

**SANITARY DISTRICT NO. 5
OF MARIN COUNTY**

STRATEGIC PLAN

JULY 1, 2026



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Approved: May 21, 2026

Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County

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1. Introduction, History and Overview

Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County was formed in 1922 primarily as a refuse district. In the 1960's a primary treatment plant was constructed at its current location at 2001 Paradise Drive. In the 1980's the District added on a secondary treatment portion to the plant to comply with new local and federal standards of the 1972 Clean Water Act. During that period state and federal grant funding was available for those upgrades which the District took advantage of. Also during the 1980's upgrade the Main Plant treatment facility was designed with a new commonly shared out fall into the SF Bay. The District shares an outfall with SASM (Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin) The District is also responsible for dechlorinating SASM's effluent prior to discharge into the receiving waters of the state of California. In the mid 1980's, a smaller, secondary treatment package plant was constructed on the eastern side of the Tiburon peninsula to serve the unincorporated area of Tiburon, known as the Paradise Cove plant. The District was able to get about 30+ years out of both plants before they were due for major upgrades and were upgraded to improve efficiencies and reliability.

In 2005 the City of Belvedere sewage collection system was annexed to the District. When this task was completed, a new sewer rate had to be established for the City of Belvedere residents, as it was treated as a separate zone per the annexation agreement with Belvedere. In that annexation agreement, the City of Belvedere negotiated keeping the sewer service revenue portion of the property tax (ad valorem) and also transferred over a loan that was used for the rehabilitation of sewer lines in the Belvedere service area, thus the perceived higher sewer service rates in the City of Belvedere c. As of July 1, 2023 the District adopted a single sewer service rate for the District. Beginning July 1, 2024 the single sewer service rate will be \$2,033 Per EDU(\$1534 for ad-valorem credited parcels). Prior to annexation into Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County, an investigation of the entire sewer collection was performed by Harris & Associates to assist the District in determining the condition of the collection system and the required repairs that would be needed in the future. A similar study was also performed for the collection system owned by the District for the Tiburon zone. Those studies assisted in determining the rates that are in place today.

In 2009, the smaller Paradise Cove plant was upgraded and enlarged to accommodate a growing population on the eastern Tiburon peninsula. Treatment plant capacity went from 20,000 gallons per day up to 40,000 gallons per day, with a peak flow max of 100,000 gallons per day. In conjunction with the treatment plant upgrades, the Seafirth Estates subdivision constructed 2 pump stations to serve the residents in that area, in order for them (Seafirth Estates) to cease operation of the Seafirth Estates RBC (Rotating Biological Contactor) plant that had reached its useful life. Both pump stations were turned over to the District for ownership and operation after a year of successful operation. In 2018 the District worked with San Francisco State Romberg Center in successfully negotiating an outside sewer service agreement which allowed the university to decommission several septic tanks serving the property and allowed for the construction of a new pump station that the university owns and operates to pump into the Districts publicly available sewer system located on Paradise Drive (Vogt Extension Line). SFSU Romberg began service on January 1, 2019.

In 2014 the District invested \$12 million dollars to upgrade and enhance the Main Treatment plant, which serves the City of Belvedere and the residents eastward of Gilmartin Drive in the Town of Tiburon. The electrical system of the plant was upgraded with a more reliable up-to-date system, major treatment plant equipment was replaced with newer, more energy-efficient equipment, and additional wet weather storage was configured into the project using the existing facilities.

In 2017 the District completed a 2-year phased project at the Mar West Pump Station in Tiburon worth 1.5 million dollars. The work involved converting an older dry pit pump station to a wet pit submersible style pump station. It also involved the installation of Diesel standby generator and all new electrical control panels and meters. This pump station is the largest pump station in the Tiburon service area.

In 2021 the District completed a 2.2 million Dollar force main installation project in which it installed a new sewer force main serving the city of Belvedere starting at the Cove Road Pump Station #1 moving towards Beach road then down Juanita Ln to its terminus point on Tiburon Blvd near the roundabout. Part of this project included a bypass line serving Tiburon Pump station #6 located on the corner of Tiburon Blvd and Beach Road.

