



Georgetown Divide Public Utility District 2026-2028 Strategic Plan

The purpose of this document is to confirm the strategic direction of the Board of Directors and to direct staff actions in key issue areas that impact the District's business, its customer base, and the citizens of the Divide and serve our community in the most cost-effective way in providing high quality and sustainable water supply and services

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General Manager's Message

This plan is more than a collection of goals and objectives; it reflects this District's commitment to the customers we serve, the employees who make our mission possible, and the communities that depend on us every day. It is the result of thoughtful collaboration among the Board of Directors, District staff, and community stakeholders who share a common vision for the future of the Georgetown Divide.

The Divide is a special place with a rich and unique history. As custodians of one of the region's most valuable resources, water, we recognize our responsibility to protect, preserve, and enhance the systems that support our quality of life today and for future generations.

Since 2020, the District has made significant progress in strengthening its operational, financial, and organizational foundation. Together, we have stabilized key leadership positions, secured more than \$35 million in grants and appropriations, modernized our financial systems, implemented advanced metering infrastructure, developed a comprehensive asset management program, improved transparency, and advanced critical infrastructure investments across the District. We have also strengthened our partnerships with neighboring agencies and increased our engagement at the regional, state, and federal levels to advocate for our customers' and rural communities' interests.

While we are proud of these accomplishments, we recognize that significant challenges remain. Aging infrastructure, rising regulatory requirements, climate variability, cybersecurity threats, workforce development needs, and long-term financial sustainability all demand careful planning and decisive action. This Strategic Plan serves as our roadmap for addressing these challenges while upholding our commitment to reliable, affordable, and high-quality water, irrigation, and wastewater services. Several values guide my leadership and this organization's work.

First, I believe public trust must be earned every day. Transparency, accountability, and open communication are essential to maintaining the confidence of our customers and stakeholders. We will continue to provide clear information on District operations, finances, and decision-making processes.

Second, I believe in responsible stewardship. The water rights, reservoirs, treatment facilities, canals, pipelines, and other assets entrusted to us have been built through generations of investment and vision. Our responsibility is to ensure these assets remain reliable, resilient, and capable of serving future generations.

Third, I believe local control matters. The Georgetown Divide has unique water needs and challenges. Through continued advocacy and engagement with local, state, and federal policymakers, we will work to protect our water rights, preserve local decision-making authority, and ensure our customers' voices are heard.

Finally, I believe that people are our greatest asset. The dedication, professionalism, and expertise of our employees enable the District to fulfill its mission every day. Investing in our workforce, promoting safety, and developing future leaders will remain among our highest priorities.

As we move forward, I remain optimistic about the Georgetown Divide Public Utility District's future. Thank you to the Board of Directors, District employees, community partners, and customers for your continued trust and support. I look forward to working together to implement this Strategic Plan and to continue building a resilient and sustainable future for the communities we proudly serve.

Nicholas Schneider
General Manager
Georgetown Divide Public Utility District

Georgetown Divide Public Utility District (GDPUD) Strategic Planning

Achievements 2020-2026

Staff

- Filled all critical positions in the District: Operations Manager, Water Resource Manager, Human Resources, Office/Finance Manager, and a majority of the field staff.
- Completed Salary Survey and Local 1 and Local 39 MOU's updated for 2024-2029.
- Contracts Secured: District Engineer, District Legal Counsel, Water Transfer Consultant, CPA.

Revenue Augmentation

- Secured grant funding and appropriations from Federal and State of \$35 million since 2022,
- Contracted with Grant Writer to assist in grant searches, writing and presentation.
- Contracted with Federal Lobbyist to educate and provide required advocacy for the District.
- Vehicle Maintenance/Replacement Program led to a considerable decrease in vehicle expenses.
- Asset Management Plan (KASL) completed in 2023.
- Software Upgrades: Asset Management; Financial, with improved reporting and monthly analysis of budget to date actuals. We also added an ERP System and Zoom audio technology for meetings.
- Increased returns on investments by 800%.
- Funding for recovery from the Mosquito Fire is approximately \$8.6 million after attorney fees.
- Approximately 3000-acre feet of water preserved through customer water conservation and canal lining projects.
- Utilized the Water Transfer Consultant annually to explore the viability of turning the water preserved and storm water into revenue enhancement. Water transfer of 2000-acre feet led to the District's realizing \$600,000 in gross monetary gain for the Capital Improvement Plan

Capital Improvement Plans

- Automatic Meters installed throughout the District that were grant-funded.
- Tunnel inspection completed.
- Solar project to begin in 2026 to defer PGE energy costs that was augmented revenue funded.
- Continued Projects: Tank Coating; Treated water pipe replacement; Canal lining.
- Headquarters building repairs and upgrades.
- Generators for all pumping stations are in place in case of emergencies that was State Appropriations funded.

