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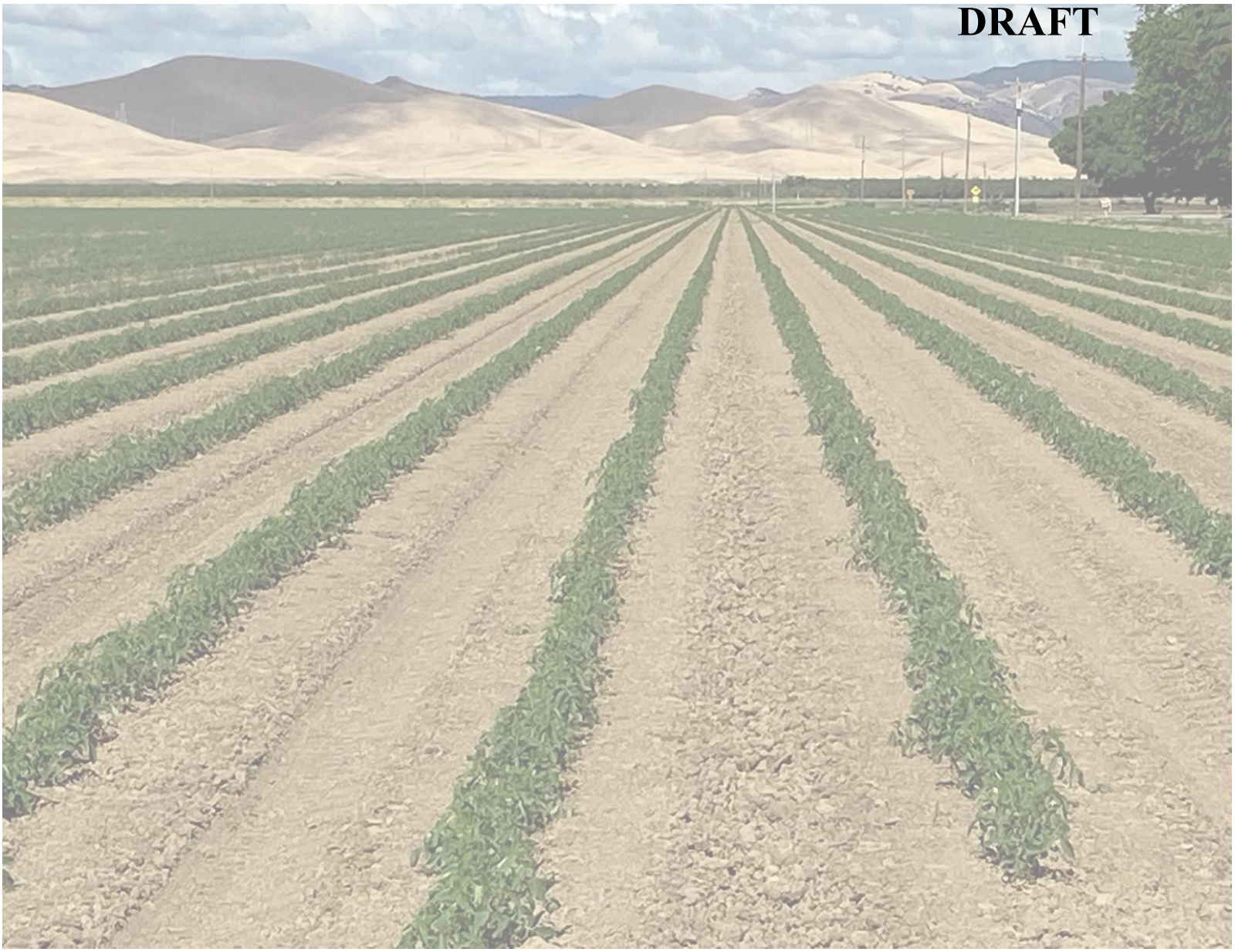

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

DRAFT

STRATEGIC PLAN | 2025-2030

Central California Irrigation District's 2020–2025 Strategic Plan outlines the Board's vision and priorities for the next five years, serving as a practical roadmap for decision-making and staff action. It builds on the District's past success while adapting to future challenges, all with a continued focus on operational excellence and a grower-first approach. The plan centers around seven key priorities—Water Supply & Infrastructure, Finance & Rates, Workforce Development, Community Relations & Partnerships, Safety & Security, Technology & Innovation, and Board Governance—providing a unified direction to guide our efforts and demonstrate progress to those we serve.

