



LEHIGH COUNTY AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PLAN

ADOPTED DECEMBER 1988; REVISED DECEMBER 1995 AND FEBRUARY 2007

FOREWORD

Lehigh County Authority (LCA) first developed and adopted a Strategic Plan (Plan) in 1988 to provide a road map for its “journey” of delivering water and wastewater (W&WW) service in Lehigh County. Much has changed in the last two decades, and this 2007 update was undertaken to be sure that our Plan addresses the most significant current and future W&WW needs and charts a clear and effective way of getting there.

The purpose of this Plan is twofold. First, it provides criteria to guide LCA's efforts in the coming years. These criteria will help us to select specific actions that will bring us closer to achieving our goals, and to discard those that are not clearly aligned with our vision. Second, it sets a level of expectation—what we expect of ourselves and what others should expect of us.

PLAN STRUCTURE The Plan includes the following elements:

Mission – a statement defining what we plan to achieve for whom and where and a generalized description of how we plan to achieve it;

Vision – our dream, or said differently, “What do we want to be when we grow up?”;

Objectives – our goals for the most critical performance areas, including specific measures to gauge our performance;

Supporting Strategies – general activities that will be undertaken to achieve the Objectives; and

Values – these criteria reflect the standards or philosophy, which guide our implementation of the Plan.

One other element is typically part of a strategic plan process—Tactics. This Plan does not include a statement or summary of our tactics. Tactics cover the specific steps to be taken to implement the supporting strategies. LCA has historically established tactics through a host of documents and processes, including annual budgets, capital plans, communication plans, policies, and standards, among others.

Implementation of the Plan began in 1988, and some elements of that Plan remain in place in this 2007 update. Other elements have been added, changed or deleted to reflect the changes that have taken place since 1988. Although we expect to revisit the Plan triennially, this 2007 Plan update is expected to provide meaningful guidance for many years to come, as did its predecessor. We recognize that both internal and external changes will have an impact on our ability to fully implement this Plan, and future updates will be necessary to address those changes.

CHANGES One change in this Plan requires some explanation:

Previous Plans separately listed the water and the wastewater Objectives and Supporting Strategies. Because there is significant duplication and overlap, we have consolidated Objectives and Supporting Strategies where appropriate, reducing the former from nine to four. To facilitate this, any statement in the Plan refers to both W&WW unless specifically stated otherwise. For example, where the term “service” is used, it means both W&WW.

MISSION

To provide continually improved, sustainable, affordable and reliable water and wastewater service in the Lehigh Valley region which meets the expectations of existing and future customers.

VISION

To be the leading water and wastewater service provider in the Lehigh Valley region in every dimension.

OBJECTIVES & SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

SERVICE QUALITY

To provide high quality service, meeting or outperforming industry standards and regulatory requirements, including service reliability of at least 99.95%; customer service satisfaction of LCA of at least 93%, and providing facilities and capacity to meet demand when required by new and existing customers.

STRATEGIES:

Facilities & Capacity

- a) Absent the highest capacity source, maintain water supply equal to one and one-half times average daily demand.
- b) Develop and maintain a transmission and distribution network capable of delivering flow equal to one times maximum daily demand plus fire flow equal to the appropriate Insurance Service Organization's requirement.
- c) Maintain effective system storage equal to storage for firefighting based on Insurance Service Organization guidelines plus storage for emergency and peak demands equal to average day demand.
- d) Regularly monitor current and projected capacity needs, and develop and regularly update 20-year facility plans.
- e) Develop plans identifying desirable locations for future facilities, and acquire such sites.
- f) Maintain an active program of infiltration and inflow (I/I) location and removal in conjunction with LCA-served municipal systems and continually evaluate the benefits of I/I removal considering both avoided operation and maintenance, and capital costs.
- g) Achieve and maintain an unaccounted-for wastewater ratio of no more than 20%.

