

2020 Update



Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission Strategic Plan



Alberta Capital Region
Wastewater Commission

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission (ACRWC) Board members and administration met over the course of several meetings in 2020 to review various aspects of the 2019 – 2023 Strategic Plan. This updated plan comprises the expressed desires of the Commission’s Board, and provides councils, businesses, and other stakeholders with an indication of the Commission’s plans. For 2020, the Board made no changes to the goals and but did clarify wording for some of the strategies and performance metrics.

1.2 Vision, Mission and Values

1.2.1 Vision Statement

The Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission is an environmental leader in wastewater management.

The Board’s vision provides a long-term picture of where or what the region wishes to be or become. The vision also indicates what makes the Commission unique from other similar organizations.

1.2.2 Mission Statement

The Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission provides responsible wastewater transmission and treatment for member municipalities.

The Board’s mission answers a question about what business the Commission is in. It lets readers know what the Commission does and who benefits from the work of the Commission.

1.2.3 Values

The values expressed here continue to be the guiding principles that help determine how the Commission will operate, both in public and privately.

Accountability: We are accountable to those we serve, and we will focus on integrity in our governance.

Communication: We will ensure that technical information, board plans, and progress are reported to our respective member municipalities, and request that member municipalities provide information to the Commission in a timely manner.

Continuous Improvement: We are committed to meeting and exceeding provincial regulatory standards, and we encourage new ideas and approaches to provide excellent service delivery.

Leadership: We will provide high-value service delivery and environmental protection that inspires our regional neighbors. We will be seen as leaders in our field of expertise.

Reliability: We are committed to providing dependable service to member municipalities.

1.3 ACRWC's High Priority Strategies

Within the full list of strategies that appear later in this document, the Board has created a subset of five 'high' ranked strategies. The items on this list reflect the priorities that the Board saw as both important and timely. Administration will report on these high priority strategies at every Board meeting.

ACRWC's High Priority Strategies

Strategy
Operate and maintain our facilities to ensure the Commission meets or exceeds environmental regulatory requirements.
Manage wastewater at the source through Bylaws and the Source Control Program.
Use industry standard asset management strategies to determine infrastructure needs, costs and timelines as well as potential sources of funding.
Request additional funding from the Province of Alberta to finance capital replacements and upgrades.
Adopt rate increases that support the long-term financial sustainability of the Commission.
Be early adopters of relevant environmental protection policies that further the goals of the Commission and its members.

1.4 Priority Ranking of Strategies

Each strategy in the tables below contains a colour coded prioritized ranking of relative strategies for 2021 and beyond as determined by the Commission's directors. This ranking is used by the Commission's administration to determine the relatively high, moderate, and low priorities for the year as the Board assigns resources to key strategies.

High Priority - Work on this Strategy must be conducted in 2021 in order for the goal to be achieved within the scope of this strategic plan.

Medium Priority - When resources and/or better information become available after required resources are assigned to high priority strategies, action will be taken on this strategy.

Low Priority - Limited action is expected on this strategy in the current calendar year.

Complete - The goal or strategic objective has been met

2 Goals and Strategies

The following pages contain the full list of goals as identified by the ACRWC's Board. Within each goal, are a series of strategies that contribute to achieving that individual goal.

Throughout the tables on the following pages, the term 'Lead Role' is used. This list identifies the lead role:

- Board.....ACRWC Board
- GMGeneral Manager
- Corp.....Corporate Services
- PlanEngineering Planning
- RegRegulatory Services
- OpsOperations
- Maint.....Maintenance
- D&C.....Design & Construction

2.1 Environment

2.1.1 River Protection

Goal: To Protect the North Saskatchewan River			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Operate and maintain our facilities to ensure the Commission meets or exceeds environmental regulatory requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACRWC continues to regularly meets or exceeds provincial regulatory requirements. 	
b)	Manage wastewater at the source through Bylaws and the Source Control Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wastewater management systems are optimized. Businesses, landowners, and municipalities are better educated and more accountable for water pollution. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	The ACRWC meets regulatory requirements on reportable contaminants 100% of the time.	Ongoing	Ops
b)	100% of businesses in identified sectors of concern with a high environmental risk are inspected at least once every five years	2023	Reg

