Office of the Deputy City Administrator
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Public Works

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October 8, 2024

Dear Mayor Wheeler,

Thank you for the opportunity to assess the feasibility of implementing a One Water approach within the City of Portland (City). Following your directive on August 14, 2024, the Public Works Service Area (PWSA) began exploring innovative solutions that benefit our environment, community, and government. Along with relevant City partners, we examined "*how Portland could adapt the One Water model to fit our city, what challenges we would need to address, and what timeline would be realistic.*" Through this process, we gained valuable insights into enhancing collaboration within our service area and across the City. I am pleased to share the consultant's report and present my recommendations for implementing a One Water approach, for your consideration.

Understanding One Water

One Water is a holistic approach to water resource management that transcends traditional administration models, valuing all sources of water —tap, river and stream, stormwater, aquifer, or sewer—in a collaborative and inclusive manner. This framework promotes intentional collaboration among utilities, businesses, industries, and community, fostering connections within the watershed and delivering better social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

The enclosed report and implementation roadmap emphasize the urgent, multifaceted challenges facing our drinking, storm, and wastewater systems today. These challenges include rising regulatory demands, insufficient funding, fragmented services, aging infrastructure, affordability concerns, climate impacts, etc. Addressing these issues requires innovative approaches and collaborative action. The One Water framework offers a comprehensive strategy that enables cities, communities, and utilities to work together in overcoming these challenges.

Project purpose

The One Water Feasibility Study serves as a preliminary assessment to evaluate the potential applicability of a One Water management approach for the City of Portland.

Key drivers

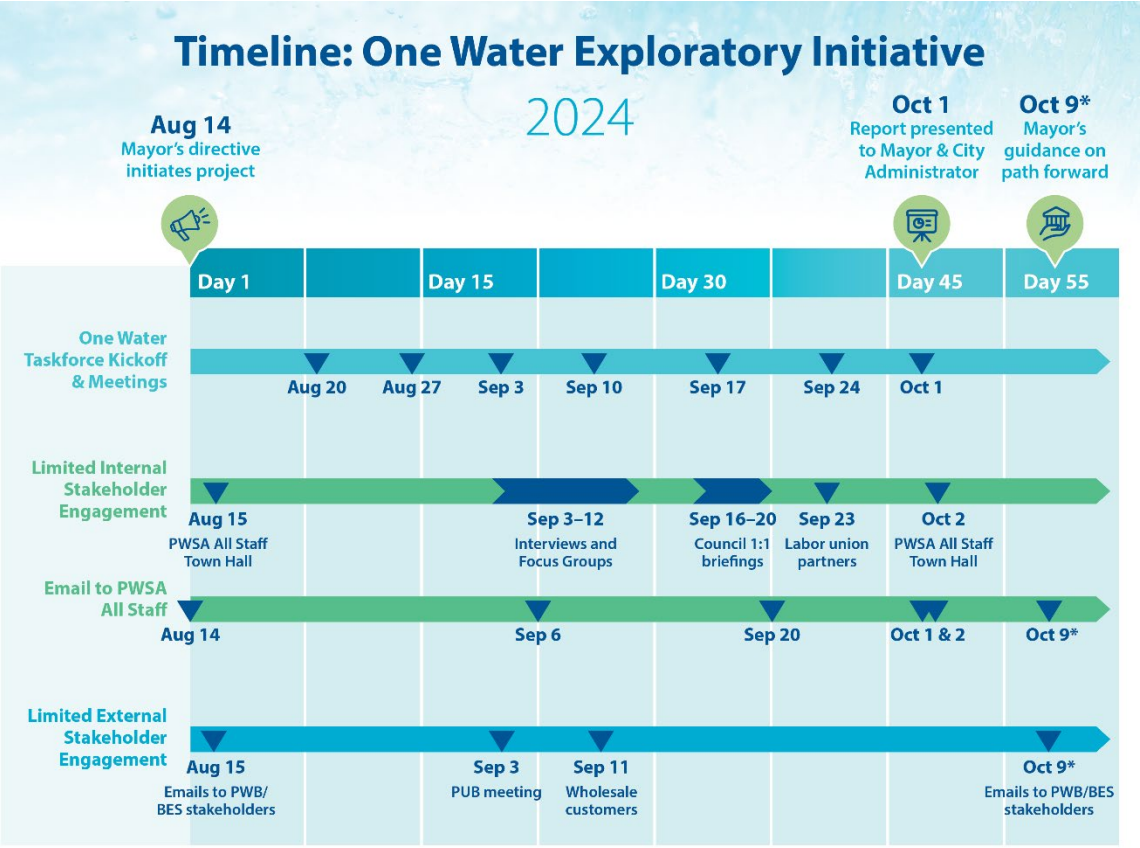
The Mayor, City Administrator, and PWSA leadership have identified several key drivers for this project:

1. **Enhancing long-term financial sustainability**: Strengthening the financial health of the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) and Bureau of Environmental Services (BES).
2. **Improving equitable service delivery**: Ensuring that all communities receive fair and equitable access to services.
3. **Advancing environmental stewardship**: Creating a more sustainable, integrated, holistic and resilient water management system.
4. **Building on existing successes**: Capitalizing on Portland's current initiatives and achievements.
5. **Embracing government transition opportunities**: Leveraging changes in government structure to improve service delivery and collaboration.

Project scope, schedule, and budget

The project's primary deliverables included: 1) a preliminary feasibility study to evaluate the pros, challenges, and opportunities of implementing a One Water approach in Portland for the Bureaus of Water and Environmental Service as well as connections with Transportation, and 2) a potential high-level roadmap for execution.

The One Water Feasibility Study was conducted between August 14 and October 1, 2024. The schedule was as follows:



The budget for this work was established at $150,000 via a not-to-exceed task order allocated to NEX Strategies, Stantec, and the US Water Alliance, in addition to the time contributed by city staff involved in the One Water taskforce.

Process

As the Executive Sponsor for this project, I convened a One Water taskforce in late August 2024 comprising the leadership teams of PWB and BES as well as representatives from partners across the city, including the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R), Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), City Attorney's Office, and the Natural Resources Service Delivery (NRSD) team. A designated project management team was established to facilitate the process. A consultant team from NEX Strategies (prime consultant), Stantec, and US Water Alliance (sub-consultants) was onboarded to guide us through the feasibility study and the development of the implementation roadmap.

We employed the 5-D (define, discover, dream, design, deliver) Appreciative Inquiry process, which enabled us to build on our strengths within the One Water framework and identify opportunities for

enhanced collaboration. Alongside six taskforce meetings, we held focus groups, and collected input from employees through an online form and dedicated email account. We also engaged with the city's elected officials, the Portland Utility Board (PUB), wholesale water customers, labor union partners, and key PWB/BES external stakeholders. This feedback, along with an extensive document review, informed the consultant report.

Recommendations from the Deputy City Administrator of Public Works

Several factors influenced the recommendations I present to you today. These include careful consideration of our City and community as a whole, the mission and practices of the PWSA bureaus, the deliverables from the One Water Feasibility study, and the valuable input received during this process.

With these considerations in mind, and with the support of the One Water task force, I am pleased to recommend that the City move forward with the One Water approach as outlined in the October 1, 2024 consultant report and as further detailed below. We have a unique opportunity to lean into the evolving government transition, build a unified service area team culture, and create a more collaborative, equitable, transparent, and accountable work environment.

Insights on the consultants' recommendations and immediate next steps

I am forwarding all of the consultant recommendations, along with my adaptations outlined below, for your consideration. This includes my feedback on the consultants' suggestions, immediate next steps to advance these recommendations, necessary schedule adjustments, and insights into ongoing work, where applicable.

1. **Develop a standing One Water Leadership Team to serve as the internal champions:** As the Deputy City Administrator for Public Works, I am directing and encouraging the current One Water taskforce to continue meeting monthly, reinforcing their role as One Water champions for the One Water initiative. Their ongoing collaboration will be vital to our success. This group will work closely with the PWSA executive leadership team, which will provide strategic guidance to ensure effective implementation and integration of the One Water approach across all levels of the PWSA. Together, we will diligently establish a robust governance and decision-making framework to advance our initiatives.

2. **Embrace processes to navigate change more effectively within the PWSA:** Change management processes—including effective communication, awareness-building, and support structure establishment—are already in progress as part of our service area development and will continue to be prioritized. I also look forward to collaborating with the One Water Taskforce to implement the consultants' recommendations effectively. The recommendations include an employee readiness survey, a One Water awareness campaign, a comprehensive engagement plan, and a Portland Change Network. I am committed to managing these changes with intention, prioritizing employee well-being. Transparency and fostering a supportive work environment are essential to the change management process to help us all adapt and thrive during transitions. This approach is essential for effective navigation of change and will strengthen our organization while fostering increased collaboration, trust, and accountability.

3. **Develop a unifying Public Works Service Area Strategic Plan:** I am directing the PWSA executive leadership team to develop a unified Public Works Service Area Strategic Plan. A meeting is scheduled on October 22, 2024 to initiate the planning process for a comprehensive PWSA Strategic Plan. This initiative will span several years for completion and implementation and will build on the foundation laid by the One Water task force and key recommendations from the consultant report.

It is essential to coordinate this effort with the Citywide Strategic Plan and the Climate Action Plan to ensure our work is integrated and elevated within these broader initiatives.

a. **Prioritize collaboration as an organizational norm & value:** I fully support prioritizing collaboration as a fundamental organizational norm. To advance this initiative, I am directing and encouraging the PWSA executive leadership team and One Water taskforce to develop a preliminary inventory of functions that would benefit from enhanced collaboration within the PWSA and across other service areas by December 2025. While customer service coordination is already established, we are also fostering ongoing collaboration in communications, budgeting, and project delivery. This approach will intentionally align PWSA staff toward the development of effective solutions, enhancing employee engagement**,** participation, and buy-in, ultimately leading to improved outcomes. Such coordinated efforts can lead to cost savings, increased efficiency, and the adoption of consistent processes and best practices across bureaus.

b. **Develop an integrated infrastructure management approach for the PWSA:** This recommendation aims to maximize return on investment by creating a unified Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and fostering collaboration in the planning, funding, delivery, operation, and maintenance of infrastructure across PWSA, grounded in the unified One Water and equity principles. Collaboration in project delivery and procurement is already underway and will continue to align. While full implementation of this recommendation may take 1-3 years, depending on staff capacity and resources, this integrated approach is essential for enhancing operational consistency and effectiveness, while ensuring Portland's long-term resilience and sustainability. I am directing and encouraging the PWSA Leadership Team to develop an integrated infrastructure management approach that spans the entire service area, in consultation with the One Water Taskforce. A designated Project Manager will be appointed to coordinate this initiative and ensure effective communication, collaboration, and alignment, among all associated teams - Public Works executive leadership, One Water taskforce, Planning, Project Delivery, Operations and Maintenance, Procurement, Finance, Communications, etc.

c. **Assess the entire Portland water system's resiliency to climate impacts and other significant threats and challenges:** I want to clarify that the consultant's recommendation pertains to the One Water system and applies to the City's entire drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems in the context of climate impacts and other significant threats. It is essential for the City to conduct a comprehensive, all-hazards, vulnerability analysis to identify potential risks to water quality, watershed health, infrastructure, technology, communication, etc. PWB and BES are well positioned to lead this effort in consultation with BPS and PP&R. I recommend that this work be completed over the next 3 years.

