 2015 Strategic Plan's goals and initiatives and evaluated new topics. After completing that assessment, the Commission and staff updated the goals and strategies to address the challenges and opportunities facing the District in 2017 and beyond.

In 2021, in anticipation of a change in leadership the PUD Commission reaffirmed its prior commitments while exploring and embracing new initiatives in serving its community into the future. These new initiatives are foundational to the goals and strategies adopted in this 2025 Strategic Plan.

The PUD Then and Now



Created in 1937, the PUD began serving a new refinery with power in the 1950s.



Further development of the Cherry Point Industrial Area in northwestern Whatcom County presented the opportunity to begin providing water to an aluminum smelter in the 1960s.

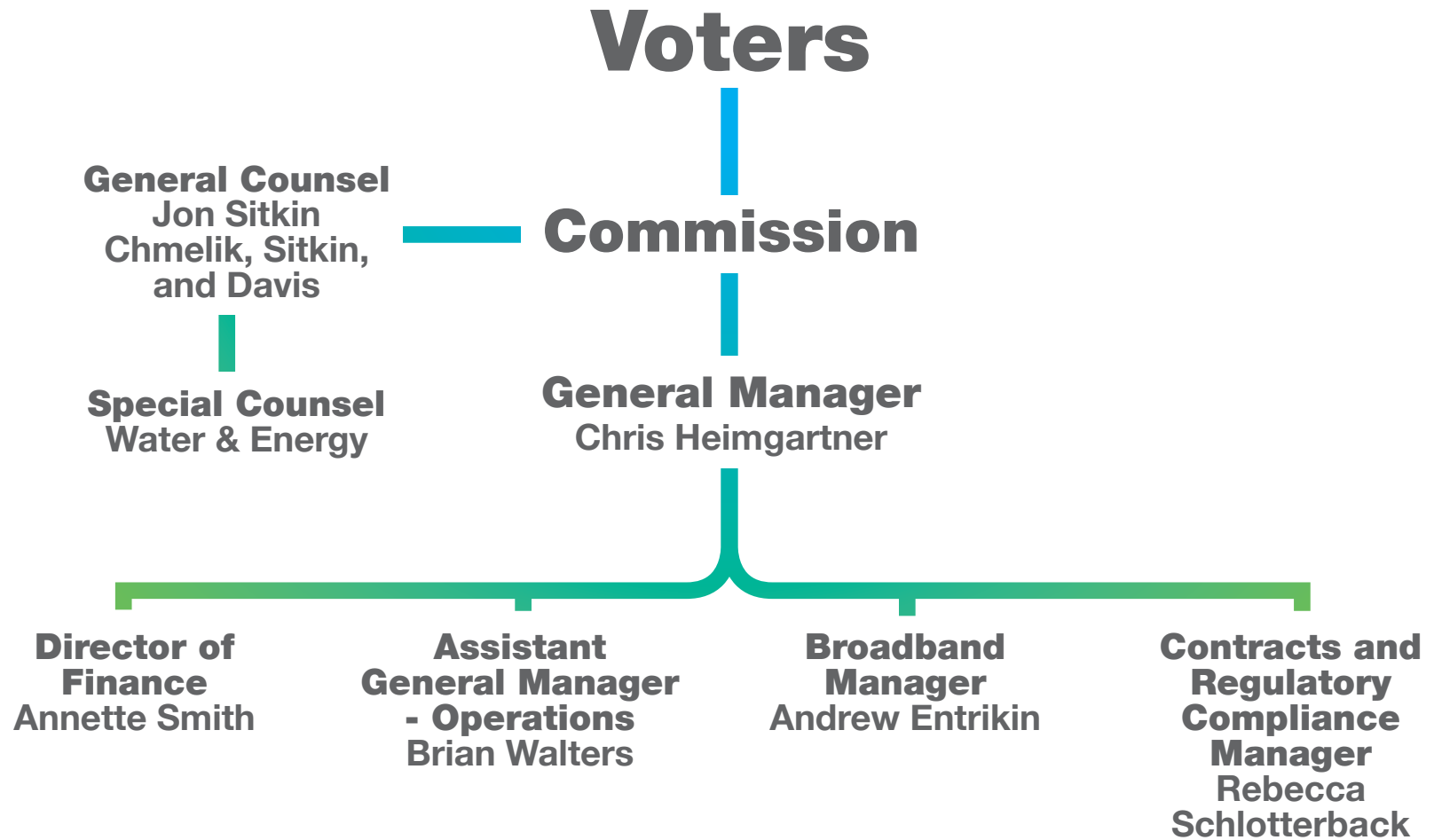


Today, the PUD continues to provide power and industrial-grade water to Cherry Point Industries and operates a second water system providing potable and fire protection water for a large industrial park north of Ferndale.



In addition to the services the PUD provides to Cherry Point, it also maintains an active role in many regional water supply and water quality planning efforts and supports environmental and salmon habitat restoration/recovery efforts.

The Organization - 2022



Our Vision

“In the future the Whatcom Public Utility District will be the preferred provider of affordable, dependable, sustainable and resilient utility services.”



Our Values



- Be committed to those we serve in the community.
- Treat everyone with respect and compassion.
- Pursue solutions within the PUD's local authority to help our community.
- Be innovative. Question the status quo. Act strategically.
- Practice lasting stewardship of our publicly owned assets and natural resources.

Goals & Strategies



- **Goals - In adopting this strategic plan the PUD Commission has established its priorities for the organization in serving its customer base and the citizens of Whatcom County.**
- **Its Goals define WHAT it will accomplish over the near and long term.**
- **Strategies support the achievement of specific Goals, in essence provide a more specific route to achieve the Goals.**