The District has a total of 24 pump stations in its service area and 153,120 lateral feet (29 miles) of gravity sewer lines that range in size from 6'' to 24'' and a total of 26,400 lateral feet (5 miles) of pressure force main. The District is governed by a 5-member Board of Directors, while the day-to-day management is the responsibility of the District Manager, and his or her staff of 11 employees.

Many Districts have different priorities, goals and challenges that face them day-to-day and in the future. That is why this District seeks to lay out its priorities, address its concerns and prioritize its future challenges with the update of this strategic plan. This planning would also assist future Board Members and District Managers with staying on-course in providing the best, safest, and most reliable collection conveyance and treatment of sewage for the Tiburon/Belvedere peninsula residents.

The strategic plan shall reflect the direction, insight, and expertise of the Board Members and its District Staff and shall provide for the overall strategic direction of the District.



1920's era –Tiburon Peninsula- Location of future Waste Water Treatment Plant



1960's era- Tiburon Peninsula – Wastewater Treatment Plant in service- Primary Treatment only



1980's era- Tiburon Peninsula- Secondary Treatment additions to Wastewater Treatment Plant



2014 – Tiburon Peninsula –Main Plant Rehabilitation at Wastewater Treatment Plant



1980's era Unincorporated East Tiburon -Paradise Cove Wastewater Treatment Plant



2010 Unincorporated East Tiburon- Upgraded Paradise Cove Wastewater Treatment Plant

2. Mission Statement and Values

Mission Statement

Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County is a special district dedicated to the protection of public health and the environment through effective and economical collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of wastewater that meets or exceeds all local, state, and federal regulations.

SD5 Values

Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County Board Members and Staff operate under a set of core values in respect to all District Functions. That set of values include:

- Public Health & Sanitation
- Excellent Customer Service
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Public Transparency
- Work Place Safety
- Effective/Reliable Long Term Capital, Operation, Maintenance, Fiscal Planning
- Valued, Competent, Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Work Force
- Effective Communication and Decision Making
- Environmental Stewardship

3. Accomplishments

SD5 Accomplishments

A generalized list of recent major accomplishments from 2012-2024:

Main Treatment Plant:

- Invested \$12 Million dollars and rehabilitated the Main Treatment Plant: this was a 2-year project, which improved treatment plant efficiencies and reliability
- Updated the Sewer Use Ordinance to include sewer lateral inspection and repair mechanism to reduce I&I from the collection system
- Began pump station controls replacement program: 20 of 22 pump stations now have new standardized control panels –Panels have been raised per Baywave sea level report study
- 34,800 Linear feet of pipe have been replaced/rehabilitated since 2006
- Completed the Point Tiburon Sewer Line acquisition (a 30+yr dispute/unresolved item)
- Completed the Mar West Phase 1 and Phase 2 Pump Station Upgrade - \$1.5 Million Invested to this site.
- Completed an LED lighting upgrade as part of our continued efforts to conserve energy & keep costs down
- Completed Bio-Solids Management Plan and negotiated disposal contract with Lystek Intl.
- Completed Cove Road Force Main Project- Installation of 2100 LF of 14” HDPE Pressure Force Main.
- Completed Collection System Master Plan
- Completed Alternative Energy Options Study
- Completed another successful NPDES renewal 2023-2028 Order No R2-2023-0018
- Completed the rehab of the File Storage/Ops Control Room building to further safe keep files in clean storage and to improve operational performance for plant operations & maintenance
- Completed the Digester Cleaning and Rehabilitation Project.