2.1.2 Climate Resiliency

Goal: To Anticipate and Respond to Climate Change			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Maintain a business continuity plan that anticipates climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs and damage associated with flooding are minimized and the ACRWC can deliver service reliably in all weather. 	
b)	Create a long-term climate change plan that explores potential changes and impacts over the next 50 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term costs, including facility damage and personnel safety, associated with increasing frequency of natural disasters, is minimized. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	A business continuity plan that anticipates climate change is created.	2020	GM
b)	A long-term climate change plan is created, and all other business, maintenance, and asset management plans are updated to align with this plan.	2023	Plan

2.2 Performance Assurance

2.2.1 Service Delivery

Goal: To Maintain Operational Capabilities Through Appropriate Staffing			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Conduct succession planning to ensure the Commission has adequate staffing as key personnel depart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The transition between retiring and new staff members is seamless and new staff are capable in their roles. 	
b)	Review employee compensation and create employee development programs to ensure staff are qualified and confident in their roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Commission is known as an attractive place to work for professionals who are looking to challenge themselves. ▪ Member municipalities, citizens, and businesses have confidence in the Commission. ▪ Staff members feel confident in their roles and are adequately trained. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	An organizational review to identify future staffing levels and skill sets is complete and succession plans to attract qualified candidates to replace departing personnel are in place.	2019	GM
b)	All staff have a documented development plan that is reviewed at least annually.	2020	GM
b)	Staff indicate continuous improvement in their ability to safely and competently carry out their jobs.	2022	Corp

2.2.2 Asset Management

Goal: To Continue to Meet Service Needs of Member Municipalities			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Use industry standard asset management strategies to determine infrastructure needs, costs and timelines as well as potential sources of funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long-term repair costs are minimized through proactive maintenance. ▪ Innovative infrastructure replacement and optimization of existing systems are explored. ▪ The Commission can budget for repair and replacement and of infrastructure proactively. 	
b)	Request additional funding from the Province of Alberta to finance capital replacements and upgrades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Commission can replace aging infrastructure while continuing to deliver services at current levels. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	Maintain a comprehensive Asset Management program	Ongoing	Plan
a)	Board members have the information necessary to decide on a strategic course of action whether to accelerate the ACRWC's rehabilitation/replacement program.	2020	GM
b)	Contingent on (a), the Board implements a communication and advocacy initiative to request infrastructure replacement funding from the provincial government.	2021	Board

2.3 Process and Policy

2.3.1 Providing Information to Members

Goal: To Ensure Appropriate Information Transfer to Member Municipalities			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Ensure that Board members are involved in reporting Commission business to their own councils and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members are personally invested and accountable for reporting to the Commission and back to their respective municipalities. 	
b)	Create comprehensive “reporting-out” documents of themes and key issues to report to municipal councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All member municipalities receive the same information. Municipalities are more aware of issues facing the Commission, and the overall profile of the Commission is raised. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	Board members provide regular updates to their respective municipalities regarding issues with which the Commission is currently dealing.	Ongoing	Board
b)	Reporting-out material is comprehensive and delivered in a consistent manner to member municipalities.	Ongoing	GM/Board

2.3.2 Reporting and Compliance

Goal: To Improve Reporting and Timely Compliance with Commission Policies			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Maintain a formal communication strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member municipalities are more aware of the challenges and successes of the Commission, and the Commission is able to track progress in member municipalities. 	
b)	Set and publicize standards for compliance requests when Commission member municipalities are asked to create/revise bylaws or policies that have an impact on the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way reporting between the Commission and member municipalities is improved. Member municipalities comply with Commission requests in a timely manner. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	The Board reviews its communication strategy annually.	Annually	GM/Board
b)	The communication strategy includes methods for regular reporting to member municipalities.	2019	GM
b)	The ACRWC can confirm whether member municipalities support the Commission's requests for statutory or policy changes. *	2023	Board

* This measure is not completely within the Commission's control.

