



Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

2018 STRATEGIC PLAN

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT and GENERAL MANAGER

Dear Stakeholders, Trustees, and Staff,

To survive and prosper, it is critical that organizations continuously review and respond to challenges presented by changing environmental, economic, or societal factors. Typically, organizations experience long periods of incremental changes, and intermittently, they encounter times of rapid and necessary adjustments. To remain an effective organization, it is essential that the *Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District* identifies the challenges and then plan and operate strategically to address those challenges.

Throughout its 90 years, this District has been constantly changing and updating its programs. Strategic planning ensures that residents of the Coachella Valley continue to receive professional services and excellent protection from mosquitoes, red imported fire ants, eye gnats, and other organisms that transmit vector-borne diseases.

This strategic plan provides guidelines for successfully meeting the District's professional, ethical, and legal obligations by establishing objectives and goals that will shape and guide future District decisions, operations, and programs. This is a living document, thus annual reviews, progress evaluations, and updates will be necessary.

Credit for the development of this strategic plan goes to the District Board of Trustees, Staff, and the Strategic Workshop Coordinator, Martin Rauch.

Shelley Kaplan
President

Jeremy Wittie, M.S.
General Manager

HISTORY

The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District was formed in 1928 to combat eye gnats. Initial efforts were directed towards control through pesticide applications. With the development of pesticide resistance the District collaborated with the University of California to develop more sophisticated methods of surveillance and control which continue to this day.

The construction of the Coachella Valley Canal in 1949 brought an abundance of water resulting in excessive irrigation runoff, mosquito production, mosquito-borne disease transmission, and the expansion of the District to include mosquito control in the early 1950s.

With the growth and development of the Coachella Valley during the ensuing years the District broadened to a full vector control agency and relocated to its current facilities in 2001. In 2005, the District added the Red Imported Fire Ant program in response to the establishment of this imported public health pest. In 2006, the District completed a Bio-Control Facility, and in 2014 added more laboratory space to accommodate arbovirus testing, and to once again reinforce the District's early commitment to research and apply the latest integrated methods to control mosquitoes.

The District has continued to steadily expand and improve programs in response to community growth and development and the introduction of new vectors and/or vector-borne diseases, such as the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in 2016, which poses a new threat to Coachella Valley residents.

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

Planning is strategic when it helps move an organization forward from its current situation to its desired future.

The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District has effectively carried out its mission for decades. Periodically, the Board pauses to consider future challenges and opportunities as part of the strategic planning process. The result is a strategic plan that focuses on critical actions and priorities that must be undertaken to move the District successfully into the future. The last two strategic planning workshops were carried out in 2011 and 2014, and the plans developed during the workshops were utilized as a Board/Management tool to successfully govern and prioritize District activities.

This report reflects the items and agreements identified at the latest Strategic Plan workshop held February 7, 2018. This Strategic Plan is the District's highest-level planning document and represents the Board's direction for the future. It was developed through a step-by-step process that included recognizing the District's operating environment, strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and opportunities and challenges.

The Strategic Plan identifies the agency's mission, vision, and values, while providing a set of goals and objectives that become a framework for all decision making. It is a practical working tool that provides clear direction to the staff and is the basis for an Implementation Plan developed by the staff to meet those goals and objectives. As such, it is referred to regularly as a guide to District actions during the period covered.

To ensure the Strategic Plan remains realistic and achievable, it should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Strategic Plan Development

The strategic plan was developed in a series of steps around a series of logical components.

The development of the plan began with individual interviews with the Board of Trustees and District Management. During a day-long strategic planning workshop, Trustees and senior management staff then reviewed the results of the interviews, undertook a number of exercises to examine the current state of the District, identified critical issues and opportunities expected to confront the District in the future, and discussed priorities.

A working draft of the Strategic Plan was developed including an updated Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals and Objectives. Based on that draft, the management team worked with staff to review and flesh out an Implementation Plan designed to meet the agreed upon strategic goals and objectives of the District.



District Priorities

The group identified key priorities that the District must focus on in the coming years, shown below. Priorities are important since in practice it is not possible to accomplish everything at once and there are limits on time, money, and personnel. These priorities were reviewed by staff to inform the development and timing of initiatives in an Implementation Plan.