- **Progress on these Goals will be assessed annually and adjusted to changing conditions, new opportunities and emerging challenges. That annual strategic re-assessment will be used to inform the PUD's annual budget.**

Goals & Strategies

CS: Customer Service - Maintain a high-level degree of customer service to the local industries that rely on PUD power and water.

Strategy CS 1 - Conduct a bi-annual survey of existing customers to assess the PUD's effectiveness and perceived performance in serving its customer base.

Strategy CS 2 - Undertake identified adjustments in customer service based on findings from survey.





WR: Water Resources - Continue the PUD's support and assistance in regional efforts to protect and manage local water resources.

Strategy WR 1 - Participate in the countywide adjudication process while protecting and preserving the PUD's water rights.

Strategy WR 2 - Support the 'water rights settlement effort' and identify points of agreement concurrent with adjudication process.

Strategy WR 3 - Utilize PUD 'water rights' to enable solutions for the benefit of the community.

WA: Water Association Support - Re-affirm the PUD's commitment to provide technical support to water associations.

Strategy WA 1 - Respond when needed and called on by water associations to assist them on policy and technical issues.

Strategy WA 2 - Improve access portals for water associations in reaching out to the PUD for technical assistance.

Strategy WA 3 - Explore emergency water offering to water associations if they are faced with shortfall.

WS: Water Supply - Undertake a pilot project with Ecology funding and other partners, to demonstrate the feasibility of providing water supply to those in need.

Strategy WS 1 - Demonstrate new technologies and approaches to providing water to agricultural operations.

Strategy WS 2 - Explore alternatives sources of water during low flow conditions

Goals & Strategies



BB: Broadband - Advance the community wide strategy in making broadband available to underserved areas of Whatcom County.

Strategy BB 1 - Develop workplan for the underserved areas of the County with the Port.

Strategy BB 2 - Develop a 'Plan of Finance' for the PUD's responsibility in expanding fiber infrastructure.

Strategy BB 3 - Develop approaches that successfully increase broadband competitive offerings in areas served by a single provider.

CL: Clean Industry - Advance 'clean' industry in Whatcom County.