MISSION

As a grower-owned district, we are committed to protecting surface and groundwater resources while delivering safe, reliable, and efficient water. We prioritize sustainability, affordability, and long-term reliability for our community and agriculture.

VISION

The District envisions a future where it effectively overcomes regulatory and water supply challenges through strong leadership, collaboration, and innovation. While maintaining its role as a trusted water supplier, CCID will continue to support farmers in navigating evolving regulatory landscapes and adopting advanced irrigation technologies. Through sustainable practices and strategic partnerships, CCID is committed to securing a resilient water future for the region while protecting the interests of its customers.

SWOT

STRENGTHS

- Highly experienced workforce
- Senior water right holder
- Affordable rates
- Conservative fiscal policies
- Reliable irrigation service
- High customer trust and satisfaction
- Locally controlled
- Provides water for habitat
- Supports the communities in service area

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of updated processes and systems
- Recruitment and retention
- Transfer of knowledge
- Aging Infrastructure
- Culture and company are slow to change

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase efficiencies in business processes
- Adoption of new technologies for efficiencies
- Create and enhance collaborative partnerships
- Expansion of storage and recharge projects
- Workforce development programs
- Potential for stronger collaboration with local and state agencies

THREATS

- Legislative and regulatory uncertainty
- Changing customer expectations
- Physical and cyber security
- Environmental volatility
- Dependent on Central Valley Project (CVP)
- Vulnerability to groundwater overuse in neighboring areas

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Water Supply and Infrastructure

CCID is committed to delivering reliable water through a resilient infrastructure system. By investing in modernization, conservation and maintenance, the District aims to meet current demands while preparing for future water supply challenges, including regulatory pressures and hydrological variability.

Workforce Development

A skilled, knowledgeable workforce is the foundation of CCID's long-term success. The District will invest in employee development, cross-training, and succession planning to ensure institutional knowledge is preserved and staff are prepared to lead in the future.

Finance and Rates

CCID will maintain financial stability through careful planning, development of reserves, and the pursuit of external funding. By minimizing reliance on transfers for operations and investing efficiently and strategically, the District will protect affordability and long-term fiscal health.

Safety and Security

Ensuring the safety of staff, growers, infrastructure, and data is a top priority. CCID will build a culture of safety, enhance emergency preparedness, and strengthen cybersecurity measures to protect the District against emerging risks.

Technology and Innovation

CCID will leverage emerging technologies to improve efficiency, service delivery, and decision-making. Through data-driven tools, real-time monitoring, and internal system upgrades, the District will streamline operations and foster a culture of innovation.

Community Relations and Partnerships

Strong partnerships are essential to CCID's success. The District will expand collaboration with local, regional, and federal partners, while also deepening engagement with community members, growers, and other key stakeholders. By building trusted relationships and strengthening its independent voice, CCID will enhance its ability to influence water policy, secure resources, and advocate effectively for the long-term interests of the region.

Board Governance

Strong governance is foundational to CCID's ability to navigate complex water, regulatory, and organizational challenges. To support strategic alignment and effective decision-making, the District will enhance clarity around Board roles, communication expectations, and delegation of authority. By strengthening governance practices, CCID aims to foster accountability, promote transparency, and ensure the Board continues to provide strong leadership in advancing the District's mission.

Water Supply and Infrastructure Goals

Goal 1: Strengthen Water Supply Reliability and Maximize Beneficial Use

Objective: Secure additional Critical Year water supply and ensure full utilization of water to protect CCID's rights and meet future demands.

Milestone: Deliver additional 15,000 AF in Critical Water Years and implement beneficial use strategy by **2030**.

Tactics:

- Create a canal lining and conservation plan (2026)
- Complete recharge projects (Orestimba 2026, Los Banos Creek 2026)
- Develop new storage capacity (Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir, San Luis Reservoir, Los Banos Creek Detention Reservoir) review annually
- Continue investing in the 10-year conservation plan by funding capital projects.
- Continue to demonstrate maximum beneficial use through direct and in-direct recharge - Utilize existing storage opportunities and pilot local on-farm recharge (2026)

Goal 2: Modernize Infrastructure and Optimize Operations

Objective: Maintain and upgrade CCID infrastructure to improve service reliability, cost-efficiency, and future readiness.