4. **Develop and implement an integrated PWSA-wide communications strategy on its efforts and the Value of Water to build public confidence and support:** The PWSA Communications teams currently coordinate on a regular basis**.** To continue to build public confidence and support for PWSA's efforts and the value of One Water, I am directing and encouraging the PWSA communications teams to enhance coordination and alignment on PWSA-wide key messages, branding strategies, social media and media relations. Our communications strategy will highlight our shared commitment to clean water, healthy communities, and ecosystems, and will include an explanation of the One Water approach and the essential services PWSA provides. The role of the communications team is crucial in storytelling, as effective narratives foster understanding and connection with our community. In addition, we will develop broader community and stakeholder engagement strategies to facilitate ongoing discussions. Proactive communication and the celebration of the vital, though often invisible, daily services that PWSA provides will remain a top priority. Together, we will strengthen our relationship with the community and reinforce the importance of our mission.

5. **Collaborate on an equitable strategy to recruit, retain, and advance a strong, diverse, and valued One Water workforce:** Our workforce plays a vital and critical role in the successful delivery of essential services to our communities. We must continue to prioritize investing in workforce resiliency, recruitment, and employees support, while preparing for the next generation of specialists. To achieve this, PWSA leadership team will continue to partner with the Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) and other service areas across the city to advance this valuable work.

Additional recommendations

In addition to the consultants' recommendations listed above, I would like to highlight several additional areas for exploration and implementation as part of the One Water initiative.

6. **Connection to the Natural Resources Service Delivery (NRSD) effort:** I recommend fostering continued collaboration among the various bureaus engaged in the One Water initiative and the Natural Resources Service Delivery (NRSD) effort, with an emphasis on the intersection of these two initiatives.

   Background: BES, BPS, PBOT, PP&R, and PWB have developed a workplan to address the "Environment and Climate" section of Resolution 37609, focusing on the potential integration of services related to green infrastructure, urban watershed management, natural area management, and more. To facilitate moving this workplan forward, the Deputy City Administrators and Directors from both efforts will convene on October 21, 2024. This meeting will aim to identify synergies and establish next steps that enhance our collective understanding of climate resilience, mitigation, and adaptation efforts.

7. **PWB-BES Affordability Work Plan:** I am directing and encouraging PWB and BES to maintain their commitment to expanding affordability efforts, ensuring equitable access to services for all community members.

   Background: PWB and BES currently share key functions such as billing, financial assistance, and customer relations for residential and commercial customers. They are also actively collaborating on several affordability initiatives, including the Smart Discount Program, revising crisis vouchers, and update billing and fee structures starting in FY 25-26. These changes will expand financial assistance to more households without increasing bureau costs. The introduction of smart meters in 2027 will allow for monthly billing, helping customers manage their water expenses. Additionally, the bureaus are planning a comprehensive sewer and drinking water rate study to create more equitable rate structures, while implementing a non-rate revenue strategy to pursue Federal and State funding to slow rate increases. And, the bureaus are aligning with national best practices through membership in the US Water Alliance's *Water Equity Network* and the *Affordability Taskforce.*

8. **Equitable service delivery as a driver of economic development:** I recommend we continue prioritizing collaboration among the PWSA bureaus to maximize equitable service delivery and economic opportunities, and fully leverage the Community Opportunities and Enhancements Program (COEP) and Equity Data Toolkit to ensure that all Portlanders benefit from our infrastructure investments.

   Background: Our commitment to equitable service delivery creates social, economic, and environmental benefits, building resilience against climate risks and advancing environmental justice for underserved communities. Through the COEP, the PWSA bureaus ensure that at least 20% of our nearly $1 billion in annual infrastructure investments benefit COBID-certified firms, while contributing 1% of project hard costs to COEP diversifies the workforce, creates jobs, and generates wealth in historically marginalized communities. Furthermore, PWB and BES currently use the Equity Data Toolkit to prioritize infrastructure improvements in areas where vulnerable populations face

the greatest risks, ensuring equitable distribution of resources and improving service reliability, which we will plan to continue as we move forward.

9. **Climate resiliency as one of Portland's priorities:** I recommend that the City continue to prioritize climate resiliency in our ongoing work and as a priority in the citywide strategic plan and climate action plan.

   Background: Climate action and climate resiliency are key hallmarks of a One Water approach and are essential components of managing water in an integrated and holistic way for the benefit of Portland's water systems and the communities we serve. We know that climate change has profound and interrelated effects on our water supplies, watersheds, infrastructure, environment, and communities, especially low-income communities and communities of color. PWB and BES have for many years been collaborating on and investing in improvements that mitigate climate risks to drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, including impacts to water infrastructure and workforce. Continuing to prioritize collaboration among the PWSA bureaus will help to build upon Portland's positive reputation as a leader in the national conversation on climate resiliency.

Closing thoughts

I would like to again express my gratitude to you, Mayor Wheeler, for inspiring the PWSA to contemplate the work our utilities already do in service to city and to seek innovative solutions beyond our traditional approaches. I look forward to your thoughts on these recommendations and would appreciate any feedback you may have. Your insights are invaluable as we work together to implement the One Water framework effectively.

I also deeply appreciate the dedication and collaboration of the One Water task force and our city partners. Their commitment has been crucial in shaping our vision on this initiative. We have gained invaluable insights into how we are already aligning and collaborating successfully. With your support, I am eager to build on this foundation and collaborate further on implementing the One Water framework and fostering a unified PWSA, to serve every member of the Portland community every day equitably and effectively.

Sincerely,

Priya Dhanapal
Deputy City Administrator of Public Works

PORTLAND ONE WATER: PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY STUDY

October 1, 2024

Prepared for:
City of Portland

Prepared by:
One Water Consulting Team

Project Number:
224802361

Acknowledgements:

We would like to express our gratitude to the dedicated City staff, especially the One Water Project Management Team and the Task Force. We appreciate your expertise, collaboration, and commitment to serving your community through City government. Staff willingness to engage throughout the process allowed us to complete this work within a short timeframe.

Thank you for entrusting us with this work and contributing to a One Water future for all.

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The conclusions in this Report titled Portland One Water: Feasibility Assessment and Roadmap are those of NEX Strategies, Stantec, and the US Water Alliance (Consultant Team), reflecting their overall professional opinion, as of the time of the Report, and concerning the scope described in the Report. The opinions in the document are based on conditions and information existing at the time the scope was established and do not take into account any subsequent changes. The Report relates solely to the specific project for which the Consultant Team was retained and the stated purpose for which the Report was prepared. The Report is not to be used or relied on for any variation or extension of the project, or for any other project or purpose, and any unauthorized use or reliance is at the recipient's own risk.

We have assumed all information received from the City of Portland (the "Client") and third parties in the preparation of the Report to be correct. While the One Water Consulting Team has exercised a customary level of judgment or due diligence in the use of such information, we assume no responsibility for the consequences of any error or omission contained therein.

This Report is intended solely for use by the Client in accordance with NEX Strategies' contract with the Client. While the Report may be provided by the Client to applicable authorities having jurisdiction and to other third parties in connection with the project, we disclaim any legal duty based upon warranty, reliance, or any other theory to any third party, and will not be liable to such third party for any damages or losses of any kind that may result.

LIST OF APPENDICES

1 Executive Summary

On August 14, 2024, Mayor Ted Wheeler directed the City of Portland's Public Works Service Area (PWSA) to assess the feasibility of adopting a One Water model. Alongside the City of Portland's government transition and citywide reorganization efforts, this directive has created a unique opportunity for the new City Leadership Team to embrace a spirit of collaboration, which can result in efficiencies and more effective governance.

Based upon the assessment of the US Water Alliance, Stantec and NEX Strategies (Consulting Team), it is our recommendation that the PWSA pursue a structured One Water model to build upon the outstanding work that City staff have already undertaken and to support the goals identified through interviews and workshops conducted between September 3 and September 17, 2024. Key to our assessment is evaluation on the effectiveness of a One Water approach in addressing the following interests:

- Improve the long-term financial health and feasibility of the Water and Environmental Services Bureaus.
- Improve and achieve greater service delivery equity and affordability.
- Enhance environmental stewardship by creating a more sustainable, integrated, holistic and resilient water management system.
- Build on Portland's successes.
- Leverage planned municipal government changes.

One Water Defined

One Water advances holistic, sustainable water management. By breaking down management silos, Portland can find solutions for better social and environmental outcomes at lower costs. One Water has unifying characteristics that are actionable and measurable, which guided the Consulting Team's process.

The Process

As part of considering a One Water model, the City hired the Consulting Team to conduct a preliminary study and outline a draft implementation roadmap. The study would assess the potential applicability of adopting a One Water management approach to address the mayor's interests and be completed in 45 days.

The mayor's office organized a One Water Feasibility Task Force (Task Force) to inform and collaborate with the Consultant Team at various points in the study process. This Task Force included managers and select staff from the Bureaus of Water, Environmental Services, and Transportation, with ad hoc participation from Portland Parks and Recreation. A City project management team was also established with representation from the Bureaus of Water and Environmental Services. This City project management team worked closely with the primary project managers on the Consultant Team to ensure alignment throughout the project.

The Consultant Team engaged the Task Force in envisioning possible futures and actionable next steps, grounded in present state assessments and understanding of past initiatives.

