Providing Sustainable Leadership
County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works - Strategic Plan 2012
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*Front cover picture: The Department of Public Works’ headquarters building in the city of Alhambra*
Chapter 1
Strategic Plan Framework

The Strategic Plan Framework is the blueprint that identifies the core elements of the Plan itself and the correlation between them.

At the top level of the Framework are the mission, vision, and values that define our commitment as an organization to the communities we serve.

The Strategic Focus Areas prioritize actions necessary to address challenges to meeting our mission.

At the Framework’s foundation, the re-defined core service areas and strategic roles describe how we will deliver on the commitment we have made to our customers and stakeholders.
Strategic Plan Framework

Our Commitment

- Mission
- Vision
- Values

Strategic Focus Areas

- Manage Risks
- Invest in Sustainability
- Innovate
- Strengthen the DPW Team
- Tell the DPW Story

Core Service Areas

- Public Buildings
- Water Resources
- Waste Management
- Transportation
- Development Services
- Emergency Management

Goals
The broad outcomes Public Works strives to achieve

Results

Strategy and Action
Chapter 2
Our Commitment

We have a passion for service, and pledge to the people of Los Angeles County to protect and enrich their daily lives and to place their needs first and foremost. Our commitment provides us with a mission and vision that give meaning to our work, identifies our underlying values, and defines the reason for our existence as an organization and the vital role we play within the community.

Our Commitment: It’s who we are, what we do, and how we do it.

Our Mission

We provide public infrastructure and municipal services to protect and enrich the daily lives of over ten million people in Los Angeles County

Our Vision

Creating communities…sustaining life

Our Values

Safety, Integrity, Teamwork, Transparency, Excellence, Our Employees, Sustainability
Defining Our Commitment – **Our Mission**

We provide public infrastructure and municipal services to protect and enrich the daily lives of over ten million people in Los Angeles County.
Defining Our Commitment – Our Vision

Our vision statement defines the preferred future that we aspire to achieve by ensuring the long-term health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Youngsters enjoy a hands-on nature experience during a visit to the Dominguez Gap Wetlands.
Defining Our Commitment – **Our Values**

Values are the underlying principles through which we act to fulfill our mission and achieve our vision. They define the fundamental ethics, behaviors and beliefs that guide the actions and decisions of the Public Works team. Applying our values in our words and in our deeds will ensure a climate of unity and trust throughout the organization and in our relationships with customers and stakeholders.
...Is it safe?

We will work to protect our employees and communities from injuries and hazardous conditions. No job is so urgent or important that it be performed in an unsafe manner. Always think safety first.

Bridge Maintenance Crew member Jose Cisneros suspended from the Gerald Desmond Bridge in Long Beach.
INTEGRITY

We will strive to uphold the public’s trust by being honest, competent, and consistent in our beliefs and actions. We will hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct.

...What’s the right thing to do?
...How can we make this happen?

We will work together to achieve common goals. We will share information freely and cooperate in an atmosphere of interdependence. We will collaborate with our customers, stakeholders, and partner agencies and actively engage them in our decisions and initiatives.

The Department’s national champion dragon boat team, comprised of volunteer crew members representing many divisions.

TEAMWORK
We will share ideas and information freely and promote a culture of openness and transparency in all our work. We will facilitate access to information and actively engage the community, partner agencies, and stakeholders in our decisions and initiatives. We will respect the views of others and seek first to understand and then to be understood.

Principal Engineer Terri Grant, second from right, listens intently as concerned residents participate in a breakout session during a Department-sponsored public forum on sediment management.
...Is there a better way?

We are dedicated to providing high quality, appropriate, professional, and timely responses for all our services. We will seek and embrace effective leadership, innovative solutions and creativity, and support an orientation for change and progressive thought. We will encourage and reward efficiency and ingenuity.

Public Works employees take center stage with senior County officials after receiving a coveted Los Angeles County Productivity and Quality Commission Top Ten Award for their outstanding efforts on the Countywide Address Management System.
We will strive to be leaders in the organization and to treat all people with dignity, respect, and fairness. We believe our employees are our most valuable resource and will invest in their growth. Each person’s contribution is essential to our success.

Employee growth and success are celebrated through many recognition programs, including the Employee of the Month Award. Pictured clockwise from the top are former employees of the month Lizbeth Calderon, Matthew Dubiel, Irena Guilmette, Gary Hilliard, and Oscar Enriquez.
...What is the best for the long term?

We will act with foresight to ensure the long-term health and well-being of the communities we serve. We will seek a balanced approach to deliver multi-benefit projects, programs, and services in an economically, environmentally, and socially responsible way.

Residents enjoy the Dominguez Gap Wetlands multi-benefit facility.
Chapter 3

Responding to Emerging Issues and Challenges

A strategic plan serves as a bridge between present day reality and the future vision an organization aspires to achieve. Spanning this gap requires not only a vivid picture of the desired long term destination, but also a clear understanding of the organization’s current circumstances as shaped by the challenges and opportunities it faces. At the beginning of this strategic planning process, Public Works conducted an extensive Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the numerous internal and external factors presently influencing the department and the environment in which it operates. Through this analysis, we identified and focused in on critical driving forces and trends that, in coming years, will have the greatest impact on the organization:

- Increasing regulations and costs, coupled with diminishing revenues and resources, impact our ability to deliver core services, meet customer expectations, and maintain what we already have.
- Increasing demand for value (accountability) and transparency in government (access to information), coupled with decreasing public trust, create demand for more accountability and transparency in our decision making and how we spend taxpayer funds.
- Increasing population, resource consumption and waste, coupled with increasingly scarce and costly resources, threaten our ability to provide sustainable, balanced solutions for the long-term well-being of our communities.
- Increasing liability claims and litigation costs affect our ability to manage within existing budgets and resources.
- Aging, deteriorating and obsolete infrastructure, along with rising expectations of what infrastructure should deliver, challenge our ability to meet public expectations.
Providing Sustainable Leadership

While these issues are within our capacity to act upon effectively, new realities mean we can no longer afford to manage as we have in the past. The adoption of a more modern sustainable business approach will enable us to increase efficiencies, reduce costs, and improve our effectiveness. By focusing on the critical issues, Public Works can greatly enhance its ability to provide sustainable solutions for the communities we serve.