Operations

- a) In the event a source violates a primary drinking water standard, use of that supply will be terminated until the primary drinking water standard can be consistently met.
- b) Prepare for future workforce needs through the establishment of employee recruitment, development and retention programs and by fostering a work environment that rewards employee performance in areas of identified strategic importance.
- c) Achieve and maintain an unaccounted-for water ratio of no more than 7.5%.
- d) Actively monitor customer and system wastewater strengths and volumes, and facility conditions.

OUR VALUES

Maintain working conditions that provide personal fulfillment, reward performance and personal initiative, encourage individual development and implementation of improvements, and ensure employee safety.



- e) Hold all high-strength wastewater dischargers accountable for their waste strength through established user charges or pretreatment requirements.
- f) Aggressively apply technology to address all operational needs, including knowledge development and retention.

Reliability

- a) Maintain a leading edge emergency response, risk management and security management program.
- b) Set standards for consistent emergency response times in all service areas, including remote locations.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Practice sound financial management as evidenced by user rates which, in aggregate for all customer classes, increase by no more than the change in the national CPI (All Urban Consumers – Water and Sewerage Maintenance, US City Average) over any five-year span and which do not result in legal challenges.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Use generally accepted ratemaking practices in establishing user charge and capital recovery fees.
- b) Recover capacity costs attributable to serving new customers through capital recovery fees based on the capital costs of that division.
- c) Convert new service areas to common water use charges over no more than 10 years from the date of service initiation.
- d) Establish a common wastewater rate for operational costs by 2012.
- e) Achieve and maintain an AA bond rating.
- f) Closely scrutinize operational costs and actively seek more economical and efficient ways of providing services.
- g) Pursue an aggressive accounts receivable collections program.

REGIONAL SERVICE

Actively promote regionalization of public water and wastewater service in the Lehigh Valley region, as measured by a 20% reduction in the number of systems over a 10-year span, resulting in the reduction of duplication of effort and fragmentation of service, better utilization of existing facilities, and enhanced public service quality and efficiency.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Provide leadership in forming a regional providers forum to evaluate and plan for mutually beneficial service.
- b) Support efforts to study and implement regional approaches to services.
- c) Promote memoranda of understanding with all neighboring public water systems providing for interconnection when systems are within one-half mile of each other.
- d) Actively promote the public acquisition and integration of systems in the Lehigh Valley region.
- e) Establish agreements with Lehigh Valley municipalities without public water service, designating the Authority as the service provider to all new development where service is proposed.

OUR VALUES

Actively seek guidance from and communicate with our employees, customers, municipal officials, community organizations and other stakeholders.

Provide service that protects the environment and enhances life in the community.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Promote the preservation and protection of water resources in the Lehigh Valley region, as evidenced by increased implementation of joint land-use plans which consider water and wastewater system planning as a key component, no new developer-operated water or wastewater systems, and integrated approaches to source water protection.

OUR VALUES

Constantly seek ways to improve LCA services by:

- implementing more economical, efficient and effective ways of performing ongoing activities;*
- evaluating and refining activities to ensure they achieve their purpose;*
- striving to perform all tasks properly the first time, every time;*
- treating all problems as opportunities for improvement; and*
- seeking new and creative responses to changing needs.*

STRATEGIES:

- a) Establish joint efforts with Lehigh Valley water systems to develop area-wide aquifer protection measures.
- b) Monitor the impact of all proposed and existing activities, land uses, policies and legislation on water quality and quantity in the Lehigh Valley and oppose those having adverse impacts.
- c) Educate municipal officials about water quality protection and preservation of groundwater recharge.
- d) Build and maintain public awareness of the importance of water conservation and promote conservative water use.
- e) Educate the public, especially children, about sound water resource management and protection.
- f) Hold regular discussions with municipal officials regarding the relationship between proposed land use and service plans, and assist municipalities in developing service plans consistent with their land-use plans.

OUR VALUES

Set Excellence as our standard.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to thank all employees, the customers, public officials, other stakeholders, and Lehigh Valley members of Vistage International, Inc. for their contributions to this Plan. Their input played an integral role in the development of a thoughtful and meaningful Plan.



LEHIGH COUNTY AUTHORITY

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