



# Strategic Plan

2008

Camrosa Water District

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7385 Santa Rosa Road  
Camarillo, California



## ***Introduction***

Southern California's water supply has become an important topic on the political scene as a combination of events has reduced the reliability of water imported into Southern California and threatened the lifestyle of Southern California residents. The Camrosa Water District (District) and water purveyors throughout Southern California are facing challenging and uncertain times ahead. A reduction in the amount of Colorado River water available to Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) was the first signal that Southern Californians need to address their long-term water needs. Subsequently, pumping restrictions imposed by judicial ruling to protect the endangered Delta Smelt reduced the water available from the State Water Project and underscored the need to develop local supplies to meet water demand. Finally, a second year of drought conditions has created further uncertainty. The drought has led to actual reductions in some water allocations from MWD, which has reduced the reliability of imported state water and increased the cost of imported water that is still available. As a result, long-range planning by water districts is more crucial than ever in maintaining reliable sources of water for their constituents.

This Strategic Plan was developed following a two-day Board retreat designed to focus on the challenges and internal constraints facing the District and the opportunities available that will allow Camrosa to further improve its services. The Board of Directors met with the executive management staff on July 15 and again on July 22, 2008. The outcome of the Board retreat is the development of this Strategic Plan that addresses Camrosa's Mission and Vision, the core business services provided to the District's customers, and the strategies necessary to achieve the vision. While the Mission and Vision Statement are the cornerstone of this Strategic plan, the goals and strategies, and the initiatives that will follow as part of the Integrated Facilities Master Plan, will ensure Camrosa is well positioned to address the challenges it faces.

### **A. Vision Statement**

Camrosa is a public agency that provides vital services to its customers in a non-competitive environment. Accordingly, the manner in which those services are provided, the team that provides those services and the satisfaction of Camrosa's customers with the service is a key consideration in the development of the strategic plan. The Vision Statement describing how the Board of Directors and staff will conduct business and how the services provided by Camrosa are perceived by its customers provides a picture of the ideal District and will form the foundation for development of the District's long-term goals and strategies.

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## Vision Statement

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**C**amrosa is a dynamic, resource-independent public entity that provides highly efficient and responsive service to its water and wastewater customers. The Board is prudent in the management of public resources and innovative in using modern tools to maintain system reliability and financial strength. The District is a lean organization, led by a cohesive Board and staffed by an honest, enthusiastic, highly competent and focused team, who find their work challenging and enjoyable and who have earned the trust of their well-informed customers.

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A key component of Camrosa's vision – to become resource independent – underscores the importance of developing local water resources, including developing local storage, to become less dependent upon imported State Water Project water.

## B. Mission Statement

If the Vision Statement is the foundation upon which the Strategic Plan is built, then the Mission Statement is the cornerstone of that foundation. The Mission Statement reflects the District's responsibility to meet current and future needs of the community, describes the primary attributes of products and services it will deliver, and provides an awareness of the special trust that exists between Camrosa as a public entity and the public at large.

The Board reviewed Camrosa's Mission Statement, which was last revised in 2001, and concurred with the existing focus of providing water and wastewater services that are reliable, affordable, responsive and of high quality. In addition, the Board voiced the need to broaden the definition of "District's assets" to not only include cash and investments, but also the responsibility to maintain and upgrade the District's capital infrastructure. Employees were also recognized as an asset in the revised definition and the need to train, nurture growth and broaden the skills of Camrosa's employees was emphasized.

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## Mission Statement

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**T**he Mission of Camrosa Water District is to meet the current and future needs of the community for water and sanitary services. Our products and services will be reliable, affordable, responsive and of high quality. At the same time, the District will prudently manage and maintain the District's assets, honor the public's trust, and maintain public awareness and confidence in the District's activities.

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**C. Goals and Strategies**

To be effective, the Goals and Strategies developed to guide Camrosa must align perfectly with the Mission Statement. The Mission Statement above can be segmented into four primary areas of emphasis:

- To meet the current and future needs for water and sanitary services
- To deliver high quality products that are reliable, affordable and responsive
- To prudently manage and maintain the District's assets, and finally
- To maintain public awareness and confidence and honor the public's trust

Some fundamental goals were established under these four areas of emphasis as outlined in the following table. In this table, the Mission Statement is highlighted in blue while the goals are highlighted in grey.