Milestone: Complete infrastructure modernization plan by **2029.**

Tactics:

- Develop a canal dredging and sediment management strategy by 2026
- Create a weir repair and replacement plan by 2027
- Evaluate shops and offices for functional upgrades by 2028
- Fleet assessment and replacement plan by 2028

Goal 3: Define CCID's Role in Regional Challenges

Objective: Establish clear strategies for CCID's role in mitigating regional threats that impact operations, water supply and quality.

Milestone: Develop actionable strategies for drainage and subsidence by **2028**.

Tactics:

- Monitor and model drainage migration impacts
- Define level of CCID participation to collaborate on regional water quality mitigation measures – Annually review and refine
- Quantify subsidence impacts on canals and facilities
- Participate in SGMA forums to advocate for infrastructure protection
- Balance subsidence mitigation with a focus on limiting impact to westside farmers

Workforce Development Goals

Goal 1: Build a Strong Succession Pipeline

Objective: Ensure continuity in critical roles by capturing institutional knowledge and preparing future leaders.

Milestone: Develop a succession plan for critical jobs by **2027.**

Tactics:

- Identify critical positions that require over a year of training
- Develop a process for capturing institutional knowledge
- Develop continuity of operations plan
- Create Standard Operating Procedures as part of the succession planning process

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Goal 2: Launch a Comprehensive Employee Development Program

Objective: Equip employees with the skills and exposure needed to grow within the District.

Milestone: Identify a program lead and begin phased rollout by **2028.**

Tactics:

- Brand the program
- Implement cross-training across departments
- Develop formal training and professional development pathways
- Host employee educational tours and workshops
- Review and update job descriptions and salary schedules
- Introduce incentive programs tied to certifications and additional training

Goal 3: Improve Operational Efficiency Through Workforce and Equipment Planning

Objective: Maximize service quality while optimizing staff time and resource allocation.

Milestone: Conduct full workforce and equipment evaluation by **2030.**

Tactics:

- Conduct a department-by-department assessment of staffing and equipment needs
- Identify and evaluate scope of services provided to growers (e.g., community ditches)
- Develop a multi-year equipment replacement and upgrade plan
- Implement a centralized work order and scheduling system
- Document and standardize preventive maintenance practices

Goal 4: Strengthen HR Capabilities

Objective: Professionalize HR operations and support employee growth more effectively.

Milestone: Hire a certified HR professional by **2026.**

Tactics:

- Develop clear HR policies and update employee handbook
- Create a structured onboarding and offboarding process
- Develop a centralized training tracking system
- Develop internship program

Finance and Rates Goals

Goal 1: Strengthen Financial Resilience Through Targeted Reserves

Objective: Build and manage reserves to protect the District from revenue volatility and unexpected costs.

Milestone: Continue funding Tier 1 Rate Stabilization and create Emergency Reserves by **2026.**

Tactics:

- Track and manage reserve levels with defined thresholds and replenishment strategies
- Use favorable water years to build reserves
- Establish criteria and policy for emergency fund deployment
- Present reserve health annually to the Board

Goal 2: Expand External Funding

Objective: Diversify revenue sources and reduce operational dependency on water transfer income.

Milestone: Increase grant funding when available. Ongoing**.**

Tactics:

- Pursue regional, state, and federal grants
- Develop a pipeline of external funding opportunities
- Identify and implement cost-saving strategies and revenue alternatives

Goal 3: Maintain Affordable Water Rates Through Strategic Investment

Objective: Offset rising operational costs and inflation while maintaining long-term rate stability.

Milestone: Keep annual rate increases at or below approved 2021 Prop 218. Ongoing.

Tactics:

- Invest in automation and efficiency improvements
- Reduce operating inputs and streamline internal workflows
- Align capital planning with rate forecasts and affordability goals

Safety and Security Goals

Goal 1: Develop and Implement an Emergency Operations Plan

Objective: Ensure organizational preparedness for natural disasters, infrastructure failures and other emergencies.

Milestone: Emergency Operations Plan completed and adopted by **2026**.

Tactics:

- Hire Consultant who specializes in emergency planning
- Conduct training for all employees
- Conduct annual tabletop or scenario training
- Review and update plan each year

Goal 2: Strengthen Cybersecurity Resilience

Objective: Protect District systems and infrastructure from cyber threats and reduce dependence on key staff for IT functions.

Milestone: Hire dedicated IT staff or consultant with cybersecurity experience by **2026.**

Tactics:

- Hire consultant to conduct a cybersecurity risk assessment
- Develop cybersecurity plan and protocols
- Provide cybersecurity training to staff

Goal 3: Foster a Safety-Focused Organizational Culture

Objective: Build a proactive, compliant, and continuously improving safety environment.

