

5-Year Strategic Plan for the Regional Water Providers Consortium

Originally Adopted

September 6, 2000

Revised

September 2008



Revised 5-Year Strategic Plan

The Regional Water Providers Consortium (RWPC)

The Regional Water Providers Consortium is a group of 24 water providers in the Portland metropolitan area that directly provide water service to approximately 90-95 percent of the urban area. These water providers represent 16 cities, 7 water districts, and 1 people's utility district. The regional government Metro, not a direct water provider, is also a member making up a total membership of 25 dues paying governmental entities. This organization was formed in 1996 through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and is operated by a set of bodies, which meet periodically. The intent of this organization is to collaboratively discuss, study and adopt policy, and facilitate partnerships to provide municipal drinking water supplies. At the same time that the IGA was signed to form the Consortium 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 including any major revisions recommended to the participant entities. An update of the RWSP was endorsed by the active members in winter 2004. In 2004 several amendments to the Consortium IGA were approved which changed the dues formula to one that reflects the more recent efforts of the Consortium in conservation and emergency planning, changed the advisory committee structure, and removed extensive language on dispute resolution among other changes. One of the basic tenets of the Consortium that remained 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.

Regional Water Providers Consortium Mission Statement

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 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.
- We provide a forum for study and discussion of water supply issues of mutual interest and we communicate 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.

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
- Collaborating on water supply issues gives emphasis and value beyond that possible through individual action
- Implementing regional conservation programs collectively provides a more economical service to our individual customers and allows the Consortium to speak with one voice on the importance of conservation
- Protecting and advocating the protection of existing and potential sources of drinking water
- Providing safe clean 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 as well as acting as a clearinghouse for water issues in our region
- Providing emergency preparedness services that enable more effective response by individual entities and backup to each other during emergencies
- Building partnerships to explore options, build projects, and operate systems while retaining individual decision making authority and accountability to customers
- Providing adequate financial and other resources to accomplish agreed upon Consortium objectives on an annual basis
- Recognizing the need to demonstrate positive value to each participant member and their customers
- Minimizing cost and maximizing benefits to our respective customers

Future Vision

The Regional Water Providers Consortium (RWPC) will play an important facilitative role in ensuring that the water supply 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 5-year Strategic Plan, which the Board adopted in September 2000. The 5-Year Strategic Plan was developed by a subcommittee of the Board and recommended to the Board by this subcommittee along with the water provider staff from the member agencies. The revision of the Strategic Plan was assigned to the Board Executive Committee (EC), which was created in early 2001. The Strategic Plan was revised and updated for the first time in 2004. In March 2008 the staff developed a work program for a second revision of the Strategic Plan which was reviewed by the Consortium Technical

Committee (CTC) and Board Executive Committee. A survey of the CTC and Board was conducted via e-mail and hard copy in April and May. At the June 2008 Board meeting the Strategic Plan was discussed in two facilitated breakout sessions. The Consortium Executive and Conservation Committees were consulted about the update also. Based on comments and suggestions received through this process the 5-Year Strategic Plan was revised and the Board will act on the revision in September 2008.

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.

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 the Consortium or of public water infrastructure in general
- Local, state and federal regulation, particularly water rights issues as these affect water resources and public infrastructure responses
- Growth without adequate thought and planning for adequate water facilities to meet the added need
- Economic conditions and rate concerns by customers
- Climate change impacts on our region
- Emerging contaminants in drinking water
- Emergency events and disasters

External Opportunities

The diagram illustrated in Figure 1 shows the external opportunities that are taking place that could be favorable to the organization.