Paradise Cove Plant:

- Acceptance of the Seafirth Estates subdivision pump stations: allowed for the decommissioning of Seafirth Estates’ Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC) treatment plant
- Acceptance of the Paradise Drive Sewer Line Extension (PDSLE) Line Sewer line: allowed sewer service connections for 52 homes allowing people to decommission septic systems in the unincorporated area of Tiburon an connecting to the public sewer
- Acceptance of Vogt sewer line extension at Paradise Cove which will allow for an additional 12 connections and the connection of the Romberg Tiburon Center
- Established an Outside Sewer Service Agreement with SFSU Romberg Center for Sewer Service
- Paradise Cove Treatment Plant upgrade and installation of new discharge pipe and diffuser: treatment plant capacity doubled and treatment efficiency improvement
- Completed another successful NPDES renewal 2026-2031 Order No R2-2026-00XX

Finance & HR:

- Major work on the District's Finances and Capital Improvement Program in FY2022/2023: this led to difficult decisions to increase sewer rates for the prolonged safety and compliance of both treatment plants and its collection system. Prior to 2023, the sewer rates had not been raised in 8+ years
- Funding for the California Employee Retirement Benefit Trust (CERBT) for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is 100% funded as of FY2025/2026
- Paid off CalPERS side fund and SD5's unfunded accrued liability, through 2023
- Updated the SD5 Connection Fee Schedule 2024
- Created a District wide succession plan
- Financial Policy & Procedure Manual -Updated in 2024
- Updated the SD5 Reserve Policy and created a new CalPERS Reserve Trust in order to fund future CalPERS' inability to obtain target returns in their investment strategies
- Refinanced the 2012 MPR Revenue Bonds
- Completed Staffing Evaluation Study 2022
- Negotiated updated Memorandum of Understanding 2026
- Streamlined Payroll Functions, using technology to simplify operations 2023
- Reduced staffing from 13 FTE to 12 FTE through the creation of a new Job Title (administrative services manager) and hiring outside vendor to perform bookkeeping duties, work is limited to 5 days per month.
- Adopting a single sewer service rate and connection fee and eliminating zones simplified financial reporting and accounting

4. Current Conditions, Future Challenges & Opportunities

Current Conditions:

The District overall income is around as of FY26-27 is projected at \$10.3 million dollars. Total operations and maintenance costs, which includes salary, is averaging around \$6.1 million dollars (not including CalPERS unfunded liabilities) with about 3% inflation each year. Currently, Capital Expenditures run anywhere between \$1-2. million dollars yearly including debt service with FY26-27 projected at \$5million primarily due to completion of the Digester rehab project and billing for the Cove Road Pump Station Rehabilitation Project. The Districts net operating/capital income varies between \$500k-\$1 million dollars each year depending on Capital Projects identified for the year. That is the current overall trend of the District finances as of 2026. Please note that both treatment plants were improved in 2010 and 2014 respectively so the need for costly capital expenditures at both of these facilities will mostly likely not occur for another 5-7 years.

The current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, for both facilities, have been in compliance (violation free) year-in and year-out since 2008 with our current standard of treatment and configuration of both facilities. Labor, Electricity, and Chemicals are the costliest items for operating and maintaining both facilities. The District has completed many projects to date to reduce costs, such as installing automated Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) software for improved reliability and to keep labor costs down, installing new energy-efficient equipment like high speed neuros turbo blowers that are controlled with variable frequency drives (vfd's) new motor control centers which operate large pumps also through the control of vfd's & completing a LED lighting upgrade throughout the plant

to reduce PG&E costs; and performing annual competitive bidding on chemical purchasing contracts to ensure we get the lowest price from the most competitive suppliers.

In 2013, CalPERS enacted new retirement formulas for new-hire employees into the CalPERS' retirement system (Public Employees' Pension Reform Act - PEPRA), which keeps our employee overhead costs down. Currently the District has 4 employees under the Classic Member formula of 2.7% @ 55 formula, and 8 employees under the PEPRA formula of 2.0% @ 62. The District has paid its CalPERS pension liabilities up through fiscal year 2024. The Districts OPEB Other Post-Employment Benefits (retiree health) is 100% funded as of 2026. The District currently has 6 retirees receiving OPEB. The Board of Directors receive compensation of \$150 for attendance at each Board Meeting; no other benefits are granted to the Board of Directors.