The Consultant Team also performed a document review and analysis of city ordinances, policies, procedures, plans, and practices to identify areas of strong performance, challenges, and opportunities that might be realized through a One Water approach.

Key Takeaways:

- Portland's utilities are contending with affordability challenges, like most U.S. water and wastewater utilities. Increased regulatory requirements, climate change impacts, community expectations, and aging infrastructure are driving up costs.
- Water resiliency planning is necessary throughout the Bureaus to position the City to adapt to changing social, environmental, and climate conditions.
- Portland is already developing projects and practicing many of the unifying Hallmarks of a One Water approach.
- The PWSA workforce is engaged, open to new approaches, and generally optimistic for the future.
- Opportunities exist to partner on efforts among PWSA bureaus and throughout the broader citywide organization. General areas to focus on include business services, community engagement, construction, and operations and maintenance.
- A repetitive theme heard from staff was the desire for greater focus and organizational alignment. Specifically, staff indicated their commitment through statements like "just point us in the right direction and we will get you there."

Recommendations

The Consultant Team identified five recommendations, with anticipated benefits, and initial next steps outlined in the Recommendations section. The recommendations are:

1. Develop a standing One Water Leadership Team to serve as the internal champions.
2. Embrace processes to navigate change more effectively within the PWSA.
3. Develop a unifying PWSA Strategic Plan.
    a. Prioritize collaboration as an organizational norm and value. Programs identified include:
        i. Facilities Management
        ii. Administrative Services
        iii. Budgeting and Financial Planning.
        iv. Human Resources
        v. Emergency Management and Planning
        vi. Communications
        vii. Capital Planning, Prioritization, and Project Delivery
    b. Develop an integrated infrastructure management approach for the PWSA
    c. Assess the entire Portland water system's resiliency to climate impacts and other significant threats and challenges.
4. Develop and implement an integrated PWSA-wide communications strategy on its efforts and Value of Water to build public confidence and support
5. Collaborate on an equitable strategy to recruit, retain, and advance a strong, diverse, and valued water workforce.

The order of recommendations does not reflect prioritization. Instead, the order reflects a logical flow to build a foundation for achieving the greatest impact. The overall government transition timeline and other external factors will likely influence the timing of next steps.

A Bright Future

The Consultant Team ends this summary encouraging optimism. This optimism and future success are built upon the strong bedrock of Portland staff 's deep expertise, diversity of perspectives, empathy and motivation. In a final workshop, members of the Task Force identified six ‘vital few’ opportunities to move a One Water approach forward, and staff are already implementing that work. The staff’s dedication to serving the people of Portland is unwavering, even in this challenging time of intense public scrutiny, resource scarcity, and change. As a unified City team strengthened by the new form of government, we are confident the City can achieve a sustainable water future for all in Portland.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. It has been a privilege.

2 Organizational Background

This feasibility study recognizes the significant organizational dynamics and initiatives the City of Portland has experienced and led over the last two years.

Charter Change

Measure 26-228 was passed by Portland voters in November 2022, marking a significant turning point for the city government's structure. Historically, the City of Portland has operated under a commission form of government, in which a mayor and four city commissioners were elected and shared responsibility for managing and operating the city government. Measure 26-228 eliminated the commissioner structure and replaced it with 1) an expanded council representing geographic districts and focused on policymaking, and 2) a city administrator overseeing day-to-day operations alongside the mayor. Measure 26-228's passage set into motion a series of internal decisions to define roles, shape planning efforts, and reconfigure teams to develop the path forward and navigate the transition.

Change in Form of Government

Following Measure 26-228's passage, Mayor Ted Wheeler issued an executive order to reorganize bureaus into service areas, assigning them to himself and the city commissioners. Underlying the rationale for grouping bureaus into service areas, the mayor cited a desire to break down silos, coordinate planning, and strengthen collaboration across related bureaus. Together, the Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), the Bureau of Hydroelectric Power (BHP), and the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) would constitute the new Public Works Service Area (PWSA).

Subsequently, the city council passed a resolution directing the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to "guide organizational wide conversations toward organizational realignment" and support the development of more cohesive and effective operations across the city. The CAO worked collaboratively across the organization to design a new structural model that was later approved by the city council in November 2023. Under this new structure, the PWSA would include BES, PWB and PBOT under the direction of a new Deputy City Administrator. In July 2024, Mayor Wheeler assumed control of the service areas and assigned bureaus to begin a 6-month transition to the new form of government directed by a newly appointed Leadership Team consisting of the Interim City Administrator, Deputy City Administrators, and an Assistant City Administrator.

3 One Water

Water systems are facing urgent, multifaceted challenges, including demands for increased regulatory performance, fragmentation and siloing of services, inadequate funding, and failing or aging infrastructure. Traditionally, water systems and resource management have been fragmented by governance structures, regulatory frameworks, and financial limitations. Other notable challenges include climate impacts, affordability, workforce dynamics, and resiliency. These challenges require new ways of thinking and acting. One Water approach offers an integrated and inclusive way for cities, communities, and utilities to address these challenges.

One Water is a philosophy and an approach to manage water holistically by breaking down silos to find solutions that have better social and environmental outcomes at lower costs. The One Water approach values and manages all water--whether from the tap, a stream, a storm, an aquifer, or a sewer-- in a collaborative, integrated, inclusive, and holistic manner. One Water is often led by a community's water systems but is a broad endeavor relying also on businesses and industry, community, inter-municipality coordination, and connections to upstream and downstream neighbors in the watershed. Valuing all water also means recognizing the value it plays in society and the environment, including the health of natural resources, people, and economy. By managing water in a collaborative, integrated, inclusive, and holistic manner, communities can address pressing challenges and realize water's power as a pathway for thriving.

Through a One Water plan, cities typically articulate a vision, goals, and strategies that are collaborative and innovative. One Water approaches do not exist in isolation and interact with and ideally complement other local or regional plans (e.g., sustainability, public health, land use). The pathways to implementing One Water vary depending on the communities and emphasize right-sized solutions and inclusive partnerships.

The US Water Alliance's Hallmarks of a One Water approach:

- Value water at every state and in every form
- Focus on achieving multiple benefits
- Approach decisions with a systems mindset
- Use water-shed scale thinking and action
- Intervene with right-sized solutions
- Center inclusion and partnerships
- Account for climate action urgency and opportunities

”One Water Arenas for Action” courtesy of US Water Alliance:

4 Purpose and Scope

The City of Portland's government transition and citywide reorganization have created a unique timing opportunity to embrace a new spirit of greater collaboration and resulting effectiveness. Effective collaboration across the PWSA, in tandem with meaningful community engagement, will be needed to meet the full spectrum of challenges facing both the water industry and the region.

On August 14, 2024, Mayor Ted Wheeler directed the City's PWSA to assess the feasibility of adopting a One Water approach for Portland. In the press release, Mayor Wheeler states, "Streamlining water, sewer, and stormwater demonstrates the effective, efficient government that Portlanders demanded. We have the opportunity to elevate an essential community resource and make it better."

The City of Portland hired the Consultant Team of NEX Strategies, Stantec, and US Water Alliance to conduct a preliminary feasibility study and a draft roadmap for implementing a One Water approach. Tasks identified as part of the investigation included facilitated meetings, workshops, City and staff engagement, document review and management, presentation development and delivery, strategic planning support, and advice.

The primary deliverables included:

- Research, analysis, and assessment of current management systems, plans, organizations, and practices. The goal of these analyses was to identify Portland's water related successes, challenges, and opportunities.

- Preliminary feasibility study of opportunities to successfully implement and sustain a One Water management approach for the Bureaus of Water and Environmental Services. This includes assessing the leadership and organizational knowledge and practice of One Water concepts and drivers.

- The development of a City of Portland One Water Preliminary Feasibility Study and Roadmap.

To guide our analysis and recommendations, the City asked the Consultant Team to look for opportunities in five focus areas.

- Improve the long-term financial health and feasibility of the Water and Environmental Services Bureaus.
- Improve and achieve greater service delivery equity and affordability.
- Enhance environmental stewardship by creating a more sustainable, integrated, holistic and resilient water management system.
- Build on Portland's successes.
- Leverage planned municipal government changes.

Additional focus areas that were identified as critical but would not be addressed or receive significant attention within the short timeline include the Natural Areas Service Delivery Area Initiative, Portland Parks and Recreation within the Vibrant Communities Service Area, Community Engagement and thorough Workforce Engagement.

The project timeline was August 14, 2024 – October 1, 2024. The project budget for the Consultant Team was an all-in not to exceed of $150,000.

5 Research

The Consultant Team's process focused on internal engagement and research to get the most relevant and timely information and formulate recommendations in an efficient and collaborative manner.

5.1 Leadership and Internal Engagement

The Mayor's office organized a One Water Feasibility Task Force (Task Force) to inform, collaborate with, and advise the Consultant Team at various points in the study process. This Task Force included managers and select staff from the Bureaus of Water, Environmental Services, and Transportation with participation from Portland Parks and Recreation, the Chief Administrator's Office and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

The engagement process used is based on the Kolb Experiential Learning Model[1]. The strength of this model is that it builds shared learning through each step in the process. This was important as the three Bureau's on the Task Force all had different experiences, values, and approaches. The Kolb model is similar to the principles of the Appreciative Inquiry 5D approach, which is familiar and well-received by the Portland staff. Refer to Appendix D for the 5D approach.

The Consultant Team engaged the Task Force in envisioning possible futures and actionable next steps, grounded in present state assessments and knowledge of prior initiatives. The process was conducted during the Task Force's weekly meetings and in follow-up discussions as summarized below.

1. Introduction. The Consultant Team and City leadership study was introduced to this study's purpose, scope of work, and path forward to the Task Force, along with the Hallmarks of a One Water approach. The Task Force engaged in a current-state discussion.

2. Project Kick Off. The study kick-off included an overview of One Water, key considerations, and potential approaches. The Hallmarks and One Water Arenas for Action were discussed in more detail. The Task Force reflected on Portland's critical water needs and key challenges that may emerge in the future.

3. One Water Primer. The Consultant Team presented the common elements of One Water, the One Water mindset, and Pillars of Water Equity. The Task Force engaged in an exercise to imagine a future One Water Portland. Refer to Appendix B for additional information.

4. One Water Examples. The Task Force considered a City of Fort Collins, Colorado case study which demonstrated the positive aspects and challenges encountered with the One Water approach.