Board Actions

- Hire long term General Manager.
- Reinstated the Finance Committee and successfully held joint budget workshops.
- Implemented Irrigation Committee that achieved success in community engagement, infrastructure improvement and advocacy for the District.
- Implemented Irrigation Committee also created first water forum to provide customers with irrigation information; reworked the irrigation applications, emails, and completed outreach for irrigation customers; and works with the fire departments to have customers ponds included in fire mapping.
- Implemented Grants Committee.

- Crafted an upgraded District and Board Policy and Procedure Manual in 2024.

District/Customer

December 2018 Board established a policy for Low-Income Rate Assistance program (LIRA) for treated water. December 2024 Board set discount percentage of 50% off base rate of treated water

Strategic Relationships and Education

Maintained positive relationships, ensuring proper advocacy and support for the District's short and long-term needs by serving on committees and Boards for Association of California Water Agencies Joint Powers Insurance Authority (ACWA/JPIA), Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), Regional Water Authority (RWA), Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA), California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA), and California Special District Association (CSDA).

District Overview

The Georgetown Divide Public Utility District (District) serves communities in western El Dorado County, among the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, in the heart of the Mother Lode. The Georgetown Divide is located between the Middle and South Forks of the American River, nestled in the heart of the Sierra Nevada Foothills and Northern California's Gold Country. Access is via Highway 50 and Interstate 80, providing proximity to either metropolitan cities or the recreational activities of Lake Tahoe. The cornerstone of the District's water supply system is the Stumpy Meadows Reservoir with a storage capacity of 21,206 acre-feet. GDPUD is one of the many water districts in the Headwaters of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers that provide approximately 60% of the State's Water Supply.

- Location — 72,000 acres (112.5 square miles) serving unincorporated areas of western El Dorado County.
- Services — Raw and treated water supplies, on-site wastewater disposal.
- Population of area served — With 3,800 connections, we serve a population of approximately 10,000.
- Formation Date — June 11, 1946.
- Type of District (Act) — California Public Utility District Act.
- Source of Water — Pilot Creek and other tributary water rights.
- Amount of Water Served — Approximately 5,166 acre-feet per year of which 1,418 was treated water and 3,757 was agriculture/irrigation water for 2025.**(Nick be sure these numbers are right)**
- Predecessor Agencies — A series of private water companies dating back to 1852 and the El Dorado, Pilot Creek, and Rock Creek Canal Companies. In 1872, the California Water Company purchased the Pilot Creek Ditch Company and, in 1890, renamed it the Loon Lake Water and Power Company.

GDPUD History

The origins of District facilities can be traced directly to 1852 and the El Dorado, Pilot Creek, and Rock Creek Canal Companies, among the first water purveyors established in the State of California, following James Marshall's discovery of gold in nearby Coloma. Following the decline in gold production, agriculture and lumbering became the staple industries on the Divide for many years. The focus of the District water supply system is the Stumpy Meadows Reservoir, a 21,206-acre-foot impoundment on Pilot Creek, at the eastern edge of the District. Water from this source of supply traverses approximately 75 miles of canals and pipelines to provide both raw water for customers and raw water supplies to the District's water treatment plants.

Mission Statement and Governing Values (Final)

- Ensure the safe and reliable delivery of high quality drinking water, irrigation water, and wastewater services.
- Responsibly steward water rights.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility and long-term financial sustainability.
- Build and maintain a resilient infrastructure to meet current and future community needs.
- Provide excellent and responsive customer service through dedicated and valued staff.
- Ensure transparency and accountability are observed by balancing immediate and long-term needs.

Governing Values

Our Core values guide our daily decisions and the way we fulfill our mission, goals, and strategies in serving our ratepayers. The Board, Operational Staff, and all interested parties critical to the District's success believe modeling these principles is critical to how we serve our customers.

Public Trust: We act with integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Stewardship: We responsibly protect resources and infrastructure for future generations.

Service Excellence: We deliver reliable, responsive, and customer-focused service.

Safety & Well-Being: We prioritize the health, safety, and preparedness of our workforce and community.

Collaboration & Respect: We foster teamwork, professionalism, inclusion, and respectful communication with our Board, staff, and community.

Board Effectiveness: We maintain a high-performing board through engaging in respectful and informed decision making; honesty, sound fiscal oversight, continued learning and training; working and communicating with each other, staff, and the public.

Strategic Goal #1: Water System Reliability

Importance

The District operates a sole-source water supply that is delivered to the Divide communities as untreated irrigation water, treated drinking water, and Wastewater Services. Our primary focus in Water System Reliability is to protect and ensure the reliability of water supplies for the future while maintaining local control, advocating for District water rights, ensuring an available supply that serves the region, and adapting to the needs of future generations.