Internal Weaknesses

- Lack of participation by Consortium members
- Different interests and expectations between providers
- Cumbersome size creates difficulties in communication between members due to the venue for the Consortium meetings
- Lack of shared expectations
- Changes in membership and staff over time
- Communication could be better both internally and externally

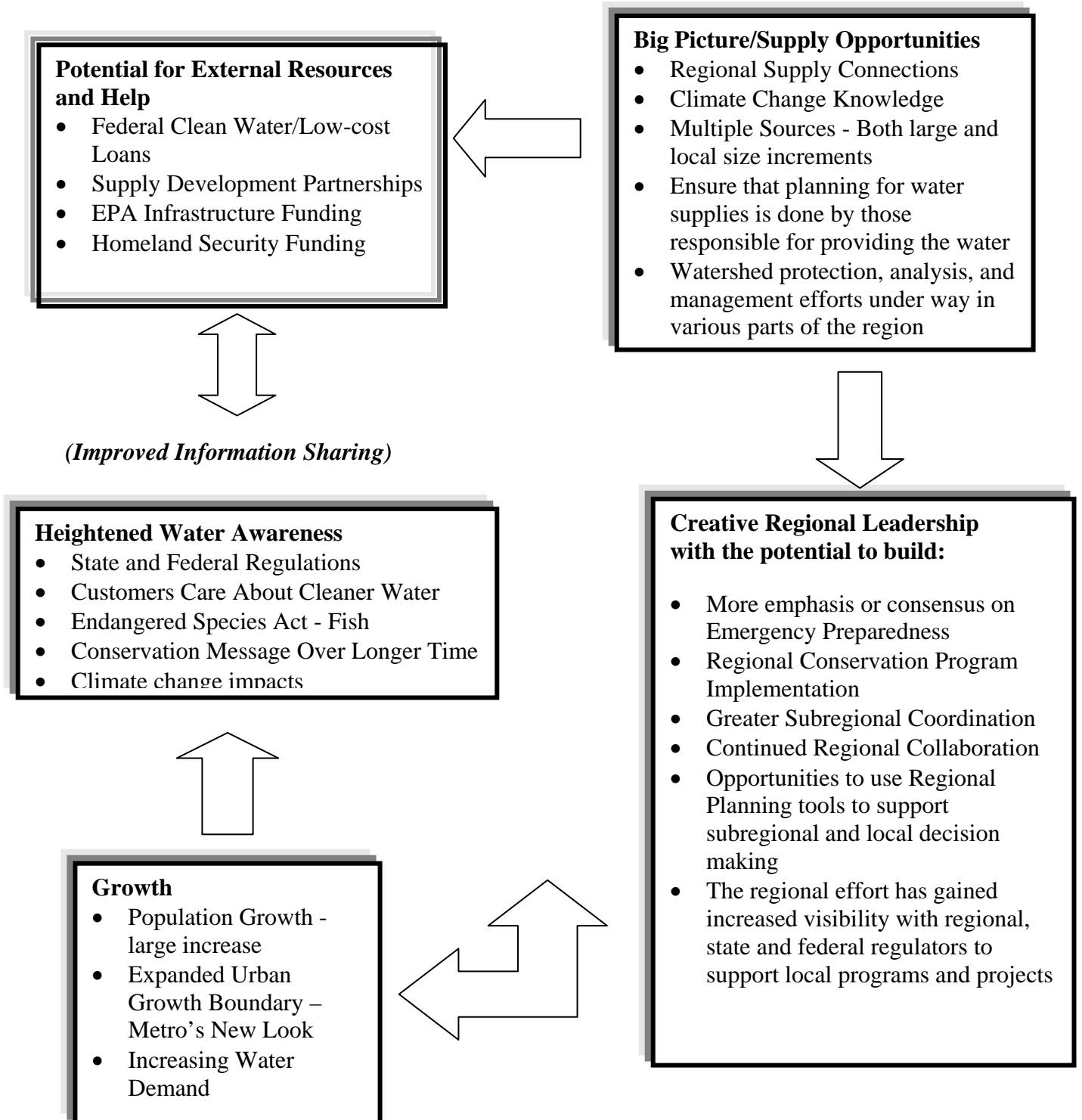
- Competition for scarce fiscal resources to pay for Consortium programs particularly as entities deal with aging infrastructure, changes in the economy, and regulatory mandates

