

I. Introduction

In 2010, the District's Commission adopted the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's 2035 Vision and Strategic Objectives to improve the area's waterways and attain zero overflows, zero basement backups, and improved storm water management. The Vision also states that MMSD will be a model in its management of climate change impacts on wet weather and its focus on energy efficient and sustainable operations. The 2035 Vision gives guidance on how to reach the District's ultimate goal of a healthier, cleaner, more resilient region. Fourteen years into the twenty-five-year initiative, the District is dedicating its three-year strategic plan to mapping out specific achievable actions in support of the 2035 Vision. The 2025-2027 Strategic Plan sets forth a clear path over the next three years to build on the District's strengths that have resulted in numerous awards and a strong national reputation. The plan also builds on the significant operational improvements achieved over the past fourteen years and enables the District to focus its energy and resources on transformational growth to achieve our long-term 2035 Vision.

The 2035 Vision framework includes two guiding principles and two objectives. The guiding principles are the basic truths that guide the organization toward the right decisions, practices, and processes. MMSD's guiding principles are sustainable bottom line and water quality leadership and collaboration. By practicing the sustainable bottom line, future planning, design, and operational decisions balance economic, environmental, operational, and social values. Water quality leadership and collaboration includes MMSD expanding its leadership role in developing regional approaches to protecting and improving water quality, developing and fostering strategic alliances, and advocating for a watershed approach to managing the region's water resources.

The two objectives laid out in the 2035 Vision are integrated watershed management and climate change mitigation/adaptation with an emphasis on energy efficiency. An integrated approach to watershed management responds to inter-jurisdictional opportunities and limitations and includes external public, private, and nonprofit sector partners. Focusing on climate change mitigation and adaptation and emphasizing energy efficiency helps the District plan for the impact of climate change on our services and tailor our operations to be able to respond.

The following 2025-2027 Strategic Plan identifies the focus areas and projects that MMSD will undertake in the next three years to realize the 2035 Vision.

II. Plan Elements

The three-year strategic plan is shaped by the 2035 Vision framework. The District's work and priorities are also weighed against the nationally recognized guidelines of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) Effective Utility Management initiative for water and wastewater utilities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The NACWA Effective Utility Management (EUM) Initiative, launched in 2007, has been used by a growing number of utilities across the U.S. to improve operational performance. EUM has been recognized by the collaborating utility organizations as the best way to promote sustainable water and wastewater systems. EUM identifies Ten Attributes of Effectively Managed Utilities. These ten attributes help management maintain a balanced approach to all aspects of utility operations, while focusing on areas of improvement.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) suggest that development should balance social, economic, and environmental needs. The goals were developed by the United Nations to provide a global roadmap to improve conditions for current and future generations. The UN SDGs provide guidance for MMSD as it pursues projects and initiatives. The District's goals in the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan take into consideration actions the District can take to further the UN SDGs. The SDGs and MMSD's history suggest that local government is most effective when it works in partnership with the region. We will continue to collaborate with private businesses, community organizations, and other orders of government to achieve our mission.

III. Planning Process

The 2025-2027 planning process was guided by the Office of Management and Budget. During the annual budget process, budget staff met with divisions to discuss ideas, opportunities and goals that could be included in the three-year plan and how their 2025 budget requests relates to the plan. Budget staff reviewed all of the division inputs and organized this information into strategies and measures as part of an internal SWOT analysis. The Executive Director provided the final feedback of his priorities to include in the plan.

The pyramid on the following page visualizes the elements of the three-year strategic plan. At the bottom of the pyramid is the mission.

- The MMSD **mission** defines who we are and why we exist as an organization. It is base-building and drives everything we do.
- Above the mission are our 2035 **guiding principles** that permeate our work and do not change.
- Our 2035 **objectives** flow up from the mission and guiding principles and define the change we want to see over the next three years.
- The MMSD **vision** is the pinnacle of these foundations and efforts: a cleaner, healthier, more resilient region.