Strategy CL 1 - Identify and explore the 'components of success' of those communities that have launched similar industrial clean industry hubs/programs.

Strategy CL 2 - Explore an economic development partnership with the Port and County to attract clean industry to the county.

RE: Clean and Renewable Energy - Define the PUD's role in advancing clean and renewable, local energy.

Strategy RE 1 - Develop a long-term plan to consider the provision of retail, clean and renewable energy throughout the county.

Strategy RE 2 - Undertake a demonstration project of the use of alternative clean and renewable energy technologies.



CO: Community Outreach - Refresh the PUD's community, governmental, industry, and internal facing identity.

Strategy CO 1 - Redo the PUD's logo and printed material; website design; outreach efforts; and the like.

Strategy CO 2 - Develop a social media program to promote an understanding of the PUD's initiatives and priorities.

CA: Community Impact Analysis - Determine the economic impact of the PUD on the Whatcom economy.

Strategy CA 1 - Complete a community impact analysis using Implan or similar model.

AM: Asset Management - Build asset management culture to ensure sustainable replacement of key physical assets and personnel succession plan.

Strategy AM 1 - Identify key personnel roles and positions.

Strategy AM 2 - Categorize all of the physical assets into a useable inventory.

Tactics

Tactics are the more granular details behind a strategy that energize the strategy to accomplish a goal.

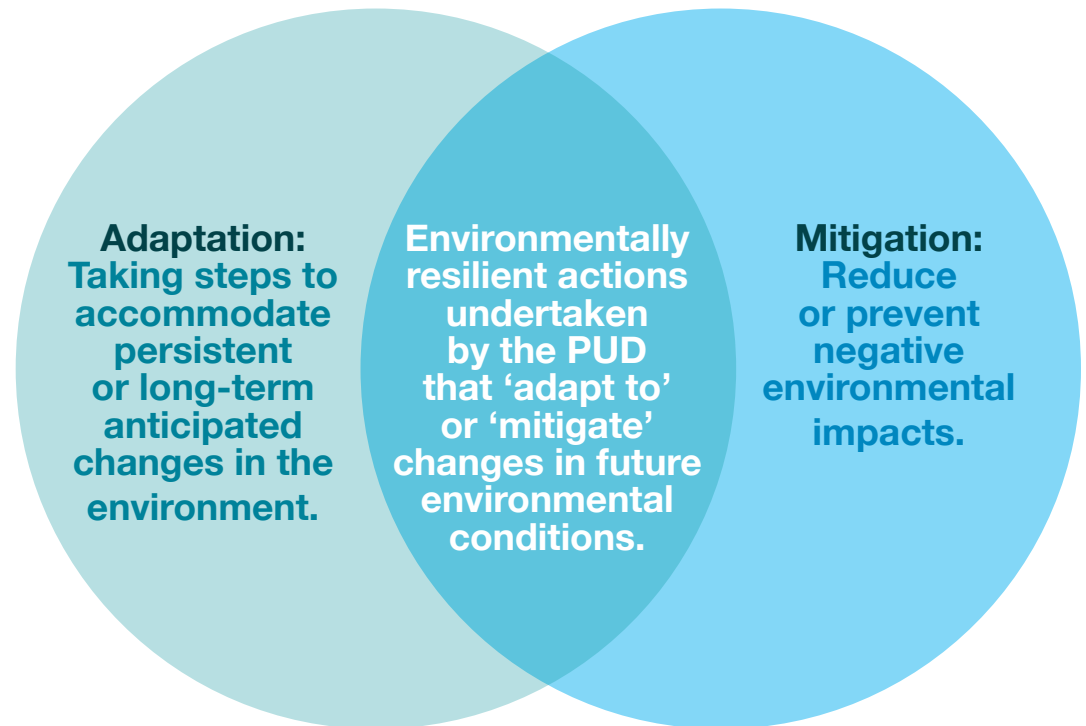
Implementing strategies to reach goals takes time and conditions change-so tactics must be nimble. That flexibility is captured in resiliency planning for the known and unexpected.