Internal Strengths

- Have 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 programs
- 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 (from small to large entities and types of entities)
- Multiple water resources in the region
- Implementation of regional conservation programs by the Consortium has both increased the value of the Consortium to members and increased customers' awareness of the work of the Consortium and regional water providers

Figure 1

External Opportunities Diagram



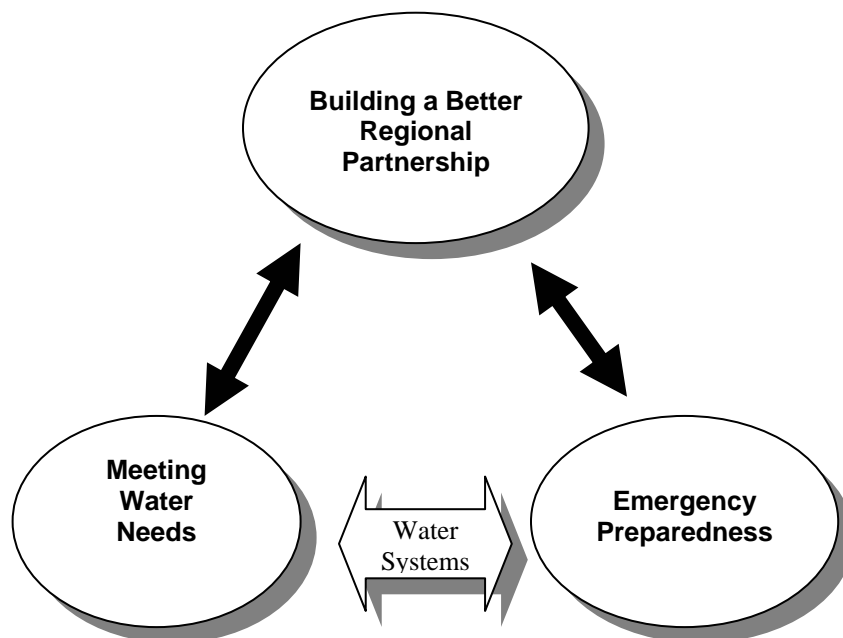
The Key Strategic Challenges

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:

1. How do we facilitate the provision of adequate water supplies as a region?
2. How do we deal with emergencies on a regional basis?
3. How do we 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 and each one of the challenges 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



Strategy: Meeting Water Needs

THE CHALLENGE:

HOW DO WE FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLIES AS A REGION?

CONTEXT:

The Regional Water Providers Consortium was formed by an Intergovernmental Agreement initially signed by 26 water providers and Metro in 1996-1997. Due to consolidations, departures, and additions the size of the Consortium in 2008 was 24 entities that represent 25 different water provider entities (some of whom also 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 Intergovernmental Agreement also agreed to endorse the Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) developed in 1996.

The primary purposes of the Consortium are listed in the Intergovernmental Agreement 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 statewide 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. A number of significant subregional actions, evaluations and efforts have taken place outside of the Consortium function, including a proposal to regionalize the Bull Run water system, agreements to provide water from the Clackamas River between existing and potential new service areas, development of the Willamette River as a source, and planning for new water supplies in Washington County associated with raising Hagg Lake.

In addition, the Consortium added the implementation of regional conservation programs to its function in 2000, and 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 continue 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 our 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. It's also an opportunity for members to discuss and participate in sub-regional programs with other interested member entities and staff. Collaboration is the key and the CCC has been successful in working together to develop successful water conservation programs that serve our diverse member's needs.