By living our mission, staying true to our principles, and taking action to achieve our objectives, we will ultimately reach the District's vision. We know that we need to strengthen the bottom of the pyramid or work on foundational work in order to reach the top of the pyramid. In the next three years, we are committed to working on programs, projects, and initiatives that support our guiding principles and help us achieve the 2035 Vision objectives.

To reach our
ultimate **Vision:**
A cleaner,
healthier,
more resilient region

To Achieve our 2035
Objectives:
Integrated Watershed Management &
Climate Change Adaptation/Mitigation
with a focus on Energy Efficiency

What are we doing?

Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern Projects
Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
Urban Water Cycle
Green Infrastructure
Energy & Waste Neutrality

Following our **Guiding Principles:**
Sustainable Bottom Line & Water Quality Leadership &
Collaboration

What are we doing?

Workforce Planning • Organizational Development •
Post-2028 Operations Analysis • Milorganite • Research
& Innovation • Community Engagement • Climate
Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Mission

To protect public health and the environment through world-class, cost effective water resource management, leadership, and partnership.

IV. Guiding Principles

A. Sustainable Bottom Line

The sustainable bottom line is a framework designed to help organizations think about the environmental, social, financial, and operational impacts, benefits, and trade-offs of the organization's decisions. MMSD has a long history of strong financial planning. In addition, over the past three years, MMSD has participated in Milwaukee's Water Equity Task Force, affirmed its commitment to environmental justice, and increased its community outreach and workforce development efforts. In the next three years, MMSD will build off these efforts and focus on:

- Workforce Engagement
- Organizational Development
- Long-range Financial Planning
- Analyzing post-2028 operations analysis
- Information Life Cycle Management

B. Water Quality Leadership and Collaboration

We know that water does not follow municipal boundaries and that we are stronger when we partner as a region. MMSD has a history of providing strong leadership and cooperation to protect the area's water resources. We seek partnerships to provide economies of scale and operational efficiencies. In the next three years, we will build off these efforts and focus on:

- Research and innovation
- Community engagement-Workforce Ecosystem
- Data Strategies and Transformation
- Environmental Justice

V. 2035 Objectives

A. Integrated Watershed Management

Integrated watershed management is a continuous adaptive process of managing human activities and ecosystems at the watershed scale. It integrates land and water use planning, and it evaluates cumulative effects from multiple environmental stressors. Integrated watershed management brings people and their activities together to build relationships. In order to work across watershed boundaries, MMSD depends on relationships and strong communication with its stakeholders. Furthermore, the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides significant funding for clean water efforts and water infrastructure is receiving elevated attention at the national level. MMSD will take this timely opportunity to further its mission by:

- Water Quality
- Completing projects to support the Milwaukee Estuary of Area of Concern
- Water Reclamation Facility Operations
- Expanding green infrastructure implementation

B. Climate change adaptation and mitigation with an emphasis on energy efficiency

Climate change impacts MMSD's operations and flood protection efforts. MMSD must plan ahead for the consequences and costs of climate change. In order to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change, MMSD is evaluating options to improve the resilience of its operations, infrastructure, and finances. MMSD has identified its climate change vulnerabilities and is updating its Energy Plan. The 2050 Facilities Plan also identified additional renewable energy and energy conservation opportunities. Looking forward, MMSD will build off of these successes and work on:

- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
- Sustainability and Research
- Renewable Energy and Efficiency

VI. Conclusion

The 2025-2027 Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document. The overarching goal of the plan is to assure that the core mission of the District, to protect public health and the environment through world-class, cost-effective water resource management, leadership, and partnership, is well supported into the future. This plan aims to set our priorities, focus our energy and resources, strengthen our operations, and ensure that employees and stakeholders are working toward common goals. The public counts on MMSD to provide seamless wastewater operations and be agile and responsive to their evolving needs. This plan defines our destination yet maintains needed flexibility so that MMSD can deal with the uncertainty. We will track progress through regular reporting. The annual budget will serve as a reporting and implementing policy document.