As for Capital Improvement Projects , the Districts main function is to provide high quality collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of the wastewater in the service area. A main priority currently for the District is the rehabilitation of the districts collection system – an ongoing 10 year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is in place to replace/rehabilitate the collection system based on video reports conducted in 2006 and 2011. The District recently completed a Collection System Master Plan to further assist and guide the District along in prioritizing the Capital Projects forecasted for the next 13 years. Also, the District most recently completed a project of standardizing the control panels at 22- out of the 24 pump stations, servicing the areas and raising them per the Marin BayWAVE Marin Bay Waterfront Adaptation Vulnerability Evaluation

The District when feasible, participates in regional programs/partnerships for the benefit of rate payers and the overall enhancement of services in Marin. Some examples include, mutual aid services agreements which allows the District to call on other sewer agencies that participate in the group for assistance with equipment/staffing in times of need, the Marin County Public Education Group, which collaborates with other agencies in the Districts efforts to inform the rate payers and the general public about pollution prevention, and monthly general manager meetings with the managers of the 5 other Treatment plant agencies in Marin to share ideas and assist one another on critical issues facing the agency or the wastewater community.

Future Challenges and Opportunities:

The District has several challenges in the near and far future. Some of those items include:

Wastewater Treatment System:

- Nutrient limits in National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits - requiring expensive upgrades to facilities currently estimated at \$2.5 Million dollars.
- Possible Toxicity Limits in future NPDES permits- requiring expensive upgrades to facilities.
- More stringent requirements from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and California Air Resource Board (CARB) -New Sources-Emergency Generators and Portable Pumps and large vehicles and forklifts must comply with new standards.
- Increased electrical costs due to provider raising rates.
- Increasing chemical costs- due to unpredictable markets/raw materials availability
- WWTPs Master planning
- Opportunities to enhance collaboration with neighboring agencies on larger items like laboratory service, safety training services and instrumentation services.

Customer Service:

- Live website updating of important District activities -increased awareness of district activities and accomplishments for customers.
- LinkedIn Profile for continued professional outreach of District Activities and accomplishments.
- Additional Ark Newspaper Articles

HR and Employee Development:

- Encourage staff to cross train in Operations and Maintenance
- Succession planning-training for Management/Supervisory Positions

Renewable Energies and Continued Energy Reduction:

- Investigate all possible paths to energy savings.
- Study and report on potential Alternative Energy Project for Main Plant (solar)

Organization, Budget and Finance:

- Sewer Rate Sustainability
- CalPERS Pension Sustainability
- Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Sustainability
- Complete scanning project
- Clean up and organize current District administrative database.
- Create standards and file storage location, and file storage paths for staff to save work
- Connection Fee Rates (to perform every 5 years)
- Contracted Services (evaluate savings compared to FTE)
- Sewer Rate Study- (to complete every 5 years)

Facilities and Operations:

- Review of Emergency Planning/Preparedness:
- Planning for future Treatment Plant Rehabilitation
- Continuing partnerships through Mutual Aid Agreements with neighboring agencies

5. SD5 Goals

The SD5 Strategic Plan is organized according to six major goals which assumes Financial Stability as the overall goal:

- **Goal One: *Protecting Public Health and Employee Safety***
- **Goal Two: *Infrastructure Reliability***
- **Goal Three: *Fiscal Accountability***
- **Goal Four: *Operational Capability***
- **Goal Five: *Employee Development***
- **Goal Six: *Resource Recovery/Energy Sustainability***

The Goal areas represent Board members overall top priorities. Within each Goal area, Board Members identified their top priorities and programs which are summarized on the following pages.

Goal One: Protecting Public Health and Employee Safety

The Districts main purpose for existing is for the sole purpose of protecting public health through safe and efficient collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal of wastewater generated in the Districts service area, and to ensure a safe working environment for all staff.