Strategy 1: Stumpy Meadows Reservoir Water Supply

G1.S1.KP1: Maintain local control and protect water rights, maintain and protect the reservoir and structures. Budget and maintain diversion permits.

G1.S1.KP1: Continue post-wildfire recovery mitigation. Vegetation mitigation, canal lining, pipe conversion, investment, and maintenance of upcountry infrastructure.

Strategy 2: Develop Redundant Supply

G1.S2.KP1: Protect and utilize existing sights to develop redundant supply, ensuring water supply for Divide communities, and looking for ways to expand our system for better service to capture a portion of the approximately 60,000-acre feet of water that passes over Edson Dam during the wet seasons.

G1.S2.KP2: Develop a plan with potential funding resources to replace the Onion Creek diversion that is contained in the Capital Improvement Plan.

G1.S2.KP3: Develop a plan with potential funding resources to build a 15,000-acre-foot Reservoir above Edson Dam that is contained in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Strategy 3: Water Supply Planning and Advocacy

G1.S3.KP1: Maintain strategic partnerships with local, regional, and State agencies in developing planning documents associated with the Upper American River Watershed.

G1.S3.KP2: Advocate with Federal and State representatives to maintain local control of water supplies and educate representatives about our system and infrastructure.

G1.S3.KP3: Update Urban Water Management Plan to ensure we develop and maintain emergency planning methodologies to handle large scale and local emergencies.

G1.S3.KP4: Provide an Annual Water Year Declaration and follow up with Water Supply and Demand Assessments and Water Shortage Contingency Plans as appropriate.

G1.S3.KP5: Apply for Prop 4 funding for adaptation projects that can expand our system for better reliability and resiliency including stormwater capture.

Strategic Goal #2: Water System Sustainability (Treated, Irrigation, Wastewater Services)

Importance

Treated Water: The District operates two three-million-gallon-per-day water treatment plants that supply a series of storage tanks and a 200-mile network of treated water distribution lines. The majority of critical potable infrastructure was installed in the 1970s; however, the District has worked continuously to identify weaknesses and deficiencies to ensure consumer water deliveries are met.

Irrigation: The District operates a 70-mile Irrigation water conveyance system canal system that traverses through significant topographic relief from a maximum elevation of 4,000 down to 1,000 feet. The raw water delivery system terminates at two water treatment plants and numerous irrigation customers located throughout Georgetown Divide communities.

Wastewater Disposal: The District must maintain and improve our current water and wastewater infrastructure cost-effectively to ensure the safe, sustainable delivery of water and wastewater services now and in the future. This strategic goal emphasizes a holistic, forward-thinking approach to water and wastewater system management and infrastructure, fostering innovation, collaboration, and enduring strategies that align with the District's mission and ensure the long-term reliability of its operations.

Strategy 1: Maintain a reliable and adequate supply of high-quality drinking water

G2.S1.KP1: Provide an annual water reliability and quality report, Consumer Confidence Report, and correct and address any deficiencies.

G2.S1.KP2: Maintain and document the hydrant flush program and PSI per hydrant, and update with the GIS system for the public.

G2.S1.KP3: Maintain and repair treated water lines and major connecting pipes. Consider Artificial Intelligence utilization tools.

G2.S1.KP4: Identify areas where the Community Development resources can be used to improve treated lines and infrastructure.

G2.S1.KP5: Maintain adequate signage and programs for recreational areas around reservoirs to mitigate mussel and other environmental contamination.

Strategy 2: Ensure the Irrigation water delivery system is reliable and resilient

G2.S2.KP1: Address water loss in the system through infrastructure improvements, boost canal lining and piping initiatives, and conversion of open canal to pipeline where appropriate.

G2.S2.KP2: Evaluate strategic areas to potentially serve additional customer capacity or demand.

G2.S2.KP3: Address potential areas for water theft.

G2.S2.KP4: Continue vegetation management of canals and major resilience projects.

Strategy 3: Maintain service to the customers of the Wastewater System

G2.S3.KP1: Identify additional capital projects and improvements that enhance system resiliency.

G2.S3.KP2: Explore grants and appropriations for the lift station and recycle/treatment system.

Strategy 4: Optimize and Maintain Energy Sustainability

G2.S4.KP1: Return the Hydro Facility Contracts back to GDPUD stewardship

G2.S4.KP2: Expand hydrogenation opportunities with new facilities

G2.S4.KP3: Monitor energy cost savings with Solar generation

Strategic Goal #3: Customer Service, Transparency, and Community Engagement

Importance

The District's leadership continues to provide general and critical information in a timely manner through multiple methods. In addition, the District continues to provide transparency in its fiscal activities, governance, and infrastructure maintenance and development.

Strategy 1: Provide excellent customer service, respond to broad customer needs, and make information available, such as board meeting minutes, historical documents, and reports, to result in positive customer experiences.