The Consortium Board and Technical Committees 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 local entity programs, but not direct the provision of specific water supplies to meet the needs of the region.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS:

The key stakeholders are the entities which make up the Consortium. These entities include 16 cities, 7 water districts, 1 public utility district, and 1 regional government. Other stakeholders include customers of the various entities, special interest groups, and other governmental agencies, including the State Water Resources Department and the Oregon Drinking Water Program, that 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 who will not see value in continuing membership and will withdraw. At some point a reduction in members will result in disbanding the Consortium. The value in a collaborative organization is often contingent on retaining enough members at the table to effectively justify the time and expense associated with such organizations. The Consortium members have been concerned about 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 which needs at least 15 members to stay in business. The loss of the forum provided by the Consortium will result in a return to more individual and subregional efforts to meet water supply needs and to communicate collective positions on water programs and issues. The return to more turf-oriented perspectives is a more likely outcome if the Consortium is disbanded as well as the loss of a regionally focused conservation program and emergency preparedness programs. 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 which each entity would be left to do this on their own. Absent the planning function, there is increased likelihood that the Consortium would lose credibility

with regulatory agencies and that Metro, as part of their Charter responsibilities, would face 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 their need to show that adequate water supplies are provided to meet future growth in the region, particularly during Metro's New Look program.

Other issues of consequence to individual providers if the Consortium is not able to deal with this challenge is a continuation of suspicion between individual entities, lost opportunities to reach regional and subregional arrangements to develop timely system improvements, some entities having their needs not met in a timely or efficient manner potentially resulting in added costs to customers by system duplication. In addition the region may lose opportunities for more responsible environmental resources management through conjunctive use of water sources and regional programs to conserve water. Simple lack of information about the activities and programs of others can result in decision making in a vacuum.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

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

- Be a collaborative clearinghouse and to 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.

- ❑ Review and revise the Regional Water Supply Plan no later than 2014. Obtain individual provider endorsement for any major plan revisions.
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Reevaluate the Source Water Protection Strategy last adopted in 1998 to determine if the Consortium will continue to play a role in this arena. Evaluate existing and future threats to drinking water quality in our region. Rewrite the Strategy if or as needed.
- ❑ Provide the necessary clearinghouse and coordination functions to meet the need for Metro to have a water supply element of their Framework Plan. Be a forum for discussion with Metro on infrastructure planning issues associated with their New Look process.
- ❑ 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.

CRITERIA AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY MUST MEET:

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 their 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 their 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 including at both the individual provider level 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 \$700,000 per year for the years 2004/2008. The majority of the budget as of 2008 is spent on regional conservation program implementation and logistical support. The Consortium has also been successful in obtaining emergency preparedness grant funds, and 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 at least twice as a part of Board, Executive Committee and Technical Committee discussions before hand.

BOARD ROLE

The role of the Consortium Board will be to approve the 5-Year Strategic Plan, annual work plans and budgets, and to approve policy, project strategies that are developed, and to recommend to individual entities any revision of the IGA and the Regional Water Supply Plan. The Board Executive Committee has assumed a function in between Board meetings to work with the staff and Technical Committees to implement Consortium programs and recommend actions to the Board for their consideration. The EC has responsibility for recommending revisions to the 5-Year Strategic Plan.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

- a) 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..
- b) Review the staffing arrangements for the Consortium and adopt recommendations before the Staff IGA expires on June 30, 2010.
- c) Consider applying for State of Oregon Water Conservation and Storage Initiative grant funds as part of accomplishing strategic goals for regional conservation programs as well as other funds that may be available for emergency preparedness planning to study system interconnections or other activities under that Emergency Preparedness Key Challenge.
- d) Continue to encourage dialogue between Consortium members and Metro as they complete their New Look process and add more lands into the Urban Growth Boundary.
- e) Work with federal and state agencies to support continuing efforts to identify the impacts of future climate change. Encourage joint 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.

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 for supporting residential lifestyles as well as accommodating 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, while others are isolated and have inadequate, or lack, interconnections with other back-up 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. Clackamas Basin or Bull Run Watershed). The most devastating event could potentially affect all water systems, both surface and groundwater (major earthquakes, ice and windstorms, terrorism or the threat of terrorism). 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) is bringing water and waste water agencies together to provide mutual aid assistance to each other.