[1] Collective Learning for Transformational Change: A Guide to Collaborative Action, Valerie A. Brown and Judith A. Lambert, Routledge Press, 2013

5. Internal Engagement. Task Force members were invited to attend one of four smaller roundtable discussions over several days. Members discussed questions such as: What does One Water mean to you? What is working? What could be done even better? The City Project Management team summarized these discussions using the framework in the Water Research Foundation's *One Water Cities: Development of Guidance Documents and Assessment Metrics*[2]. The Task Force and additional internal engagement discussions informed the final version of this summary. Refer to Appendix C.

6. Continued Internal Engagement. The Consultant Team interviewed specific City government stakeholders, including Commissioner Mapps and his staff, legal counsel, and staff from Portland Parks & Recreation.

7. Visioning. The Task Force participated in a half-day retreat to identify "vital few" opportunities and outline actionable next steps. This process involved breaking out into groups, discussing strengths and challenges to implementing a One Water approach relative to each opportunity, and developing action proposals. Refer to Appendix B for additional information.

5.2 Document Review and Analysis

The Consultant Team reviewed and analyzed documents including City Ordinances, policies, studies, procedures, and practices to identify areas of success, challenges, and opportunities in alignment with One Water Hallmarks. The Consultant Team organized documents in an online SharePoint repository and built a document review matrix that organized reviewed documents by One Water principles for quick analysis.

After each Task Force, focus group, and additional stakeholder interview or meeting, the City Project Management Team and Consulting Team analyzed and summarized notes. This process surfaced key themes and high-level observations that inform the Consultant Team's recommendations.

[2] One Water Cities: Development of Guidance Documents and Assessment Metrics, Water Research Foundation, Project #4969, 2023

6 Research Takeaways

The Consultant Team had to become knowledgeable about the City of Portland community, organization, and water systems and use insights to craft the recommendations in this report. To achieve this, we developed two separate research strategies described in the Methodology section: 1) document review, analysis, and synthesis; and 2) leadership and internal engagement meetings and workshops. The appendices provide the work products from the research process, with the major takeaways from both strategies provided here.

6.1 Document Review Key Takeaways

- The City has lacked a coordinated approach to facilitate cooperation amongst City bureaus for greater efficiency and effectiveness.
- There is not yet one overarching citywide strategic plan or corresponding vision for where the City is heading that all bureaus and staff may align to.
- Some program areas are proactively taking steps to streamline efforts between PWSA bureaus. Examples identified include budgeting, communications, maintenance and operations, project delivery, safety and security, community engagement, planning, design, outreach, and construction.
- Workgroup functions among PWSA bureaus and other citywide bureaus may overlap. Staff and the City are currently evaluating some of these areas of overlap as part of the transition to the new form of government.
- Significant projected and planned budget shortfalls exist.

6.2 Leadership and Internal Engagement Key Takeaways

- Organizational change processes do not exist.
- The PWSA has an opportunity to be a national One Water leader because of their extensive water systems and watersheds, strong community values grounded in environmental and social justice, and the great work already in progress.
- Many organizational changes are occurring all at once. These changes, and the nature of delivering critical 24/7/365 community services can weigh heavily on staff. While these feelings are common and expected, they need to be addressed proactively over the coming months and years.
- The PWSA leaders are engaged and generally optimistic about the potential of the new form of government. There is an opportunity to build a unified team culture to create a more equitable, trusting, transparent, inclusive, and accountable work environment for the future.

- There is a need for greater organizational alignment and prioritization. PWSA's resilience strategy and planning have strengths like the Water Bureau's supply planning and assets to leverage such as the Bureau of Environmental Services' watershed mapping and assessment tools. There is an appetite to do more to ensure the City is ready to adapt to changing social, environmental and climate conditions.

- Affordability challenges are a common issue in most communities. While investing in water is needed, so is ensuring all residents can afford bills for essential public health services like those PWSA provides. The current Affordability Work Plan is an emerging example of collaboration between PWB and BES and illustrates meaningful work rooted in the values of water equity and providing essential services to community.

- Another aspect of affordability is achieving the support and funding required to perform the services expected by Portland residents. More effort is necessary to tell a compelling story about the value of water and how taxes and rates are being put to work efficiently and effectively.

Given the project limitations, further research and internal and external engagement will be needed to deepen the understanding of the opportunities to implement additional One Water approaches and realize their benefits.

7 Recommendations

Further implementation of a One Water approach could lead to increased effectiveness and efficiencies across the PWSA, citywide government, and the community. The following recommendations are based on insights that surfaced from document review and internal engagement. They represent opportunities to build upon success, strengthen current efforts, and delve into broader, strategic One Water approaches.

Each recommendation contains:

- How insights from the discovery phase support or align with the recommendation,
- Key implementation considerations,
- The anticipated benefits and ways the recommendation supports priorities identified by the Mayor and Task Force, and
- Considerations on timing and expectations for duration of effort.

The order of recommendations does not reflect prioritization. Instead, the order reflects a logical flow to build a foundation for achieving the greatest impact. The overall government transition timeline and other external factors will likely influence the timing of next steps.

7.1 Recommendation 1: Develop a standing One Water Leadership Team to serve as the internal champions.

The One Water Task Force highlighted the need for alignment at the executive level. To address this need, a One Water Leadership Team should be established. Many organizations adopt a unified team known as a One Water Leadership (OWL) team. A Unified Water Leadership Team or an OWL team should be a cross-bureau group with a good understanding of One Water principles and the ability to influence citywide and bureau specific policy development and decisions. This recommendation can be implemented immediately.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** OWL teams can be instrumental in developing citywide champions at the broader organizational level to cooperatively tackle cost effective solutions to water challenges. This approach could build on the momentum started by the One Water Task Force.

- **Initial Steps:** Identify an executive sponsor, recruit current One Water champions and other early adopters of change, develop a governance and decision-making framework, and set a regular cadence for working meetings.

7.2 Recommendation 2: Embrace processes to navigate change more effectively within the PWSA.

Given the complexity and extent of concurrent change facing the city, an intentional process would ensure PWSA staff are informed, involved, and able to influence changes as the organization continues to evolve. When selecting methods, we recommend careful consideration of the purpose, scope, and potential impact of decisions and initiatives, as well as how various areas of the organization might benefit from continuous improvements over time. This recommendation can begin immediately.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** These types of efforts build organizational clarity and capacity. Intentional processes like this can support overall success and help staff manage continuous improvements, promote trust, collaboration, preparedness, psychological safety, risk management, and communication. This approach will also support broad understanding of the effort and its potential impact on the community, wider City organization, and specific bureaus and workgroups.

- **Initial Steps:** Perform a readiness survey and assessment to gauge staff understanding of One Water principles, develop an awareness campaign based on the readiness survey results, draft a communications, branding and engagement plan, and establish a Portland Change Network including the One Water Leadership team, Sponsor Coalition, Change Champions and Change Agents.

7.3 Recommendation 3: Develop a unifying Public Works Service Area Strategic Plan.

Guided by PWSA leadership and the OWL team, a strategic plan would serve as the Bureau's framework for visioning, priority setting and implementing the delivery of critical water services for the region, consistent with One Water approaches and hallmarks. This recommendation could be broadly scoped in the coming months once the OWL team is established and the framework for navigating change is in place. Strategic planning is an ongoing best practice and will take a few years to develop a structure.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** The comprehensive review of needs and opportunities will help identify the greatest benefits and what it would take to realize them. It would also help guide budget development in a way that smooths current resource requirements. By starting the strategic planning process now, the PWSA can be ready to advocate for further One Water opportunities and engage in future citywide strategic planning. Such a plan would ensure all Portland's One Water efforts are supporting broader community and city goals.

- **Initial Steps:** PWSA leadership and the OWL team should undertake a strategic plan readiness effort identifying the needed resources, equitable community engagement and ownership goals, decision-making approaches, and timing considerations.

7.4 Recommendation 3a: Prioritize collaboration as an organizational norm and value.

Encourage cross-bureau problem solving and innovation to achieve more cost effective, holistic solutions. Building this capacity will carry over when working with other City departments. Therefore, the PWSA should prioritize collaboration as a business norm and expectation. The One Water Task Force flagged areas such as:

- Facilities management
- Administrative services
- Budgeting and financial planning
- Human resources
- Emergency management and planning
- Communications
- Capital planning, prioritization, and project delivery
- Community and civic engagement

Given the drivers behind the new form of government changes in Portland, it may be beneficial to examine community and civic engagement standards and practices across bureaus and consider a PWSA-wide operating philosophy and standard. Undertaking this exploration in a manner consistent with the City's commitment to equity and desire for a healing with the public requires being guided by deep community engagement and ownership commitments throughout the process.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** Collaboration will engage PWSA staff in designing the best solutions and approaches, improving buy-in, outcomes, and satisfaction. Resulting coordination or integration in these areas could lead to cost savings, efficiency and scaling best practices across bureaus. The process of exploration itself, when done in concert with strong community engagement and ownership frameworks and practices, could also contribute to improved relationships between the City and the community.

- **Initial Steps:** The OWL team, supported by PWSA executive leaders, might undertake an initial exploration of these opportunities with an eye for sequencing and readiness as part of their initial mandate to support a PWSA Strategic Plan.

7.5 Recommendation 3b: Develop an integrated infrastructure management approach for the Public Works Service Area.

One Water can provide multiple benefits through the ways infrastructure is planned, funded, and delivered. The planning, delivery, operations, costs, and maintenance of the infrastructure in the PWSA's purview are major undertakings. An initial opportunity to pursue significant return-on-investment collaboration is the development of a One Water unifying Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Public Works Service Area.

Examples of steps involved include:

1. exploring various bureaus' asset lists and asset management planning processes,
2. identifying projects in current CIPs and those preliminarily flagged for inclusion in future CIPs,
3. defining levels of service goals for assets using One Water and equity principles,
4. developing prioritization criteria, examining infrastructure delivery contracting and procurement regimes within the PWSA,
5. and considering long-term asset management standards and practices, including operations and maintenance synergies and cross-training, between the Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services specifically.