HIGHEST PRIORITIES	
•	Emerging Vectors.
•	Pesticide Use.
•	Financial Stability.
•	Community Collaboration.
•	Emergency Preparation.
•	Technological Innovation.
•	Climate Change.
•	Board Culture.
•	Science-based programs.
•	Land Management.
•	Performance Measurement.
•	Transparency.
•	Interagency Collaboration.

2. THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission

A good mission statement should accurately explain why an organization exists and what it hopes to achieve in the future. It articulates the organization's essential work. **The District mission statement as updated in this process:**

We are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for our community by providing effective and environmentally sound vector control and vector-borne disease prevention programs.

Vision for the Future

The vision articulates what the agency will become at a given time in the future. It is the strategic target which, when achieved, is the fulfillment of the agency's mission. As such, it is at the heart of the strategic planning process. **The District vision as updated in this process:**

To progress towards a future free of vector-borne disease using proven scientific, technical, and educational strategies, which are financially and environmentally sound.

Values

Values are what we consider important, what we believe is right and wrong. Values help employees understand and contribute in a consistent way. If defined, disseminated and followed, values impact every aspect of the organization. They can be written as statements or posed as questions when making decisions. **The District values as updated in this process:**

Public Health – protect the public from vectors and vector-borne diseases.

Science – develop programs and services based on research and scientific evidence.

Professionalism – ensure work and services are performed professionally and to a high standard.

Environmental Stewardship – carry out work in an environmentally conscientious manner.

Financial Sustainability – provide stability through the responsible use of public resources.

Ethics – maintain high ethical standards.

Communication – inspire public trust and action through proactive and transparent communication.

Collaboration – work with individuals, communities, and institutions to further our mission.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives, along with the mission, vision and values, represent the core strategic direction provided in this plan.

Note on Timing. Goals and objectives will be reported on at least once each year in February when the General Manager provides a Strategic Plan progress report along with the District's Annual Report.

Goal 1. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. Extend budgeting and the financial planning horizon to ensure long-term stability, financial security, and taxpayer value.

Strategic Challenge. The District is fiscally conservative and well-funded, with strong financial management. However, there are many potential disrupters to the District's financial health, such as the ongoing cost and growth in capital equipment, technology, and personnel and benefits costs. In addition, new vectors and diseases, increased regulation, and pesticide resistance developed by vectors may increase costs. As such, the District needs to incorporate these potential challenges in a longer-term outlook to strengthen its financial position.

The objectives below must be consistently carried out into the future to achieve the goal above.

1.1.0 Enhance financial policies and practices to further promote long-term financial strength and stability.

1.2.0 Ensure financing, reserves, and other key financial plans and policies are regularly reviewed and updated.

Goal 2. EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY. Provide secure and up-to-date equipment and technology to enhance staff's ability to communicate and carry out its work effectively and efficiently.

Strategic Challenge. The District's mapping and database technology is well-established and growing new capabilities. The District must expand its application of technology to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability through activities such as creating work orders, routing technicians, managing the fleet, and employee and program performance. In addition, there are growing cybersecurity challenges that must be dealt with.

The objectives below must be consistently carried out into the future to achieve the goal above.

2.1.0 Increase cyber security.

2.2.0 Identify and create processes and associated training to implement new technologies that will allow the District's workforce to be more effective and responsive to present and emerging threats from vectors and a changing environment.

2.3.0 Update and implement new technologies that improve cost efficiency, accountability and District transparency.

Goal 3. HUMAN RESOURCES AND GOVERNANCE. Recruit, develop, and retain a professional, collaborative, high quality, motivated workforce.

Strategic Challenge. The District values a positive culture that promotes collaboration and communication from the Boardroom to the field. Over time, changes in staff or the Board can threaten the productive and collaborative culture that has been built through many years of effort. The aim of the objectives in this goal is to assure continued excellence in human resources and governance.

The objectives below must be consistently carried out into the future to achieve the goal above.

3.1.0 Recruit, develop, and retain a professional, skilled, and motivated workforce.

3.2.0 Develop and implement succession planning programs to prepare qualified employees for competitive promotional opportunities.

3.3.0 Evaluate and improve staff culture and working conditions to promote effective communication, collaboration, creativity, and employee satisfaction within a safe working environment.

3.4.0 Develop programs and provide opportunities for the Board of Trustees that promote a deep understanding of the District and preserve Board culture.