The Consortium has been actively involved in Emergency Planning since 1999. Efforts were initiated with an Emergency Preparedness Assessment in 1998. This survey helped the Consortium establish priorities for coordinating emergency planning and response activities. This survey was followed up with an Emergency Preparedness and Planning (strategic planning) workshop in early 2001 which helped identify the steps needed to accomplish our strategic goals for Emergency Planning. 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, facilitate ways to improve interconnections between providers and offer relevant resources. Recently the Consortium addressed the need for short-term emergency water supplies. Research directed us to a type of portable water distribution system used by other water providers in the Seattle area.

The Emergency Planning Committee has accomplished many tasks including: development of an annually updated emergency contact list, promoting mutual aid opportunities including ORWARN and the Cooperative Public Agencies of Washington County and other resources. The EPC monitored relevant legislation, provided training in Incident Command System

(ICS) to water agency staff and Public Information Officers and also conducted three table top exercises. Most recently the Consortium has brought water providers together to discuss regional interconnections and ways to make our regional water system more resilient. Staff participates in the Regional Emergency Managers Technical Committee (REMTEC) and the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Public Works Group in addition to other forums to foster better communication and coordination with other agencies involved in emergency preparedness, response and recovery. In 2007 the Consortium received a \$216,000 UASI grant to purchase four emergency portable water distribution systems.

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 Department of Human Services 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 any 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 entity 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, the emergency can be more efficiently dealt with 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 and developing emergency response plans. 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:

- Outside drivers (e.g. state or federal requirements to have emergency plans or agreements);
- Lack of customer support and understanding of need for resources to be proactive, unless emergency affects them directly;
- Concern about the ratepayer impacts of implementing programs to deal with 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 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 our readiness among not only water provider staff but customers as well. Also loss of experienced personnel through retirements and attrition impact our reservoir of institutional knowledge.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

- ❑ Participate as stakeholder in regional preparedness and coordination plans developed by ORWARN, REMTEC, UASI or other regional efforts.
- ❑ Continue to provide training and exercises to enhance water providers' knowledge and experience in responding and recovering from an emergency. Disseminate information on other regional training and exercise opportunities.
- ❑ Develop tools to provide a framework for local and regional decision making on system interconnections. Potential tools include a regional map of interconnections, regional workshop, and a study to identify system interconnection vulnerabilities, then identify and prioritize opportunities.
- ❑ Test interconnections and their capacities to facilitate and support reliable back-up supplies of water for all water providers in the event of an emergency.
- ❑ Continue to develop, update and enhance resources for water providers.
- ❑ Encourage all Consortium members to have mutual aid agreements and promote ORWARN.
- ❑ Identify federal and state funding opportunities for emergency preparedness at a regional, subregional or water provider level in coordination with other regional funding efforts.
- ❑ Regularly update and exercise emergency preparedness plans. Share plan elements among providers to assist each other with plan preparation and updates.
- ❑ Continue to facilitate and encourage coordination and information sharing among water providers and other stakeholders to improve communication and emergency preparedness and response.
- ❑ Develop strategy to improve operable communication between water providers. Strategies include preparing an inventory of water providers' communication systems and developing a communications plan.
- ❑ Support the use and deployment of regional portable water distribution systems with training and testing of systems and completion of Regional Emergency Water Distribution Plan. Coordinate and share information with other system owners in the Pacific Northwest.

CRITERIA AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY MUST MEET:

An effective Emergency Preparedness strategy will:

- ✓ Raise the awareness of emergency preparedness issues with the water providers and with the public
- ✓ Support and be linked to the Regional Transmission and Storage Strategy objectives for system interconnections and other studies
- ✓ 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 regional interconnections, 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 5-Year Strategic Plan, annual work plans and budgets, recommend changes to the Consortium's IGA and to approve policy and any emergency preparedness plan.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

- a) 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.