The PWSA could even take this exploration further by considering ways to maximize the economic and community benefits of infrastructure investment. This would involve setting common minimum standards for community benefits approaches, minimizing construction impacts, small and minority business development and partnerships, community engagement and ownership frameworks in planning and delivery, and more. Exploring these facets of infrastructure management could result in shared efforts, structures, processes, collaboration, and integration where appropriate that lead to significant and multi-

benefit returns. Implementing this recommendation could take 1-3 years to do in-depth and well depending on staff capacity and supplementary resources available.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** Internally, this recommendation could alleviate some of the competition for the same funding across bureaus within the PWSA and foster collaborative internal partnerships, increase awareness of work being done by other workgroups, identify ways to dovetail projects, and provide greater clarity and strengthened strategic coherence to the PWSA's infrastructure management priorities. Financially, these activities could result in cost-saving to the City through efficient processes, staff utilization, project delivery synergies (such as "dig once" policies and approaches), and reduced transaction costs. Broadly, a combined CIP prioritized by criteria informed by One Water and equity **and** representative of all environmental, financial, and social aspects of the service area's work can create environmental, social, and economic returns. This effort can also be considered an investment in Portland's long-term resilience and sustainability.

- **Initial Steps:** In the short term, the PWSA has skills internally to work together to create an infrastructure asset prioritization framework using One Water and equity principles and including a matrix of the probability and consequences of failure for all the PWSA's assets.

7.6 Recommendation 3c: Assess the entire Portland water system's resiliency to climate impacts and other significant threats and challenges.

The climate crisis poses multiple threats to a sustainable and equitable water future in Portland. There are other threats to water resilience beyond climate, too. The Consultant Team recognizes the strong work Water Bureau has done on water source and supply issues, and the team encourages an expansive view of resilience inclusive of water sources and future supplies but also a much broader assessment of threats throughout the watershed that could disrupt the City and for which the PWSA can plan in a holistic and integrated manner, consistent with One Water principles and combining watershed science with broader ecosystem science. The City would benefit from a resiliency assessment of the entire Portland water system (meaning all water and its conduits and connections in the watershed). The assessment could leverage the Water Bureau's existing work and the Bureau of Environmental Service's watershed management, monitoring data, and mapping abilities. It should include a vulnerability analysis of all sources of water; potential risks to water quality, watershed health, linear and vertical infrastructure; financial, regulatory, workforce, seismic, and technology risks; governance interdependency and coordination risks; and opportunities to improve resilience, mitigation, and adaptation efforts, as well as cultural and communications opportunities. The assessment should apply a One Water lens and incorporate variables such as climate change modeling, regional partnerships, workforce dynamics, and ever-changing regulations. A realistic timeframe for this assessment is approximately two years.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** With such an assessment in hand, Portland would be well positioned to take action to address its greatest vulnerabilities such as seismic events, wildfire, failure of critical infrastructure like levees, and cyber and other terrorism threats.

- **Initial Steps:** PWSA leadership, in partnership with the Unified Water Leadership team, can scope what such an effort would take and perform an initial audit of existing information about what is known about risks and various existing and missing risk assessments and related efforts. The Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services are well positioned to lead this effort

and may need consultation and buy-in from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Vibrant Communities Service Area at key moments in the process.

7.7 Recommendation 4: Develop and implement an integrated PWSA-wide communications strategy on its efforts and the Value of Water to build public confidence and support.

Public and political support for water is crucial. Gone are the days water leaders could measure success as "no news is good news" -- a historic trend across the industry that, in part, contributed to the nation's chronic and widespread underinvestment in water and wastewater infrastructure and present-day funding challenges. This process surfaced the need for a service area-wide strategic communications effort on the value of water to help the public understand what their rates pay for, why investment is needed, and the community priorities that hang in the investment balance. The Water Bureau is developing a strategic communications plan. Bureaus are also already meeting on communications. This recommendation could be pursued and implemented in short order once timing and sequencing are determined by PWSA leadership, bureau executives, and the One Water Leadership team.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** Communities with the public and political will to invest in water better reap the public health, social, environmental, and economic benefits these systems provide. They are also better positioned to avoid the significant consequences of underinvestment. A Value of Water communications strategy can also inspire One Water awareness and civic participation in stewardship, elevate the visibility and value of the water workforce, and promote interest in career opportunities in water.

- **Initial Steps:** Explore approaches from peer-cities with robust Value of Water strategies, such as those on the Value of Water Campaign steering committee. Conduct an inventory of external communications and outreach efforts and identify collaboration points. Consider the resources needed and the specific goals such as a communications effort might specifically hope to achieve in the short and long term.

7.8 Recommendation 5: Collaborate on an equitable strategy to recruit, retain, and advance a strong, diverse, and valued water workforce.

Water workers serve 24/7/365 and play essential roles in their communities. Cities like Portland have an opportunity to address workforce shortages, training and upskilling needs, workforce pipeline development, and employee well-being in ways that bolster mission success and promote gender and racial economic equity and community vitality. The PWSA's 2023-24 budget documents point to a focus on promoting a diverse and representative workforce, and the topic emerged in every One Water Task Force meeting. The city is currently preparing for the recruitment and integration of its first Chief Equity Officer. Often, growing pains surrounding efforts to advance equity can result in staff mistrust, perceptions of insincerity, procedural ambiguity, goal ambiguity, and other tensions. There are various peer institutions and task forces in the US Water Alliance's Water Equity Network community of practice who may advise PWSA on strategies for navigating this work. Through a holistic workforce strategy, PWSA can take a step forward in its equity journey and borrow from emerging best practices, like regional water

workforce collaboratives that embody One Water principles, to build robust and effective recruitment pipelines to meet its future workforce needs.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** Many emerging strategies and initiatives can transform, not just sustain, utilities and their community's quality of life. They offer ways to reinvigorate existing staff, build trust, educate and engage the public, and drive equitable economic opportunity for those with marginalized identities, including People of Color, women, and those facing high barriers to economic participation.

- **Initial Steps:** PWSA executives can begin by assessing the current strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats of each bureau's workforce needs forecasting, recruitment, retention, training and advancement, and internal equity efforts. The PWSA can also consider opportunities to align their workforce efforts with community economic goals, values, and partners. Identifying and committing to opportunities for meaningful and accountable community engagement and ownership will bolster the development and implementation of a holistic workforce strategy.

7.9 Example Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the Recommendations

To track and measure progress, consider the example list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound. The use of KPIs can keep the PWSA and teams focused on attaining the anticipated benefits for each recommendation. KPIs should be created, reviewed, and agreed upon with the OWL and reported routinely to show progress and provide the opportunity to review and address challenges as they occur.

Example KPIs include:

R1. Develop a One Water Leadership Team
- A team is established with an executive sponsor and appropriate representation to help champion One Water within one month of intent.
- The team has a documented One Water Leadership Team Charter within one month of establishment.

R2. Embrace adaptive management
- A baseline staff survey is implemented within one month of initiation of an adaptive management process.
- Defined improvements are seen in key outcome areas in a similar staff feedback tool six months and one year from initiation (other intervals as appropriate).

R3. Create a PWSA Strategic plan
- PWSA has a strategic plan within three years of initiation.
- 100% of staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the plan at least three times over its creation and each time receive an accounting of how their feedback was addressed.
- The strategic plan identifies clear priorities, and over 90% of PWSA staff can correctly identify / articulate those priorities (verified by survey or another instrument).
- Key community stakeholders publicly endorse the plan upon release for its alignment with community priorities based on consistent engagement and shared ownership strategies.
- PWSA leadership present lessons from planning to inform citywide planning efforts.

R3a. Prioritize collaboration as an organizational norm and value

- Staff-led collaboration processes have resulted in at least five action plans to streamline and innovate in key business services that cut across bureaus within the PWSA within one year of PWSA strategic plan development.

R3b. Develop an integrated infrastructure management approach for the PWSA

- Within three years of strategic planning initiation, the PWSA has a combined CIP prioritized by criteria informed by One Water and equity principles and other best practices.
- The PWSA assesses and communicates the anticipated cost-savings to the City compared to go-it-alone CIP planning that may otherwise have occurred in bureau silos upon the integrated CIP's release.

R3c. Assess climate resiliency and other threats

- Results from this assessment are evident in the PWSA's integrated CIP and strategic plan upon their release.
- City leaders are briefed on the relative urgency of the top threats and vulnerabilities the PWSA faces and the data underlying their assessment within six months of assessment completion.
- Action-plans develop on an as needed basis that bring cross-bureau working groups together to address risks and vulnerabilities in a unified fashion.

R4. Implement a PWSA-wide communications strategy on the Value of Water

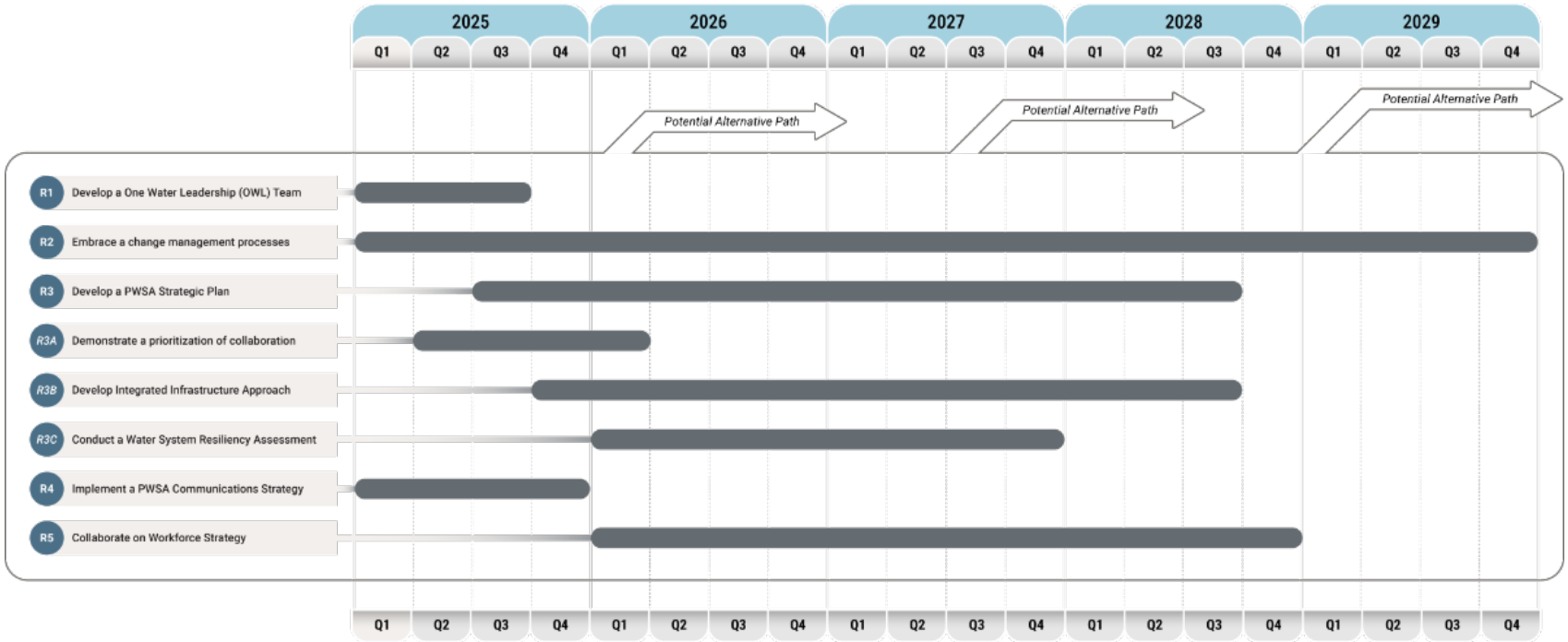
- A baseline of public sentiment on and understanding of the value of water is taken within 6 months of strategy planning kick-off, and a baseline (quantitative or qualitative) of ease of past rate increases is identified.
- All city council members are given the opportunity to learn about and champion the value of water within 1 year of strategy implementation.
- Withing two years of strategy implementation, public sentiment on and understanding of the value of water has achieved two-year targets set out in the Value of Water communications strategy.