The SD5 Board established the following key objectives:

- Maintain Adequate Staffing and Training of Staff
- Strive to eliminate all SSO's
- Compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Bay Area Air Quality Management Board (BAAQMD) permit requirements
- Maintain Robust Safety Program
- Proactive with our Maintenance Activities

Goal Two: Infrastructure Reliability

In order to protect public health, the Districts infrastructure reliability goes a long way in achieving that primary purpose. Good, sound planning and management of the District's facilities must be in order, while preventive maintenance must also be a top priority.

The SD5 Board established the following key objectives:

- Maintain and evaluate the on-going 10-year Capital Improvement Plan annually
- Maintain a comprehensive CMMS system for tracking and forecasting of future Capital work and to maintain current equipment in service
- Clean 50% of SD5's sewer lines each year- Entire system should be cleaned every 2 years
- Develop Plan for abandoned emergency outfall line at the Main Plant
- Prepare for conducting a WWTP's Masterplan "a long-range strategic document that outlines how SD5s sewage treatment facilities and collection systems should evolve over decades to meet future demand, comply with regulations, and adapt to environmental and climate challenges"

Goal Three: Fiscal Accountability

To maintain a well-operating and functional District, we must be conscious of its financial obligations, by budgeting accurately and managing the operations of the District fittingly in order to maintain financial stability.

The SD5 Board established the following key objectives:

- Ensure sewer rates are adequate for operation of the District
- Review CalPERS unfunded liabilities annually
- Ensure Achievable CIP Plan is in-line with current level of funding
- Review Sewer Rates and Connection Fees (2027-2028)
- Ensure Adequate Sewer Reserves in-line with Reserve Policy
- Review California Employee Retirement Benefit Trust (CERBT) Trust Funding (delete fully funded?)
- Evaluate & Apply for Grant Funding when applicable
- Review MOU obligations regarding Classic and PEPRA and keeping pensions costs down
- Providing high-quality service to our constituents and keeping costs down to the greatest extent possible

Goal Four: Operational Capability

Evaluation of operational strategies to ensure satisfactory collection, conveyance and treatment for possible reductions in operational costs.

The SD5 Board established the following key objectives:

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Compliance
- Reduce Inflow and Infiltration (I&I)
- Reclaim Water Program Review for use in sewer cleaning activities.
- Maintain good partnership with the Sewer Agency of Southern Marin (SASM) (District performs dichlorination services for SASM- share common outfall pipe)
- Continue collaboration with MASS Group Marin Association of Sanitary Sewers group

Begin evaluation of Paradise Cove Plant Conversion to pump station and requirements to do so.

Goal Five: Employee Development

A well-trained and hard-working staff leads to operational success, and a safe and fun work environment. In order to maintain that type of culture and workspace, employee development plays a key role.

The SD5 Board established the following key objectives:

- Maintain Adequate Staffing levels
- Continue Cross training activities
- Continue incentivizing staff to achieve highest level of certifications (CWEA & SWRCB)
- Continuing staff development through training, mentoring, conference and workshop attendance.
- Support staff volunteering with CWEA local and state sections.
- Maintain and update the succession plan as necessary

Goal Six: Resource Recovery and Energy Reduction

With the operation of two wastewater treatment plants, the District collects, treats, and disposes of tons of organic matter each year. That organic matter, which is eliminated during the treatment process, requires a lot of energy to remove it. It also generates energy in the form of methane gas, during the treatment process, which is currently used for heating purposes. Other forms of re-use exist and should be explored. The disposal of bio-solids is becoming increasingly difficult with new regulations and the restrictions of landfills. A comprehensive plan for disposal should be a key objective.

The SD5 Board established the following key objectives:

- Develop Energy Saving Master Plan
- Seek Economical Go Green options/projects
- Continue working with local agencies to seek additional Bio-Solids disposal opportunities

6. Strategic Plan Review and Monitoring

Board members and staff agree that the strategic plan should be reviewed annually, in conjunction with the budget, making review process. Annual reports shall be prepared by SD5 staff for presentation to the Board Members in order to explore top priorities in more depth, as needed or requested by the Board.