Sustainable leadership is not a recent fad but a long standing principle of governance that has guided others in the past. Nearly half a century ago, President John F. Kennedy said, “It is our task in our time and in our generation to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours.”

In this same spirit, the American Public Works Association (APWA) more recently established the APWA Center for Sustainability. According to the APWA, “Sustainability in public works means seeking a balanced approach for a vibrant community today and tomorrow, and it is accomplished by the efficient delivery of infrastructure in an environmentally and socially responsible way that ensures the best economic choice in the long term.”

By adopting the innovative thinking and actions required to provide sustainable leadership, Public Works can achieve its vision of “creating communities... sustaining life”.

“It is our task in our time and in our generation to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours.”

-- President John F. Kennedy
Five Strategic Focus Areas

To address these issues, we have developed five Strategic Focus Areas to use as a compass to guide our efforts. In the years to come, these five Strategic Focus Areas will serve as primary drivers around which all our actions will be organized and assessed. In effect, they will function as organizing principles used for translating the commitments we have made in our mission, vision, and values into the desired results and actions we will undertake to fulfill them.

1. **Manage Risks**
   Promote and refine the Departmentwide identification of control measures to lessen the probability of harmful consequences and to maintain safety in all operations.

2. **Invest in Sustainability**
   Preserve the long-term well-being of our communities and the environment by investing in and promoting economically sound, socially desirable, and environmentally healthy projects, programs, and services to achieve multiple benefits.

3. **Innovate**
   Explore the art of the possible, and seek innovations and ideas that change the world, create efficiencies, reduce costs, and improve effectiveness.

4. **Strengthen the Public Works Team**
   Empower, challenge and invest in our workforce, promote a collaborative and inclusive work environment, and strengthen multi-agency relationships and partnerships.

5. **Tell the Public Works Story**
   Proactively communicate to communities and elected leadership the vital role and importance of public works in people’s daily lives.
Chapter 4
Fulfilling Our Commitment – Core Service Areas

In order to fulfill the commitments we have made, we are adopting a new framework that will define our operations into six core service areas to better reflect how our customers experience our services.

By re-framing and aligning our work in terms of these core service areas, we will be engaged in managing whole systems, rather than separate functional units. This will enable us to more effectively deliver these core services by working together as integrated teams across divisional lines.

Each core service area has a specific strategic role and mission statement that supports the larger overall mission of Public Works. These areas and mission statements are:

- 1. Public Buildings
- 2. Water Resources
- 3. Waste Management
- 4. Transportation
- 5. Development Services
- 6. Emergency Management

How Citizens Experience Us
Core Service Areas Mission Statements

1. Public Buildings
   We design and deliver high performing public facilities for people and services to thrive.

2. Waste Management
   We lead, inspire, and support our communities toward a healthy, waste-free future.

3. Water Resources
   We provide sustainable water supplies and healthy watersheds while reducing flood risk for our communities.

4. Transportation
   We provide safe, clean, efficient transportation choices and rights-of-way to enhance mobility and quality of life.

5. Development Services
   We help people build their dreams and ensure safe and healthy homes and communities.

6. Emergency Management
   As public safety partners and first responders, we maintain a highly trained and equipped workforce to respond to and recover from daily incidents, local emergencies, and major disasters.
Chapter 5

Fulfilling Our Commitment – Measuring Success

All of the elements of the Strategic Plan are designed to work together to enable us to fulfill and sustain our new vision and mission. In order to successfully achieve these objectives, Public Works is organizing itself in terms of core service areas to better reflect how our customers experience our services. To help reinforce these core service areas as an organizing principle, we are measuring our success by applying a new management tool known as “Quad Sheets” that are designed to target and monitor the vital results customers care about the most within each of the Core Service Areas. The application of Quad Sheets will facilitate the successful implementation of core service area programs and the overall Strategic Plan by providing a disciplined, systematic focus on setting, evaluating, and communicating our progress.

Each Quad Sheet addresses four key questions:

1. What results are we striving to achieve for our residents?
   Goals and Desired Results

2. What specific data indicates our progress at achieving these results?
   Status

3. What are the results telling us?
   Analysis

4. What must we do now to make the results even better or to correct a problem?
   Actions
By answering these questions, the Quad Sheets complete the final three elements of the Strategic Plan Framework:

- **Goals**, which are the broad outcomes Public Works strives to achieve through each Core Service Area program.

- **Desired Results**, which are specific milestones as defined by a measurable target, which need to be achieved to progress toward a Goal, and

- **Actions**, which are the methods, resources, processes, and systems Public Works will carry out to achieve its Goals and Desired Results.

Quad Sheets of the Six core service areas can be found in the Appendix.