R5. Collaborate on a workforce strategy

- 90% of PWSA staff can articulate the service area's goals for advancing equity in the community and how their internal equity goals support them in realizing those aspirations within three years (measurable via survey or another instrument).
- The PWSA has clear projections for the level of workforce and related skills of that workforce five and ten years into the future within two years of strategy creation.
- Upon release, the PWSA workforce strategy is endorsed by key community and workforce development partners for its alignment with community priorities and reflection of community engagement and ownership strategies undertaken in its development.

8 High Level Roadmap

Opportunity / Recommendation	Timeline Narrative
R1. Develop a One Water Leadership (OWL) Team	This effort could be developed immediately. Possible timeline – Q1'2025 – Q3'2025
R2. Embrace a change management processes	Initial steps can begin immediately and ongoing. Possible timeline – Q1'2025 and ongoing
R3. Develop a PWSA Strategic Plan	This effort may take up to three years. Possible timeline – Q3'2025 – Q4'2028
R3A.Demonstrate a prioritization of collaboration	This should be embedded within one year effort initiation. Possible timeline- Q2'2025 – Q2'2026
R3B.Develop Integrated Infrastructure Approach	This effort may take up to three years. Possible timeline – Q4'2025 – Q4'2028
R3C. Conduct a Water System Resiliency Assessment	This effort may take up to two years. Possible timeline – Q1'2026 – Q1'2028
R4. Implement a PWSA Communications Strategy	This effort could continue efforts already in place immediately. Possible timeline – Q1'2025 – Q4'2025
R5. Collaborate on Workforce Strategy	This effort may take up to three years. Possible timeline Q1'2026 – Q1'2029



9 Closing Thoughts

The Consultant Team ends this report encouraging optimism. This optimism and future success are built upon the strong bedrock of Portland staff's deep expertise, diversity of perspectives, empathy and motivation. The staff's dedication to serving the people of Portland is unwavering, even in this challenging time of intense public scrutiny, resource scarcity and change. As a unified City team strengthened by the new form of government, we are confident the City can achieve a sustainable water future for all in Portland. But this requires vision and intent.

There is a term used in sustainability circles called backcasting, which identifies the steps needed to create the future. Backcasting is a powerful concept that involves envisioning a desired future, regardless of how impossible it might seem, and working backwards to identify the actions that need to be taken today to achieve it. Small steps get you started and add up to achieve that future over time.

To make progress, you need both optimism and pragmatism. The city leadership team can be a caretaker to ensure both are accomplished for the benefit of all in the community.

While the Consultant Team can't possibly suggest what Portland's future should be, this preliminary feasibility study hopefully starts this process of thinking big about the value of water and offering reasonable next steps.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Inventory of City Documents Reviewed

- Draft Natural Resources Service Delivery Inventory and Assessment. ECONorthwest, August 2023
- Portland Water Bureau Equity Achievements Report, 2020-2021
- Portland Water Bureau Equity Achievements Report, 2021-2022
- Portland Water Bureau Equity Achievements Report, 2022-2023
- Plan to Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, 2021-2025. Portland Water Bureau, January 2022
- City Organization Project, Phase One. Public Works Service Area, June 2023
- City Organization Project, Phase Two. Public Works Service Area, August 2023
- Report on Study of Possible Merger of Bureau of Environmental Services and the Water Bureau. Cogan Owens Cogen, January 1995
- Identification and Evaluation of Efficiencies between BES' Pollution Control Lab and BWW's Water Quality Lab. RW Beck, April 2004
- Lab Efficiency and Merger Feasibility Review Study. RW Beck, September 2004
- City of Portland One Water Feasibility Study. September 2024
- Alignment of City Drivers, One Water framework elements, existing initiatives, and future opportunities. September 2024
- Natural Resource Service Delivery Workplan. April 2024
- Preliminary Report: Sanitary Sewer and Stormwater Comprehensive Rate Study. Wood Jacobs, March 2022
- One Water Feedback from New York and Philadelphia. Email Erich Pacheco. September 2024
- Portland Water Bureau Strategic Plan, A Five-Year Risk Management Approach. Portland Water Bureau, March 2021
- The Portland Water Bureau's Net Zero Strategy, Roadmap to Decarbonization by 2050. Portland Water Bureau, 2024
- FY 2024-2025 Budget Works Session Presentation. Public Works Service Area, February 2024
- Rate Study Implementation Recommendations, email between Anthony Martin and Dawn Uchiyama. September 2024
- Adopted Budget, Volume 1 City Summaries & Bureau Budgets, City of Portland, Oregon Fiscal Year 2024-25, https://www.portland.gov/cbo/2024-2025-budget/documents/fy-2024-25-volume-1-city-portland-city-summaries-and-bureau-budgets/download. Accessed September 2024
- Adopted Budget, Volume 2 City Funds & Capital Projects, City of Portland, Oregon Fiscal Year 2024-25. https://www.portland.gov/cbo/2024-2025-budget/documents/fy-2024-25-volume-2-city-portland-city-funds-and-capital-projects/download. Accessed September 2024
- Adopted Budget, Volume 3 Program Offers, City of Portland, Oregon Fiscal Year 2024-25. https://www.portland.gov/cbo/2024-2025-budget/documents/fy-2024-25-volume-3-city-portland-program-offers/download. Accessed September 2024
- Regional Water Providers Consortium, Emergency Preparedness | Regional Water Providers Consortium (regionalh2o.org). Accessed September 2024

Appendix B Select Task Force Workshop Summaries

One Water Feasibility Task Force
September 3, 2024

The Task Force engaged in a visioning activity to imagine desired news headlines if One Water were to be implemented successfully. Headlines describe what a future state could look like in five or more years.

Headlines Developed

- One City approach results in financial resiliency and community values
- Weird Portlanders Float Sustainable Investment in Water Infrastructure
- Portland Succeeds at Reestablishing itself as a Global Water and Environmental Leader – This time for Everyone
- One Water Approach yields Regional Benefits
    - Shut offs at all-time low, water jobs increase, award winning water quality
- Community Endorses City's Public Works 20 Year Service Plan
    - Plan outlines infrastructure investments, funding and affordability and workforce

One Water Feasibility Task Force
September 17, 2024

As part of the meeting on Sept. 17, 2024, the Task Force engaged in an ideation and forward-looking facilitated activity. This activity used a facilitation approach called Open Space Technology. The Task Force members were asked to share their ideas for 'vital few' opportunities and outline next steps. Based on these initial ideas, the Task Force members worked in small groups to combine and further develop these ideas by defining the issue, defining success, and outlining actionable next steps.

The following topics were discussed, and report outs are outlined below:

- Visibility, Value of Water, and Community Awareness
- Leadership Collaboration / Shared Leadership Team
- Fundamental City Services
- Equity in Contracting and Workforce
- Customer Service Connection and Affordability
- PWSA Strategic Planning and Priority Setting
- Bureau-level Assessment of Processes

Note: The majority of the following summary of group report outs is taken directly from the written and oral report outs. Some edits were made for clarity and readability.

Summary of Group Report Outs

<u>Topic: Visibility, Value of Water, and Community Awareness</u>

Issue: There is a need to engage with the public, so they understand the value of water and Bureau services. The Bureaus have done a good job, but our work is still invisible to the community. The public does not always understand what it takes to accomplish our work and why rates increase. This results in the public not knowing the true value of our work and not engaged in rate discussions. An engaged public will help support rate discussions with elected officials. Water and access to these services are human rights.

Success: Achieving community awareness of the value of water and our work would help to expand the workforce pipeline, Community support would be evident through news articles showing community values and ensure the access to water system services as a human right. Build towards community support and advocacy.

Next Steps:

- Leverage existing resources (e.g., from AWWA, APWA, WEF, US Water Alliance)
- Define success criteria and showcase metrics that can be shared out
- Leadership committed to report content
- Onboard the new city council with video packets on the value of water and tours of key projects (Bull Run, CBWTP, etc.)
- Development of branding and PSAs (e.g., at movie theaters, Trimet) and utilizing multiple platforms as part of a larger strategy to engage the public (e.g., water as zero responders) to think differently about our work/services
- Identify partners (e.g., NGOs, such as Willamette River, and sectors, such as brewers, industry, public health)

Topic: Leadership Collaboration / Shared Leadership Team

Issue: Silos exist because of political divisions and Bureaus have been focused on our own problems and creating bespoke approaches and systems. No one has expected collaboration, but we are doing it reactively. Historically, BES and PWB didn't have money constraints, but now these Bureaus are faced with money constraints and challenges with the "color of money." We like each other, are facing the same challenges, and need to use a service mindset.