Mission Statement
Goals
Strategies
Meet Current & Future Needs of the Community
Develop Independence
Deliver Products & Services that are:
Reliable
Affordable
Responsive
High Quality
Provide Prudent Management and Maintenance of District Assets
Strengthen Financial Position
Fully Develop Staff Potential
Improve systems Operation & Maintenance
Maintain Public Awareness & Confidence & Honor Public Trust
Educate Customers
Protect Water Supplies
Exceed All Regulatory Standards

An analysis of the District's internal strengths and weakness as well as external threats and opportunities helped focus discussion and develop the strategies contained in this plan. Individual and more-detailed initiatives will be developed under each strategy but those initiatives are not included in this broader Strategic Plan. Some initiatives that implement these strategies are already under way, while additional initiatives will be developed by staff as the master planning process unfolds or as opportunities present themselves in the future. Most of the initiatives involving facilities will be aggregated into a revised Integrated Facilities Master Plan for the District. The following analysis, which looks at each of the four area of emphasis in the Mission Statement separately, identifies the strategies developed in each area.

## **Meet the Current and Future Needs of the Community**

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### **1. Develop Independence**

The cost of imported water and the cost of power are the two most substantial costs incurred by Camrosa. Minimizing the use of imported water and purchased power will provide independence in providing service to the District's customers.

The development of local water resources will provide independence to the District in a number of ways. Development of local water resources provides Camrosa with greater control in avoiding cutbacks or allocations during times of drought or that may occur as a result of regulatory cutbacks in the quantity of imported State Water Project water available. In addition, it will provide greater control over the price of water which often accelerates during periods of shortage. In meeting its potable needs, Camrosa currently relies on 72% imported state water and blends with 28% local groundwater to meet water quality standards. Achieving independence will require a substantial reduction in the use of imported state water and a greater reliance upon local sources.



**Strategy 1.1. Develop new water sources** – New water sources include development of new wells, full utilization of available surface water, and development of recycled water supplies.

**Strategy 1.2. Expand non-potable system** – Expansion of the non-potable system to meet irrigation needs will reduce demand for imported state water and make that water available to meet potable

demand. Expansion of the non-potable water distribution system will provide further reliability during times of drought.

**Strategy 1.3. Investigate Desalination** – Desalination plants treat brackish water that is not suitable for potable use due to poor water quality. With the completion of the Regional Brine Line, there are a number of near-term opportunities for construction of desalination facilities which would process non-potable water for potable use or improve the quality of recycled water. Ocean desalination remains a distant opportunity.

**Strategy 1.4. Seek Power Generation Opportunities** – Evaluate the opportunity of installing a renewable energy facility or cogeneration system to reduce utility costs. Operation of renewable energy facilities can reduce emissions and further demonstrate environmental responsibility.

**Strategy 1.5. Expand and/or Improve water storage** – Camrosa has an aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) well and could store water for future use if available. Expansion of water storage operations both within the District's boundaries and outside its service area would provide greater reliability during times of drought.

**Strategy 1.6. Improve Waste Treatment Disposal** – Increasingly stringent regulations are being implemented to control the disposal of biosolids from wastewater treatment plants. Improving the drying process and decreasing the water content in biosolids could significantly decrease the near-term cost of hauling. Development of a long term, interagency solution may be possible to meet regional needs.

## **Develop Products and Services that are:**

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### **2. Reliable**

A core business service of Camrosa is a commitment to provide adequate water supplies of high quality water. A recent survey conducted within Camrosa's service area showed that reliability of the District's water supply is of vital concern among Camrosa's customers. Through responsible stewardship Camrosa will continue to expand the use of local water resources to secure and sustain water reliability and to position the District to address regional water supply shortages without interruption or reduction of customers' water use.

**Strategy 2.1. Improve System Reliability** – Camrosa will seize every opportunity to reduce dependence upon imported water and expand the use of local water resources in meeting water demand. Prudent maintenance of District facilities, identification and elimination of single points of system failure will ensure continuation of operations in times of stress.

**Strategy 2.2. Control Water Sources** – Camrosa is fortunate to have a number of sources of groundwater, surface water and recycled water available to meet water demand. High priority will be placed upon developing and maintaining control over local resources through establishment of necessary agreements and/or maintenance of water rights. Greater use of local resources will provide greater control during times of drought.

