Doing great work for a Great Lake

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2021

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District is a forward-thinking and dynamic organization, and our employees play an active part in developing and fulfilling our Strategic Plan. What follows in these pages is our direction for the next three years. Our hope is that each employee will see their connection to these goals and be inspired to perform their best and most creative work.

Great work. Great people. Great future.
About the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District

VISION
Be the environmental leader in enhancing quality of life in the region and protecting its water resources.

MISSION
Provide progressive management of sewage and stormwater through fiscal responsibility, innovation, and community partnerships.

VALUES

Environmental Stewardship: Initiating and maintaining effective practices of environmental sustainability through commitment to a better tomorrow, a healthy environment, and strong communities.

Ethics, Honesty, and Transparency: Maintain the highest standards with our customers, our business partners, and each other.

Balanced and Informed Decision Making: Quality decisions based on objective metrics, analysis of our systems, customer needs, and organizational goals that include diverse opinions, ideas, and perspectives.

Customer Focus: Keep our internal and external customers in mind in all of our decisions, policies, and programs. Collaborate effectively in partnership with others both internal and external to the District.

Progressive Culture: Initiating and facilitating positive changes. Embracing and promoting innovation that benefits the District, our industry and the region. Promoting safety in all that we do.

Accountability: A consistent willingness to accept responsibility, account for one’s action, and deliver on individual and collective commitments.

Respect: Demonstrating high regard, value and consideration for self, others, community and environment.
Welcome to the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District’s 2019 to 2021 Strategic Plan. I am proud of this plan and, even more, proud of the thoughtfulness, insight, and collaboration that it represents and supports. Our Great Lake depends on great work, great people, and a clear vision of a great future. Our strategy depends on the same.

This strategic plan, Doing great work for a Great Lake, charts a course forward for efficiency, productivity, and sustainability over the next three years. It builds on our success and the strength of our core business, and is crafted with insight from employees and leadership.

Five strategic areas of focus—one on each of the following pages—and their corresponding objectives will guide our future while ensuring employees have clarity and flexibility to define their teams’ goals and make this vision personal.

The outstanding conveyance and treatment of sewage, stormwater management, and all the support services that make it happen provide a strong foundation for our future work. Whether you are securing that foundation or building for the future, the great work of our great people is critical and appreciated.

The first year of this plan comes on the fiftieth anniversary year of the 1969 Cuyahoga River fire, an event that sparked environmental awareness, policy, and advocacy around the country, including the Clean Water Act, which guides our work today. Our regional progress over the last half century is a testament to what great work, great people, and a shared vision for a great future can do.

Thank you for what you do every day. I look forward to working with all of you to implement our 2019 to 2021 Strategic Plan.

Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells
Customer and Community Connections

Internal and External Engagement and Service

Assist member communities to address their Clean Water Act issues

• Provide communities with data and project recommendations through completion of the local sewer system evaluation studies (SSES).
• Build on local SSES findings to focus project selection under the Member Community Infrastructure Program (MCIP).

Optimize our ability to advance community objectives

• Enhance the culture of sustainability within NEORSD.
• Use green infrastructure to strategically address resiliency including workforce opportunities, improving tree canopy, and access to green space across the NEORSD service area.
• Establish a visual brand that will be consistently applied throughout NEORSD.
• Develop an ongoing customer feedback mechanism to gauge satisfaction.
• Enhance existing and initiate new programmatic opportunities to promote healthy communities.
• Leverage technology to provide better services and accessibility to resources for NEORSD customers, member communities, partners, suppliers, and vendors.

Celebrating 50 years of progress

The first year of this strategic plan, 2019, marks the fiftieth year of progress since the 1969 Cuyahoga River fire. We are proud of our role in the river’s rebirth and remain committed to its improvement and protection.
Expand water quality focus to increase benefits to the region’s waterways

- Identify opportunities to enhance water quality and continue to solve intercommunity sewer and stormwater infrastructure problems.
- Identify opportunities to drive water quality protection and enhancement, in addition to flooding and erosion control, under the Regional Stormwater Management Program.
- Conduct ongoing campaigns to engage the public in clean water issues.

Increase opportunities to improve resource management through sustainability practices

- Manage NEORSD efforts to modify the Consent Decree for combined sewer overflow (CSO) control to provide better overall environmental and public health benefits in the most cost-effective manner.
- Improve resource management to reduce the costs and environmental footprint of NEORSD operations, including waste, purchased supplies, and utilities.
- Implement solutions and technologies to support NEORSD sustainability initiatives.

Progress is achieved through people.

Our team of experts, professionals, innovators and leaders see opportunities to grow. How will we develop talent and encourage the best in the region to consider a clean-water future? How will we create partnerships that benefit our work and improve the region’s quality of life? How will we appreciate what each employee uniquely offers in ways that make our work and relationships stronger?

Our plan identifies strategies to empower our employees and better serve our many customers, community partners, and our environment.
Explore new ways to enhance long-term financial planning that optimize ability to provide sewer and stormwater services with minimal impact on rates

- Integrate health care plan design with the long-term financial plan.
- Identify design optimizations for cost savings.
- Implement performance-based contracts for HVAC and electrical upgrades.
- Pursue funding sources that result in the lowest possible cost of borrowing for ratepayers.
- Manage finances and meet metrics to maintain current bond ratings.
- Improve the understanding of risk in shaping decision-making and results across NEORSD programs.
- Increase participation of eligible customers in affordability programs.

Develop future business opportunities to optimize operations and better serve member communities

- Evaluate cost-effective opportunities to provide increased level of service to the local collection system as NEORSD advances capital improvement projects.
- Evaluate opportunities for handling and processing solids from external sources
- Explore opportunities to use land protection to minimize costs and maximize benefits under the Regional Stormwater Management Program.
- Improve reporting capabilities through business intelligence initiatives focused on customer revenue and spending.

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— Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Chief Executive Officer
Implement Operational Readiness Plan to support evolving operations and maintenance

- Improve standardization of operations and maintenance procedures.
- Reduce utility and chemical consumption.
- Improve maintenance efficiency and effectiveness across facilities.
- Instill culture of continuous improvement across facilities.
- Establish information security program to provide assurance that critical operations and information technology assets are protected.

Implement technologies and processes that improve business efficiency and effectiveness

- Implement improvements to Engineering and Construction’s project management systems in support of the Capital Improvement Program, the Stormwater Construction Plan, and Operations & Maintenance.
- Apply sustainable practices to increase efficiencies and control costs associated with largest expenditures, including utilities and solids handling.
- Enhance use of the Legal Department as a strategic partner in accomplishing NEORSD-wide and department-specific goals.
- Standardize NEORSD policy-making procedures and codify policies in a manner that maximizes functionality and is considerate of customer and community needs.
- Activate general and targeted communication methods to better reach and inform NEORSD employees.
- Evaluate improved Operations & Maintenance information technology and control system applications and migrate to such systems as appropriate.
- Improve business operations by reducing process complexities, expanding digital workflows, and maximizing use of tools and systems.

Fully implement management process to support successful delivery of the Regional Stormwater Management Program

- Use Stormwater Master Plan findings to drive design and construction prioritization for both NEORSD and community cost-share projects.
- Optimize operations and maintenance delivery.
Progress is built on a firm foundation.

Our previous strategic plan included a significant investment in resources. From assets and operational readiness, to regional stormwater management studies and community partnerships, we were committed to the work it takes to protect our Great Lake and prepare for future challenges.

Our employees do amazing work. Our work of treating wastewater and managing stormwater is the foundation for all our efforts; whether that work is a commitment to daily efficiency, or strategic and future-oriented, our collective efforts will ensure our future success.