Success: Mutual awareness and consistent, collaborative alignment within PWSA functional areas. When problem solving, we are linking our shared interests. Strengthen and build the morale of our workforce through clear, shared priorities that activate our workforce. The breakthroughs of proximity leave room for evolution of partnership with cadence of connection

Next Steps:

- Hold monthly leadership meeting (determine who, when, and clear agenda on what to expect) with a purposeful, actionable structure of facilitation and priorities (both proactive and reactive).
    - Include a mini charter, communications training,
    - Focus area on supporting workforce development (i.e., onboarding, recognition, employee engagement), contracting procurement, and emergency cooperation (e.g., labor)
- Share improvement initiatives for synergies and look at internal teams together to assess collaboration
    - Assess shared functions and which teams are optimal for collaboration
    - Determine sustainable pacing with supported collaboration

    - Consider areas of training, onboarding, determining success factors, procurement, contracting.
- Create rituals to celebrate success and learn from each other
- Leave space for fires / challenges that come up
- Convene a change team to coordinate ("air traffic control" concept) and look at aligning agendas and ensuring smart facilitation.

Topic: Fundamental City Services (OMF-BHR, Tech, Budget, Contracting, etc.)

Issue: Need for improved coordination of fundamental city services because of a lack of coordination and resourcing.

Success: PWSA models the desired change (e.g., defining success factors, performance evaluation process improvements; communications tools). Data-informed decision-making is utilized. Public Works approach aligns with a One Water Vision (e.g., values and framework). A unified approach makes us unstoppable!

Next Steps:

- PWSA engages services provider to explain and define needs (i.e., how we can help)
- Development and implementation of data-informed decision-making.
    - Create dashboards and levels of service that better align with PWSA business needs (e.g., assess how many HR Business Partners are assigned to support bureaus because one for each bureau is not sufficient)
- Leverage the strength of PWSA to influence and support change. (PWSA includes three Bureaus and more than half of the City's workforce.)

Topic: Equity in Contracting and Workforce (Citywide Equity Planning)

Issue: There is a lack of coordination and resourcing to unify citywide equity efforts. A strategic vision and plan are needed to guide internal and external work.

Success: Continued improvement on metrics (e.g., establish, track, report, and check in with community to make sure tracking right metrics); the community feels a place in the city and feels heard; intentional processes

Next Steps:

- Hold a procurement day that is contractor-focused and with a 12-month project forecast (in progress)
- Hold internal educational opportunities (e.g., lunch and learns)
- Develop performance metrics. Track and report on these metrics.
    - Check in with community to make sure using the right metrics.
- Develop a shared leadership procurement strategy

Topic: Customer Service Connection and Affordability Efforts

Issue: BES and PWB share customers and impact. PWSA also shares impacts and some customers. Customer cost experience drives political perceptions/pressure and financial constraints. The customers' experience of cost is high; services are not affordable. Cost experience and value of services are not aligned.

Success: The Community values the services and perceives that the City cares. Customer choice; There is a clear story that the customers/community see themselves as part of. The City also understands the value of customers. There is a shift from customer service to customer experience.

Next Steps:

- Build a new process to meet these customer needs.
- Create a collaborative journey mapping process with customers
    - Gather insights on how we show up
    - Continue this as an ongoing and sustained effort
- Cultivate relationships with large water users
- Engage and utilize community events to increase community understanding and support.
- Be open and tangible in showing the challenges.

Topic: PWSA Strategic Planning and Priority Setting

Issue: Need for Community Level of Service (LOS) that we can use to inform infrastructure and planning on investments.

Success: Outcomes, value-based, coordinated PWSA strategic planning informs budget, priorities, and performance management at different time horizons. PWSA leadership are aligned with and informed by strategic plan. Budgets are being responsive to plans and emerging needs of communities. The plan is meaningful to us and the community we serve and also results in stability in revenues and expenditures.

Next Steps:

- Convene leadership team meetings and workshops
- Sharing and learning
- Develop a 10-20 year PWSA Strategic Plan with adaptive implementation cycles
    - Develop PWSA community levels of service
    - Develop long-term planning cycle with frequent measuring
- Use the strategic planning to guide budgets

Topic: Bureau-level Assessment of Processes

Issue: Deep dive assessment into processes for different bureaus to look for efficiencies, gaps, overlaps. PWSA focused on programmatic-level areas. To my knowledge, we as a City have not done this at a more granular level.

Success: A large part of why we are looking at One Water is to alleviate financial pressures for the bureaus and city. The assessment I am proposing would be successful if we can find cost reductions or at least streamline processes.

Next Steps:

- We could use the previous model that BES used with its transition.
    - Assign a Project Manager and Executive Sponsor.
    - Create a core team of Focus Area Leads.
    - Each lead forms their own teams of cross-bureau Subject Matter Experts to assess that particular part of the organization – Capital Delivery, Community Engagement, Equity, Financial, Operations, Planning. Other areas where we think there may be gaps, overlaps, or process improvements.
    - Deliverables include employee engagement workshops, reports, process maps of current state, future state visioning.

Appendix C Summary of Existing Initiatives and Opportunities

Note: The City Project Management Team created the following summary based on the internal engagement (i.e., focus groups or roundtable discussions). The Task Force also provided additional feedback on this summary. **This document is included in collaboration and is not a work product of the Consultant Team.**

Findings from focus group discussions: Alignment of existing initiatives and opportunities with the One Water framework nine key elements

Figure 2-2. Key Elements of One Water Cities.

According to the Water Research Foundation's publication *One Water Cities: Development of Guidance Documents and Assessment Metrics* "One Water can look different from one organization to another and can also be applied at different scales. However, the One Water approach can be used by any city to manage all aspects of its water cycle - drinking water, wastewater, water reuse, stormwater, flood management, and water conservation - for the benefit of the entire community." Nine "Key Elements" are suggested based on information gleaned from literature review, targeted expert interviews with utilities, and a national survey of water stakeholders (See figure 2-2).

The One Water Feasibility Study Project Management Team conducted five focus group discussions between September 3rd and September 9th, including all members of the Task Force, as well as stakeholders from Portland Parks and Recreation, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and the City Attorney's Office. The following is a summary of the focus group discussions organized around the nine key elements. Each section contains a One Water element along with existing initiatives and opportunities documented in the focus group discussions.

Key element 1: Institutional collaboration, governance, and organizational culture

Existing initiatives:

- **Customer Service and affordability:** Billing, financial assistance, and customer relations are already a shared function between both bureaus for residential and commercial customers. This collaboration already yields benefits to both bureaus and can be further leveraged.
- **Affordability analysis and workplan:** The bureaus conducted an affordability analysis and developed a two-year Affordability Work Plan, outlining current actions and additional measures that can be implemented as early as FY25-26. Key initiatives include reviewing billing charges, fees, and policies to ensure they are progressive, not regressive; and exploring alternative tiered fee structures. The plan also focuses on expanding financial assistance programs. These changes are designed to be cost-neutral by employing a more targeted allocation of funds.
- **Collaborative leadership:** Changes in the leadership composition of the three bureaus has made it easier to collaborate and consider the needs of the City as a whole when making decisions that have impacts on the operations and costs of other bureaus.
- **Coordinated planning:** PBOT, BES, and PWB fund a position in BPS to support education, coordination, and understanding of initiatives across the city. This effort has also led to increased collaboration with Prosper Portland enabling project development that supports the community and recognizes needs of the City and bureaus to maintain financial resilience. OMSI is a great example of how this collaboration has succeeded.
- **Holistic management of the water cycle:** Portland is recognized as a leader in stormwater management, particularly in the integration of natural and physical infrastructure. The green streets program is pointed as a successful cost-effective solution to minimize infrastructure expenditures.
- **Coordination on emergency response:** Crisis management collaboration during events like landslides, winter weather events, and heat events where multiple bureaus coordinate efforts.
- **Citywide Asset Management Group (CAMG):** There are ongoing collaborations between all the bureau's asset managers, with increased information sharing on projects, best practices, and common challenges.

Opportunities:

- **Customer service, rates, billing:** The existence of this shared function presents a good opportunity for further bureau alignment on budgeting, storytelling, project prioritization, rate setting, financial management, and service levels to ensure the delivery of greater value to customers and to address the evolving needs of the communities we serve.
- **Implement PWSA City Organization report recommendations:** The bureaus have been working together over the past year and have plans in place to better collaborate on permitting, safety, security, facilities, fleet, financial planning, business services functions, natural areas, and capital project delivery. All these present opportunities for improved standardization, cross-training, and cost sharing. The PWSA Deputy City Administrator is well positioned to support the bureaus in prioritizing and coordinating these efforts.

- **Implement Natural Resources service delivery workplan:** BES and Parks in collaboration with water, PBOT, and BPS have issued a recommended workplan for the service delivery of Natural Resources. This is primarily centered on how the city manages its lands for the highest and best uses for ecological function, habitat and human recreation and open space opportunities. Implementing this work plan open opportunities to best identify how stormwater management can be funded and managed into the future.
- **Enhance internal service levels:** Bureaus would benefit from stronger central city leadership in alternative contracting efforts, rather than each bureau handling this independently. Currently, bureaus are already funding the Community Opportunities and Enhancement Program (COEP). Additionally, improvements in service levels related to technology, cybersecurity, and human resources (such as recruitment pipelines) could generate cost savings by reducing the need for individual bureau investments in these areas.
- **Assess impact of internal fees:** PWB and BES rates include significant contributions to the general fund through the Utility License Fee, overhead costs, and citywide functions. The rates also include contributions to the Community Opportunities and Enhancement Program. And the bureaus currently charge each other fees for services. All of these fees place upwards pressure on rates.
- **Convene PWSA leadership regularly:** The leadership teams of the bureaus have changed drastically over the past several years. Quarterly or semi-annual gatherings for building relationships can foster greater coordination, efficient resource allocation, and alignment with city and PWSA goals.
- **Explore integrated planning:** Identified the need to better integrate citywide long-range planning with bureau specific capital and strategic plans. A gap exists in the integrated resource planning across bureaus, especially in aligning planning horizons. Building density creates issues for transportation and sewer. Coordinated CIP works, such as the "Dig Once" policy, could help reduce costs to bureaus and communities. However, align projects can be difficult due to mismatched priorities often increasing spending on non-priority work, affecting higher-risk projects.
- **Standardize capital project lifecycle and asset management approaches:** The bureaus could benefit from standardizing their approaches to project management, planning, design, construction, and associated community programming and public outreach. The same is true for asset management standards.
- **Explore cost-sharing and inventory management:** Coordination between bureaus on cost-sharing for projects like water and sewer line interactions is already a success – build on this for other efforts. Where possible, there might be opportunities for economies of scale in chemical sourcing and parts inventory.