Milestone: Launch district-wide safety program by **2026.**

Tactics:

- Hire Consultant who specializes in safety planning
- Conduct safety audits
- Create safety training program
- Develop a comprehensive safety plan

Technology and Innovation Goals

Goal 1: Improve Internal Operations Through Technology and Efficiency Analysis

Objective: Identify and implement technologies that streamline workflows, reduce errors, and increase organizational efficiency.

Milestone: Complete a district-wide technology efficiency **analysis by 2027.**

Tactics:

- Assign cross-department team to assess needs and opportunities
- Track time savings and error reductions from tech upgrades over one year
- Evaluate and implement systems such as PO/WO tracking and upgraded accounting software
- Present findings and prioritized investment plan to the Board for review and funding
- Pilot artificial intelligence tools where appropriate to enhance forecasting and operations

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Goal 2: Deploy Smart Water Management Tools for Real-Time Monitoring and Response

Objective: Leverage data-driven technologies to monitor, manage, and optimize water delivery.

Milestone: Launch a pilot real-time tracking and alert system **by 2027.**

Tactics:

- Equip head gates with remote monitored control gates
- Deploy high water alerting systems to support timely decision-making
- Integrate remote data tracking tools into water operations dashboard
- Evaluate smart technologies to improve grower demand tracking

Community Relations and Partnership Goals

Goal 1: Advance Strategic Partnerships to Support District Priorities

Objective: Strengthen relationships with regional agencies, environmental stakeholders, and community members to support CCID's mission.

Milestone: Complete and begin implementation of a stakeholder engagement strategy by **2028.**

Tactics:

- Deepen collaboration with SJRECWA, CVP partners, and GWD
- Develop a framework to engage constructively with environmental groups
- Support regional efforts that align with CCID goals, while maintaining flexibility to lead independently when needed
- Develop a relationship map
- Create ways to seek grower feedback

Goal 2: Elevate CCID's Policy Influence

Objective: Raise CCID's visibility at state and federal levels while preparing for key leadership transitions that preserve long-term influence.

Milestone: Launch annual outreach calendar **2026.**

Tactics:

- Participate in SGMA and DM Subbasin leadership forums
- Conduct regular outreach trips to Sacramento and Washington DC
- Expand CCID's independent voice through branded communications and policy materials

Board Governance Goals

Goal 1: Establish a Clear and Consistent Governance Framework

Objective: Clarify Board roles, responsibilities, and procedures to support effective, accountable leadership.

Milestone: Adopt a Board Governance Policy Manual and Roles & Responsibilities policy by **2026.**

Tactics:

- Define and adopt the Board's roles in governance vs. management
- Create policies for meeting procedures, committee structure, and public communication
- Introduce onboarding and orientation protocols for new Board members
- Review governance policies every 3–5 years to ensure relevance and alignment

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Goal 2: Build Accountability and a Stronger Board Culture

Objective: Foster a culture of mutual accountability, trust, and high-functioning governance.

Milestone: Launch an annual Board self-evaluation process by **2027.**

Tactics:

- Implement an annual performance assessment for the Board as a whole and individual members
- Provide formal governance training

Goal 3: Strengthen Board–GM Communication and Collaboration

Objective: Promote transparency, trust, and strategic alignment between the Board and General Manager.

Milestone: Implement structured communication and evaluation protocols by **2025.**

Tactics:

- Establish a regular cadence for Board–GM check-ins (e.g., monthly briefings or strategic updates)
- Introduce a shared agenda-setting process for board meetings
- Define escalation protocols for concerns and feedback
- Develop and implement a formal annual performance evaluation process for the GM

LEADERSHIP

Board Of Directors

Eric Fontana – President, Division 5

Kirk Jensen – Vice President, Division 1

Andrew Bloom – Director, Division 2

Chris Medeiros – Director, Division 3

Greg O'Banion – Director, Division 4

Management

Jarrett Martin – General Manager

Crystal Guintini – Secretary - Controller

Ben Fenters – Deputy General Manager of Water Resources

John Relvas – Deputy General Manager of Operations

Brian Howard – South Division Maintenance Superintendent

Jason Yonkers – North Division Maintenance Superintendent

Drew Guintini – Water Operations Superintendent

Dave Moreno – Project Manager