**Strategy 2.3. Improve Emergency Response** – The development of comprehensive contingency plans and mutual assistance agreements will minimize confusion during emergencies and ensure minimal interruption in service. Continued use of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) will allow coordination of efforts with outside agencies.

### **3. Affordable**

Over the past ten years, Camrosa's rates for water and wastewater services have been among the lowest in the County and the District is determined to continue to provide good value to the District's customers.

**Strategy 3.1. Improve Efficiency** – Implementation of technology improvements will allow Camrosa to improve the efficiency of operations and reduce operational costs. Outsourcing routine tasks and developing new in-house technical skills will further reduce those costs. Innovative realignment of facilities between potable and non-potable distribution systems will minimize new capital outlays.

**Strategy 3.2. Promote Cooperative Projects** – Regional solutions often bring economies of scale. Camrosa will take a regional perspective in addressing water and wastewater problems and will actively seek project partners to implement innovative solutions that resolve issues for more than one agency.

### **4. Responsive**

Camrosa recognizes that by providing water and wastewater services, it is meeting one of the basic needs of its customers. Accordingly, customers expect

Camrosa to be fair in developing and implementing Rules and Regulations for delivery of services and to be responsive to their needs when concerns arise.

**Strategy 4.1. Improve Customer Service** – Camrosa will seek to continually improve the manner in which the District interfaces with its customers. Development of technological solutions to make customer interface more convenient, continuous improvement in after-hours support, and the development of new services that increase value to the customer will all serve to improve customer support.

**Strategy 4.2. Solicit Customer Feedback** – Developing an awareness of customer needs and desires is an important step in providing responsive public services. Camrosa holds the opinions of its customers in high regard and recognizes that customer feedback is essential in implementing effective public policy. Camrosa will actively solicit customer feedback to continually improve upon the quality of services provided by the District.

## **5. High Quality**



Water quality is directly related to the sources of the water and State regulations governing the various classes of water distributed within the District. Local groundwater is high in nitrates and is generally blended with imported State Water Project water to improve quality. Local Surface water and Recycled water is high in chlorides and each is unusable for some agricultural applications. Water quality can be altered and Camrosa will seek to

maximize the use of local supplies by improving their quality.

**Strategy 5.1. Uniform Potable water quality** – Some pressure zones within the District receive State Water Project water while other areas receive various blends of imported and groundwater. Camrosa will seek opportunities to use new technologies that will improve the quality of groundwater and provide more uniformity in the potable water delivered throughout the District.

**Strategy 5.2. Trade Poor Quality for higher quality water** – Camrosa will seek opportunities to upgrade the quality of its water through substitution of higher quality water in both its potable and non-potable distribution systems.

**Strategy 5.3. Improve Non-Potable water quality** – The hot summer months lead to algae growth in the surface water delivered within the District. Chloride levels in surface and recycled water often exceed the levels acceptable for some agricultural purposes. Camrosa will seek ways to reduce suspended solids and chloride levels in the water delivered to non-potable customers.

## **Provide Prudent Management and Maintenance of District Assets**

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### **6. Strengthen Financial Position**

While Camrosa is relatively strong financially, a number of options are available that will further improve the District's financial position. Development of a rate structure that provides for Capital Replacement of aging infrastructure is necessary to maintain the long-term integrity of the various water treatment and distribution systems, the wastewater collection system and Water Reclamation Facility. Capital outlays will be required to meet new water demand and wastewater services and to further expand the non-potable water distribution system.

**Strategy 6.1. Develop Capital Financing Plan** - As a product of the master planning process, Camrosa will develop a long-range Capital Financing Plan that will identify the District's future capital needs and the source of funds that will generate the necessary capital.

**Strategy 6.2. Reduce reliance on Property Tax** – The Legislative Analyst Office has attempted to permanently transfer all water and wastewater special districts' property tax dollars to counties in an effort to balance the state budget deficit. Camrosa will proactively prepare for the eventual loss of the property tax revenue by developing a rates structure that does not depend upon that revenue to meet projected expenses.

**Strategy 6.3. Improve Debt/Service Ratios** – Camrosa's ability to enter into debt financing is governed to a large extent by its bond rating. The District will adopt financial policies that improve upon the existing debt/service ratios and exceed minimum ratios desired by bond insurance companies.

**Strategy 6.4. Improve Reserve Position** – Camrosa will establish a new Reserve Policy and identify the process and timeline for attaining desired reserve levels.