G3.S1.KP1: Encourage membership and participation in ongoing committees.

G3.S1.KP2: Develop and maintain communications with customers through newsletters, bill inserts, email alerts, social media, push notifications, text messages, and town hall meetings.

G3.S1.KP3: Continue to provide multiple bill payment options to serve the needs of our ratepayers properly.

G3.S1.KP4: Utilize technology to increase access to billing payments and account information, including water usage statistics, and further use of Water Smart efficiency initiatives.

G4.S1.KP5: Hire or contract a professional public information/outreach communications firm or staff member to develop and manage an appropriate communication, community engagement, and outreach strategy.

G4.S1.KP6: Encourage all Board Members to complete the Special District's Leadership Academy. (SDLA)

G4.S1.KP7: Community Outreach through community events, such as Founder's Day and Fourth of July, will be considered.

G4.S1.KP8: Consistent with the District's Emergency Response Plan we will evaluate alternative communication systems for customer outreach and communication in the event of power failures or other catastrophic events.

Strategic Goal #4: Fiscal Health, Rate Stabilization, and Revenue Enhancement

Importance

The District must manage its financial resources to:

- a) Meet its maintenance and operational needs;
- b) Provide for Capital Improvements; and
- c) Establish rates reflecting the costs of service as defined in Prop. 218.

Strategy 1: Ensure long-term financial stability and resilience by implementing sound financial management practices, prudent investing, optimizing revenue streams, and minimizing risks.

G4.S1.KP1: Maintain transparent, accurate, and timely financial reporting.

G4.S1.KP2: Maintain Investments to provide additional revenue with routine review, following policy principles, and minimizing risks.

G4.S1.KP3: Continue efforts in Long Range Financial Planning to ensure adequate and reliable revenue streams and operational efficiency. Maintain a conservative debt/loan ratio.

G4.S1.KP4: Reduce and minimize volatility in rate increases by investing one-time and temporary revenue sources in projects that generate ongoing revenue and/or reducing expenses. Ex: Track revenue saved from energy offsets from Solar to use as rate stabilization or reduction in budgeting operating costs.

G4.S1.KP5: Explore and utilize water exchanges or transfers with other Districts and agencies.

G4.S1.KP6: Utilize grants and appropriations to maximize funding for infrastructure and capital projects.

G4.S1.KP7: Receive a clean audit annually.

G4.S1. KP8: Review and update the Capital Improvement Plan annually. Review and provide a balanced Budget annually.

G4.S1.KP9 Utilize the Finance Committee to explore options for rate stabilization and develop projects that generate revenue income for the District.

G4.S1.KP10: Implement and Educate the Public and Board to utilize the online financial portal.

G4.S1.KP11: Reduce spending by optimizing expenditures and purchases in each department and at the Board level where appropriate

Strategic Goal #5: Safety, Security, and our People

Importance

Recruiting, developing, and retaining staff is one of the primary strengths that enable the District to provide reliable service, maintain an aging infrastructure, deliver prompt and courteous community relations, respond to emergencies, and support an employee culture dedicated to the District's missions. Additionally, being a small district, it can be difficult to have robust information technology support. Having dedicated employees and systems to manage these processes can be costly but necessary. We must protect the District's assets from cyberattacks, required technology upgrades, and other potential hazards that could impact the health and safety of our staff, customers, and other key stakeholders.

Strategy 1: Invest in staff and management to cultivate a high-performing and knowledgeable workforce.

G5.S1.KP1: Proactively plan for management and employee succession with internal employee development programs.

G5.S1.KP2: Continue utilizing competitive salary survey insights to inform salary decisions, ensuring that compensation remains competitive.

G5.S1.KP3: Create an internship program to increase opportunities for students and professionals, supporting industry employment growth and building a robust recruitment pool to attract and retain top talent to secure a skilled, motivated, and satisfied workforce. Coordinate with the Regional and ACWA Foundation internship programs.

G5.S1.KP4: Foster high employee morale and a positive organizational culture for Staff to Provide Excellent Customer Service by conducting regular employee satisfaction surveys, staff engagement sessions, teambuilding, and other successful human resources practices.

G5.S1.KP5: Provide opportunities for leadership training, technical conference attendance, staff assistance, and meeting required State Training as part of the career development process.

Strategy 2: Ensure technology and cybersecurity remain a critical priority of the agency, its employees, and IT infrastructure, including employee culture and training

G5.S2.KP1: Continue to work with ACWA/JPIA's Preventive Cyber Risk Management and utilize training and educational resources.

G5.S2.KP2: Identify ways to fortify infrastructure security and remain current with best practices, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration where appropriate. Utilizing grant funding, such as the local cybersecurity grant program, where appropriate.