Goal 4. OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT, AND COLLABORATION. Increase public understanding of and support for the District’s mission and activities, and inspire their active engagement in controlling vectors.

Strategic Challenge. Over the last several years, the District has effectively raised public awareness about mosquito-borne threats, as well as the strategies to reduce those threats. However, as technicians have increased door-to-door inspections for invasive mosquitoes, we have discovered that resident knowledge has not systematically resulted in resident action. In the desert environment, where most of the sources of standing water where mosquitoes lay eggs are manmade, it is critical that residents routinely inspect and remove standing water from their properties. The District must research and develop methods to further motivate people to act and modify their behavior.

The objectives below must be consistently carried out into the future to achieve the goal above.

4.1.0 Deepen District understanding of neighborhood-level demographics, motivators, and communication channels in order to develop and deliver messaging that inspires behavioral change in residents to eliminate vectors from their property.

4.2.0 Develop targeted messages and tools to increase awareness and garner support for prevention, control, and abatement programs.

4.3.0 Develop strategies and tools to gauge public views about vector-related issues over time and respond to them effectively.

4.4.0 Proactively seek out and influence policies, legislation, regulations, and public perceptions that affect the District mission and integrated vector management program.

Goal 5. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. Develop proactive responses to new vectors and vector-borne diseases, changing regulations, legislation, and public perception around pesticide use.

Strategic Challenge. The District has a long history of effectively controlling vectors and minimizing vector-borne disease. However, new and emerging vectors and vector-borne diseases pose greater challenges, and there is little likelihood of eradicating them with current techniques. In addition, current pesticides are likely to be less available or less effective for reasons such as increased resistance by mosquitoes, growth in public antipathy toward the use of pesticides, and increased regulations.

The objectives below must be consistently carried out into the future to achieve the goal above.

5.1.0 Identify, prioritize, and track global emerging vector-borne disease threats most likely to arrive in the Coachella Valley, and develop or implement methods locally to detect those potential emerging threats.

5.2.0 Develop and evaluate new tools and strategies for effectively managing vectors and vector-borne disease.

5.3.0 Develop and support relationships with external researchers to improve integrated vector management strategies and practices based on applied research projects.

Goal 6. PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES. Utilize effective, efficient, and environmentally sound practices to deliver District programs.

Strategic Challenge. The District has a well-structured performance evaluation program for employees to help build on staff strengths and overcome weaknesses. The District also measures the impact of its Integrated Vector Management Program on the environment. The District seeks to create a similar evaluation process for all District programs in order to increase overall effectiveness and efficiency.

The objectives below must be consistently carried out into the future to achieve the goal above.

6.1.0 Develop and implement measurable assessments of District programs and incorporate outcomes to improve program performance.

Goal 7. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS. Ensure District facilities are prepared to operate effectively through disasters and emergencies, including public health emergencies caused by vector-borne disease.

Strategic Challenge. The District faces many potential disasters, some of which are rapid and unpredictable like earthquakes and floods, while others can unfold over time such as vector-borne disease outbreaks, climate change, drought, and changes to the Salton Sea. The District must be prepared to operate effectively through all such conditions.

The objectives below must be consistently carried out into the future to achieve the goal above.

7.1.0 Extend emergency preparedness to include resiliency and recovery planning and joint interagency exercises.

7.2.0 Maintain an emergency reserve fund to meet the needs of an arbovirus outbreak

3. MONITORING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND OVERSIGHT

The District will take the following steps to ensure that the Strategic Plan is implemented and results are achieved:

- Print the Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Objectives on posters and handouts, and display them around the District.
- Distribute the Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Objectives with the District's Policies and Procedures Manual during orientation and training for new employees.
- Present the Strategic Plan to the entire staff so they are familiar with it and can better undertake their individual roles in fulfilling it.
- Management and Supervisory Teams will proactively develop and carry out projects in the Implementation Plan.
- Incorporate Strategic Plan monitoring by the Board as appropriate, and provide semi-annual staff reports to the entire Board on Strategic Plan progress.
- Evaluate General Manager and Management Team performance based in part on their implementation of the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.
- Staff will reference Strategic Plan items on Board meeting agendas as appropriate.
- The Board, with staff support, will review and update the Strategic Plan annually.



**COACHELLA VALLEY MOSQUITO
AND VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT**

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