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## 7. Improve Systems Operation and Maintenance



The backbone of Camrosa's Potable Water Distribution system was laid in the mid- to late-1960s and the Wastewater collection system was installed as the Mission Oaks area developed from the 1970's through early 2000. The Water Reclamation facility, which was commissioned in 1997 and the Non-potable distribution system, mostly installed after 2000, are much newer. All, however, will require increasing maintenance as they age and all can benefit from further automation to reduce the cost of manual interface and to improve water quality.

**Strategy 7.1. Budget for System Maintenance and Improvements** – Camrosa will be proactive in establishing budgets and rate structures that provide for timely capital replacement, infrastructure maintenance and system improvements. New technology will be used wherever possible to automate operations and improve system efficiency.

## 8. Fully Develop Staff Potential

Camrosa recognizes that staff is a valuable asset and highly qualified individuals are the key to efficient and effective operations and good customer service. The District desires to retain its highly skilled staff, provide growth opportunities through continuing education and cross training and recruit highly qualified replacements as the current workforce begins to retire.

**Strategy 8.1. Improve Expertise of Onboard Staff** – Camrosa will provide growth-enhancing opportunities for employees that will allow them to use and develop their full capacities. The District will seek to link our employees' individual strengths, interests, values, developmental needs, and personal style with the organization's major strategic needs such as staffing levels, skills, knowledge, and experience. This process will be accomplished through regularly scheduled job performance/career planning evaluations.

**Strategy 8.2. Conduct Succession Planning** – Camrosa will develop a plan to preserve corporate knowledge and provide a seamless transition as employees enter retirement.

**Strategy 8.3. Enhance Future Labor Pool** - Collaborating with local water purveyors, colleges and the University, Camrosa will evaluate

development of an internship program to encourage career development in the water and wastewater industry.

## **Maintain Public Awareness and Confidence and Honor the Public Trust**

### **9. Educate Customers**

A recent survey conducted by Camrosa revealed substantial misconceptions about the challenges faced by Camrosa related to water reliability and water



quality and what the future holds with regard to water availability and cost. Public awareness and education regarding the District's challenges, goals and strategies is fundamental to the success of drawing

support of Camrosa's customers in implementing infrastructure improvements and developing new rate structures.

**Strategy 9.1. Develop Public Outreach tools** – Camrosa will develop effective public outreach tools and media to educate the District's customers about water resources and future costs.

**Strategy 9.2. Improve Website** - Camrosa will renovate the District's website to develop an interactive customer support tool and provide a more educational experience for its customers.

**Strategy 9.3. Leverage MWD Education Program** – MWD provides water conservation, educational outreach resources and conservation rebates for residential, commercial and industrial customers. Currently, Camrosa utilizes MWD's rebates and California Friendly landscape workshops to benefit the District's customers. Through development of public outreach, Camrosa will leverage the programs already available to enhance education relating to water resources and water conservation.

### **10. Protect Water Supplies**

Local water supplies are Camrosa's most valuable asset and the preservation of those supplies for future generations among the highest priorities of the District. Diligence will be required to ensure that water volume does not diminish and

improvement of water quality is implemented. Transportation of salts off the watershed will ensure long-term use of groundwater assets.

**Strategy 10.1. Implement Phase 1 of the Renewable Water Resource Management Plan (RWRMP)** – The RWRMP is an integrated set of strategies to reduce reliance on imported water supplies while improving water quality through the managed transport of salts out of the watershed. Phase 1 (of 4 phases) is critical to address the immediate water quality problems of the lower Calleguas Creek Watershed. Camrosa will cooperate with local agencies to implement those strategies outlined in Phase 1 of the project.

### **11. Exceed all Regulatory Standards**

Regulatory policy establishes minimum water quality standards for delivery of potable water and required standards that must be met for disposal of wastewater. New policy is being developed that will establish standards for recycled water. The public places its trust in Camrosa to not only meet the minimum standards established by regulation but to deliver water of the highest possible quality. The public, too, trusts that Camrosa will be proactive in protecting our natural resources.



**Strategy 11.1. Exceed all Regulatory Standards** – Camrosa shall seek to not only meet minimum water quality standards but to exceed all current and future regulatory water standards whenever possible. The District shall cooperate fully with regulatory agencies and actively seek to preserve and protect our vital resources.