2.4 Stewardship

2.4.1 Technology Adoption

Goal: To Continue to Improve Operations and Management Systems			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Engage with other utilities and professionals to research and adopt new technology that lead to industry best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commission is a leader in considering the adoption of advanced technology and continues to exceed regulatory requirements. 	
b)	Review operational systems to streamline processes and implement innovative solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commission is seen as a leader in wastewater management by both industry and governments. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	Research is conducted into new technologies and best practices in other jurisdictions in Canada and beyond.	2020	Plan
b)	Comprehensive review of current operations identifies areas to improve efficiencies.	2021	Ops

2.4.2 Fiscal Sustainability

Goal: To Develop Innovative Solutions that Achieve Long-Term Financial Sustainability			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Adopt rate increases that support the long-term financial sustainability of the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member municipalities are better able to budget for and manage rate-payer expectations through predictable rate increases. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	A standard rate increase is calculated in accordance with Commission asset management and capital replacement plans.	Ongoing	Corp

2.5 Strategic Leadership

2.5.1 Proactive Planning

Goal: To Provide Leadership to the Province, Region, Member Municipalities, and Other Wastewater Utilities			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Use an Environmental Management System to manage the environmental aspects of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMS is up to date, reflects the priorities of the Board, and optimizes current resources. 	
b)	Be early adopters of relevant environmental protection policies that further the goals of the Commission and its members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member municipalities, industry, other Commissions, and the Province recognize the Commission as an environmental leader. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	EMS maintains registration to ISO14001 standard.	Ongoing	Reg
b)	A strategy for ongoing research into environmental protection, regulations, and policies in other jurisdictions within Canada and abroad is approved by the Board.	2020	GM
b)	The ACRWC has representation at all Water Management Framework advisory committee meetings and progress of the initiative is reported annually to the Board.	Ongoing	GM

2.6 Understanding Stakeholders

2.6.1 Commission Profile

Goal: To Raise Awareness About Commission Issues with Member Councils			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Update the Commission Communication Strategy and related practices to ensure that the priorities of member councils are a focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication between the Commission and member municipalities is improved. 	
b)	Keep board members involved in decision-making wherever possible and engage with members to ask them what they need from the Commission prior to being asked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members are engaged and have buy-in with respect to Commission issues. 	
c)	Promote treatment plant tours and presentations for municipal councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member municipalities are more aware of technical information, past successes, and future needs of the Commission. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	The Commission's Communication strategy is updated based on current knowledge and Board member expectations.	2019	GM
b)	Bi-annual survey determines Board member priorities to ensure that Commission agendas reflect the wastewater needs of its members.	2021	GM
c)	Each member municipal council is offered a plant tour and/or ACRWC orientation once each electoral term.	Ongoing	GM/Board

2.6.2 Stakeholder Needs

Goal: To Engage with Stakeholders Relative to their Needs			
Strategies (We Will...)		Desired Result(s) or Achievement(s)	
a)	Work with member municipalities to determine what utility customers would benefit in knowing about the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commission is able to optimize its service delivery to its members and is able to grow regional knowledge of its role. 	
b)	Remain in contact with utility providers, such as EPCOR, to find out about issues as early as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty is reduced, and the Commission is able to plan and budget for the future more effectively. 	
c)	Further develop personal relationships with landowners, environmental NGOs, the province, and others to identify and mitigate issues before significant problems arise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commission is able to optimize its resources by collaborating with other stakeholders. 	
Performance Measures			
Strategy	Measure	Target Time	Lead Role
a)	Ideas and themes to influence system users' knowledge and behaviors, as determined by Board members and staff, are taken back to member municipalities for input.	2023	GM
b)	Regular, meetings with EPCOR and other regional utility providers occur as needed.	Ongoing	GM
c)	The ACRWC follows a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process for its major initiatives and projects.	Ongoing	GM