It is most critical in two distinct areas of the PUD's approach to being prepared for the future:

- Anticipating Environmental Change - The Natural Environment
- Managing Assets - The Built Environment

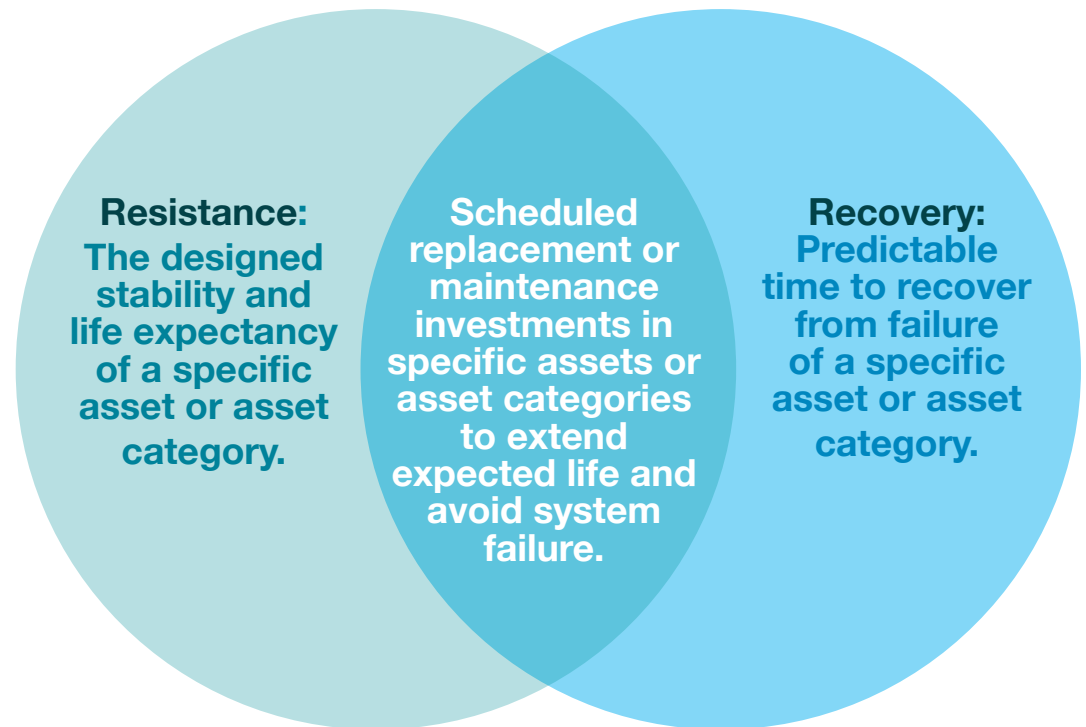
Environmental Resilience

“The ability and capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions in environmental conditions.”



Resilience in Managing PUD Assets

“Proactive planning to ensure the predictable performance of the PUD’s assets to avoid disruptions in customer service delivery and safeguard PUD staff and contractors.”





Acknowledgements

Developing the strategic direction that is captured in Strategic Plan 2025 is only possible with the thoughtful contributions of many individuals and organizations. In addition to expressing my appreciation for the wisdom and guidance of the PUD Commission, I would like to recognize on behalf the PUD and its Commission, the following that have participated in this process...

- Nash El-Badawi - British Petroleum
- Ken and Louise Sager - Irrigation Customers
- Lauren Turner - Phillips 66
- The PUD staff and legal counsel

As the PUD moves forward in implementing the priorities of Strategic Plan 2025 it makes a commitment to transparency as it encounters and addresses challenges, achieves its goals and broadens its horizons. On behalf of the PUD and the entire community thank you for taking the time to support our efforts.

Chris Heimgartner
General Manager
Whatcom PUD

See our website www.pudwhatcom.org