Strategy: Building a Better Regional Partnership

THE CHALLENGE:

HOW DO WE 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 given 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 the Regional Water Supply Plan
- Emphasize collaborate 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 a number of strengths and weaknesses that affect it, not the least of which is the nature of the organization as a voluntary collaborative one 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, different organizational objectives between providers, the sheer size of the organization, vulnerability to losing members, perception of threat to individual agency plans, and need for better communication internally and externally.

Some partnership opportunities have taken place since the Consortium was formed such as 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), or between entities to create 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 where the Consortium has played a role in encouraging members to join the ORWARN agreement and to 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 June 2008 the Consortium Board considered the activities that it would like the Consortium to focus on, and the role in building partnerships was felt to still be valid. However, the role was felt to more one of collaboration, speaking with one voice on issues of mutual interest, and being a forum if desired for discussing problems of a regional or subregional nature. There also was support for an 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 protection of source waters. Another significant partnership that has gained support within the Consortium is conducting regional conservation programs which should continue. Defining the issues of mutual interest and concern to the 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 felt to be not a lack of commitment so much as one of complacency or satisfaction with the major activities of the Consortium therefore negating the need to attend meetings.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS:

The key stakeholders are the water provider entities that make up the Consortium. These entities include 16 cities, 7 water districts, 1 public utility district, 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 either 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 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 the issues of key importance relative to each other 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 eleven years since its inception and the 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 would threaten the cohesiveness of the organization and its' focus on issues of regional significance.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

- ❑ Spend at least one Board meeting focusing on strategic planning issues as a part of the budget process.
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Explore alternative meeting attendance mechanisms that will prevent problems caused by not meeting the quorum requirements for action under the Consortium IGA.
- ❑ Use communication methods 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 to ensure that outgoing Board members communicate with new members where possible.
- ❑ Develop a package of materials that would inform new Board members of the role and activities of the Consortium.
- ❑ Work with the Executive Committee to develop and refine policy issues, 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.
- ❑ 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 Consortium satisfaction and effectiveness.
- ❑ Focus the efforts of the Consortium on meeting their strategic issues as a baseline set of activities for the next five years. Utilize voluntary provider staffing on behalf of the Consortium to embark on other issues identified by the Consortium that are outside of this baseline.
- ❑ Review and evaluate the staffing IGA with the City of Portland in 2010 as required by that IGA.
- ❑ On an as needed basis the Consortium Board and CTC Chairs will offer to attend provider entity meetings to provide information about the Consortium and to get feedback on the Consortium functions.
- ❑ 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 Urban Growth Boundary, particularly as a part of the Metro New Look process.

CRITERIA AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY MUST MEET:

An effective Partnership strategy will:

- ✓ Be based on the principle that each entity will see 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 non-threatening forum for discussion of water supply issues
- ✓ Be based on a consensus-based 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 and 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 5-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

- a) The Board or CTC may wish to appoint other topic specific subcommittees to assist in the development of work plan products .
- b) The Board may wish to consider different meeting setups, timing, or location to facilitate more effective communication either between themselves or with the public. The Board has used breakout sessions in past years and considers this meeting format to be effective and to foster more communication and would like to continue to use this meeting format.
- c) Any surveys utilized to meet the strategic goals will be brief and easily analyzed and objectives for the survey will be discussed the Technical Committees and any other Board committees.

- d) Communication about local agreements that build on partnership concepts should be reported on at Board and Technical Committee meetings.
- e) Continued support of the Web page for the Consortium with links to the Web sites for individual members..
- f) Utilize the Consortium meeting opportunities to share information about individual member programs and projects to promote more networking and education between members.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CTC	Consortium Technical Committee
EC	Consortium Executive Committee
EPC	Consortium Emergency Planning Committee
ICS	Incident Command System
IGA	Intergovernmental Agreement
ORWARN	Oregon Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network
REMTEC	Regional Emergency Managers Technical Committee
RWPC	Regional Water Providers Consortium (Consortium)
RWSP	Regional Water Supply Plan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UASI	Urban Area Security Initiative