Key element 2: Stakeholder engagement and community support

Existing initiatives:

- **Communications and community engagement:** All three bureaus have robust communications teams, community engagement programming, and public involvement in capital projects.

Opportunities:

- **"Water is Worth It" strategic communications campaign:** Thoughtfully coordinated media engagement, communications planning, community outreach, and public engagement on all projects and programs to improve access to all services and build political community support for ongoing system investments and protect rate plans. Inform and engage customers; political, business, and regional planning leaders on the critical importance of maintaining a robust water system, investing in climate action, and protecting our water resources to bolster our regional economy for decades to come: Portland will become a destination for businesses and individuals seeking refuge from water scarcity. Accessibility to water and our efforts to address costs will be central to the campaign.
- **Coordinated engagement:** There is a need for building internal knowledge of each other's community engagement programming and coordinate efforts, notably events, and communications campaigns. Also, the bureaus could better collaborate on infrastructure project public involvement efforts to leverage each other's best practices and cost-share.
- **City Council advocacy**: Employees would like greater advocacy from the city's leadership for water and stormwater/sewer work, recognizing that there is economic development opportunity to leverage from these One Water systems.
- **District based engagement**
- **Engagement officer project**

Key element 3: Water recycling and resource recovery

Existing initiatives:

- **Water recycling and reuse not warranted by water supply conditions:** Due to Portland's abundant water supply, there is no need for recycled water for water supply in Portland's long-term demand forecast. The city's "Supply System Master Plan" and "Water Conservation and Management Plan" outline the city's adaptive approach to water supply management, which allows for continuous monitoring of supply needs and conditions.
- **Analysis of water conservation opportunities:** Nationally, water utilities have seen declines in water use due to changes in plumbing codes, increased density, shifts in manufacturing, and higher rates. This has allowed utilities to defer supply infrastructure investment, but also reduced revenues. The city recently completed a Water Conservation Planning study, which showed that reuse projects are far more costly than other conservation programs. As part of its adaptive supply planning, the city determined no additional supply is needed, and no expansion of conservation programs or reuse is planned, though this will be reassessed if conditions change.
- **Methane gas recovery**
- **Solid waste recovery**

Opportunities:

- **Hypochlorite:** The new Bull Run Filtration project will have on-site sodium hypochlorite production. BES buys this chemical for its own water treatment, albeit at a higher concentration than the filtration project will produce it. Explore the possibility of PWB supplying this chemical to BES in the future if there is capacity and feasibility.
- **Revenue models:** Exploring revenue models that support water conservation without harming financial stability.
- **Parks water conservation and grey water use:** PP&R is a large water user (irrigation, splash pads, maintenance, etc.). Could grey water use help mitigate costs? Extending splash pad operations due to heat events costs the City unplanned resources.

Key element 4: Water supply resilience

Existing initiatives:

- **Filtration facility for resilience:** With two robust drinking water supply sources and the development of the Bull Run filtration facility, the city is resilient to climate change, earthquakes, and changes future regulations.
- **Groundwater stewardship:** The city's groundwater water supply, the Columbia South Shore Wellfield plays a critical role in complimenting the Bull Run system for resilience. Continued investment in the protection and maintenance of this resource is critical for …
- **Continued protections of the Bull Run Watershed:** Fire risk to city water supplies is best mitigated by limiting human access to the protected Bull Run Watershed. The city and Forest Service enforce a watershed closure and have locked gates and security patrols to prevent unauthorized access.
- **Collaboration with Regional Water Providers:** For more than twenty years, the city has partnered with water providers from around the region on water supply planning, emergency preparedness, and water conversation through the Regional Water Providers consortium. Those relationships and regional interconnections help ensure resilience for the city and the region.

Opportunities:

- **Long-term planning for resilience:** Continued emphasis on integrating water supply resilience into long-term planning efforts across bureaus. BES has groundwater rights of 4 MGD for its water treatment plant.

Key element 5: Flood and stormwater resilience

Existing initiatives:

- **Stormwater management:** BES' role in regulatory reporting for stormwater permits and coordination with other bureaus on stormwater management was highlighted.
- **Batch discharge program:** Coordination between PWB and BES to ensure flushing activities do not adversely impact BES' stormwater capacity.

Opportunities:

- **Enhancing stormwater coordination:** Opportunities to further integrate stormwater management across bureaus, ensuring cohesive responses to flood risks.
- **Implement Natural Resource Service Delivery workplan:** This plan will help understand opportunities to best use city lands across bureau portfolios for enhanced stormwater resilience.

Key element 6: Watershed and ecosystem health

Existing initiatives:

- **Drinking Water Watershed protection:** Co-management of the Bull Run Watershed with the U.S. Forest service continues to be the backbone of the protection of the city's drinking water supply. Management of the city's Groundwater Protection Program in collaboration with neighboring cities, the City of Portland Fire Bureau and local business continues to ensure drinking water quality for the Columbia South Shore Wellfield.
- **Urban watershed management:** Portland's urban watershed management was established under the 2006 Portland Watershed Management Plan (PWMP), which supported Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and other compliance drivers. PWB and BES have collaborated and coordinated on the PWB Habitat Conservation Plan, the Streamlining program, and Invasive Species management. In recent years, BES has deprioritized many watershed programs, relying on external funding, such as the Portland Clean Energy Fund. Resolution 37609 now directs multiple bureaus to collaborate and advance watershed work under the city's new form of government, aligning with the One Water feasibility assessment.
- **Watershed management data:** Sharing climate impact data on Bull Run watershed as part of strategic planning.
- **Urban forestry and natural areas:** 15% of the City's total area are parks and natural areas, which help manage stormwater. PP&R, BES, and PWB work together co-managing many urban natural areas including Johnson Creek Watershed, Powell Butte, Mt. Tabor, Forest Park. BES and PP&R share an IGA and collaborate on watershed protection for salmon and other endangered species. PP&R is updating its water systems to reduce back flows and protect the City's water supply.

Opportunities:

- **Alignment:** There are significant opportunities between the bureaus to align on the watershed approaches, the regulatory work associated with watershed management, and the sharing of technical expertise.
- **Enhanced data sharing:** Opportunities for improved data sharing and collaboration on watershed management across bureaus.
- **Shared outcomes:** Design for collaborative and holistic mindset to urban natural resources where forestry and the utilities co-exist and work together towards the same outcomes. Clarify short term vs. long term benefits in various areas of interdependence.
- **Enterprise solutions:** Sharing software systems (e.g. asset management, asset assessments)

Key element 7: Climate change resilience

Existing initiatives:

- **City-wide coordination:** Regular coordination across city bureaus is coordinated by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and provides rich opportunities for collaboration and shared learning.
- **Climate resilience planning and project prioritization:** Shared best practices between BES and PWB include incorporating climate resilience into the water systems through project prioritization, planning, and design.
- **National collaboration:** Portland is a founding member and leader in the Water Utility Climate Alliance which provides critical learning opportunities for drinking water and wastewater systems across the country to share data, experiences and case studies. The US Water Alliance is a member of the Water Utility Climate Alliance.
- **Adaptive planning principles:** Existing demand modeling and adaptive planning helps the bureaus meet the challenges of climate change.

Opportunities:

- **Support new City Chief Sustainability Office in developing Comprehensive climate resilience strategy:** Need for a more cohesive strategy across the city to address climate change impacts on the city. Both Water and BES should engage to ensure awareness of water resources and operations needs and concerns and achieving Net Zero strategies to meet city goals.

Key element 8: Livability, quality of Life, affordability

Existing initiatives:

- **Two-year Affordability Work Plan:** Ongoing efforts to update policies and practices that make water services affordable for all Portlanders regardless of ability to pay, including making changes to billing policies, financial assistance programs, and future rate structures.

- **Community Opportunities and Enhancement Program:** The bureaus contribute 1% of their hard construction costs towards increasing the number of people of color and women in the trades and to remove barriers for construction firms owned by people of color and women so that they can successfully participate in public contracting.

Opportunities:

- **Rate study:** The drinking water and sewer functions could develop criteria for a rate study that integrates revenue stability and rate progressivity, ensuring these services are affordable to Portlanders across all income levels.

Key element 9: Social, environmental, and economic equity

Existing initiatives:

- **Equity Data Toolkit:** PWB and BES jointly developed a data toolkit that integrates community data with bureau data, creating the opportunity to conduct analyses that help inform decision making. This has been used to make changes to financial assistance, billing, and asset management. PBOT will soon start using the toolkit, thus standardizing the way in which bureaus conduct equity analyses.
- **Equitable billing and financial assistance programs:** Through the Customer Service function, the bureaus have used the Equity Data Toolkit to update billing policies and financial assistance programs to achieve more equitable outcomes, focusing on the needs of vuln
- **Equity in asset management:** Embedded equity considerations into its risk management framework, prioritizing infrastructure investments in the city areas where the consequence of a system failure would be most acutely felt by the population.
- **Equitable service level analyses:** Identified service levels with strong equity implications. The bureau is currently assessing each of these service levels using the Social Vulnerability Index to identify potential inequities in service delivery. Findings from these analyses inform the development of Asset Management Plans and projects.
- **Equity in project selection and alternatives:** Updated the Project Validation Report framework to embed community and equity considerations into project selection criteria and the alternatives within projects. This enhances equitable service delivery and minimizes adverse impacts on vulnerable populations through construction and operations.
- **Accessibility policies:** PWB developed a set of comprehensive policies to address accessibility in bureau communications, programs and services, facilities, and employee experience and training.
- **Budgeting:** Integrated Equity Plan actions into relevant budget programs, and developed budget guidance for managers and directors, ensuring they can effectively allocate funding to achieve their assigned equity actions.
- **Performance management:** established equity performance measures and continuously assessed progress towards equity commitments.

Opportunities:

- **Equity integration:** Standardized integration of equity considerations into both bureaus programs and projects, particularly in asset management.
- **District based work:** Thinking about how to provide services in a districted city.
- **Economic recovery:** Thinking about how to support citywide economic recovery.
- **Natural resource service delivery:** Assessing the nexus between the two bodies of work and bolstering research and assessment completed to date.

Appendix D Appreciative Inquiry 5D approach