

City of Redmond

Utilities Strategic Framework

DRAFT



City of Redmond
WASHINGTON

Introduction

The City of Redmond’s Water, Wastewater, Garbage and Recycling, and Stormwater Utilities build, operate and maintain City infrastructure and run programs that supply clean drinking water, safely remove and manage waste, and protect property, human health and the environment. We operate throughout the City and depend on staff in Redmond’s Public Works, Planning and Finance Departments.

This Strategic Framework (Framework) details priorities for the City’s four Utilities looking forward to 2050. It was created with input from approximately 200 individuals who work directly for one or more of the Utilities and relies on the best available information. The Utilities have considered and seek to align this Framework with other efforts within the City, including the 2019 Community Strategic Plan, the 2015 Water Resources Strategic Plan, biennial Citizen Survey results, and Utility-specific functional plans. The purpose of this Framework is to ensure that the Utilities will meet future challenges and take advantage of opportunities so that the City of Redmond can continue to meet the needs of utility rate payers and the Redmond community.



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Mission

City of Redmond's Utilities provides the community with reliable and safe drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste utility services that help sustain people's quality of life and protect and enhance Redmond's natural environment.

Shared Values and Principles

The Utilities strive to embody established City-wide values:

- Commitment to Service
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Welcoming

We endeavor to operate Utilities that are:

- Sustainable
- Reliable
- Responsible
- Collaborative
- Efficient
- Resilient

Opportunities and Challenges

Redmond is home to diverse residential and business communities and vital natural resources. Our Utilities deliver outstanding, cost-effective utility services. To continue to do so, especially to meet growth, we must innovate and adjust operations and programs. During the strategic planning process, staff from across the Utilities identified challenges and opportunities that drive our work.

- **The City is becoming denser and more urban.**

As Redmond continues to grow, the Utilities will need to adapt design standards and operations to match land development patterns.

- **Climate change will affect how the City delivers utility services.** We can expect drier summers and more intense winter storm events in the coming decades. These changes will directly impact regional drinking water supply and stormwater management practices. As stewards of the environment, we also need to be conscious of how the Utilities' actions contribute to climate change.

- **Our workforce is highly dynamic.**

Before experienced Utilities' staff retire or move on, it is essential to harness that knowledge gained through years of experience. Similarly, we must work to ensure that all staff has the resources they need to build upon this knowledge, along with opportunities to expand their skill sets. Finally, we must operate Utilities that attract high-quality job applicants.

- **Technology is changing.** The City's new asset management program, use of in-the-field data capture and entry systems, and other available and emerging technologies offer us new ways to gather information that will guide our decisions and optimize management of utility systems.

- **Planning and engineering activities for the Utilities are now managed by one division.** Our new organizational structure creates opportunities to improve coordination and better manage resources.



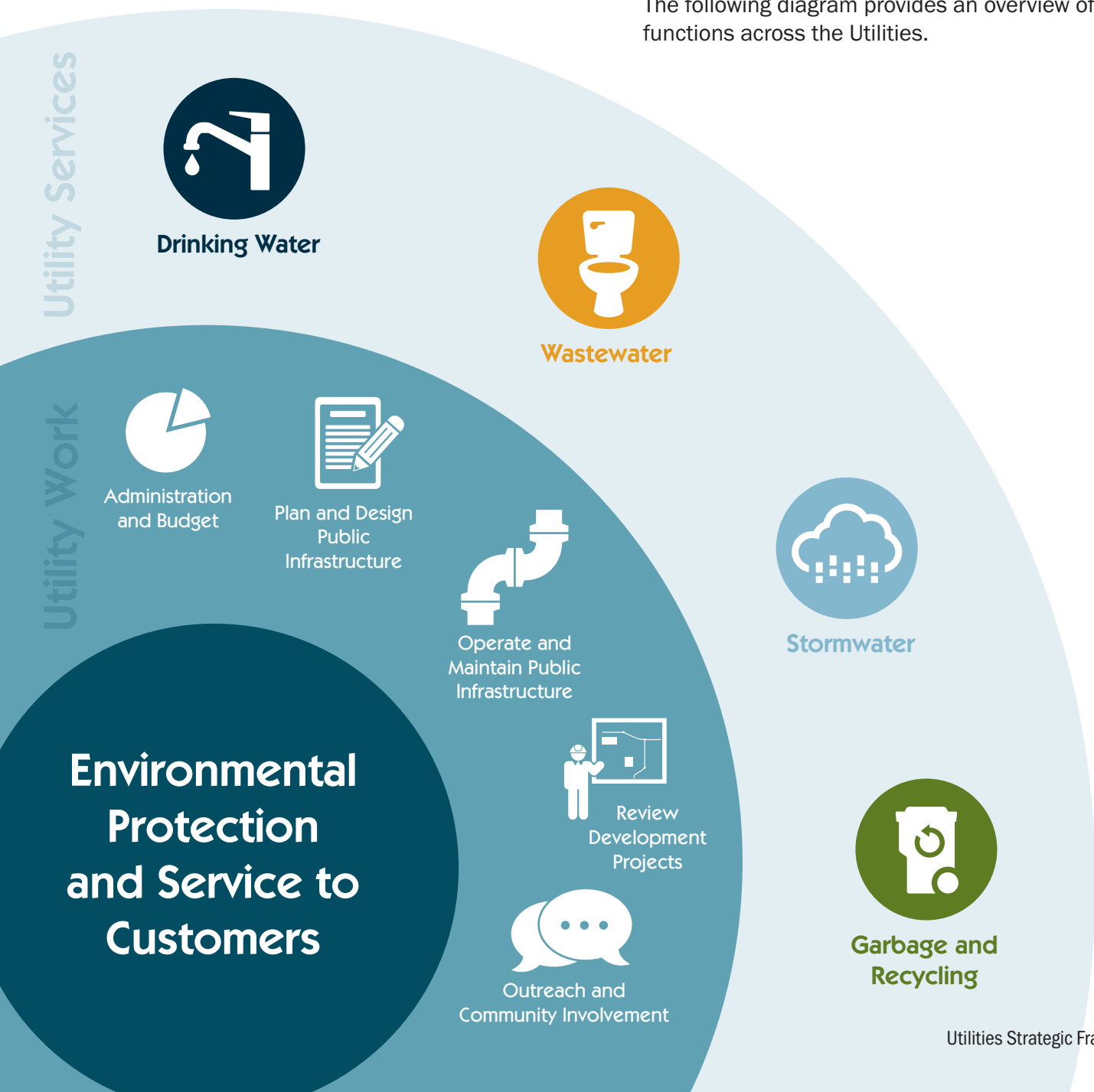
How Redmond Utilities Work

Delivering utility services to our customers requires the collaborative efforts of many people, with different talents, working throughout the City. This work is often hidden, yet critically important. The Utilities provide essential services to the people who live, visit, and work in our community so that they can go about their daily lives.

As part of our work, Redmond's Utilities must meet local, state and federal regulations that set standards and operational guidelines for things such as: drinking water quality; the security of our drinking water system; stormwater runoff management; water quality in our lakes, rivers and streams; conserving

threatened salmon populations; managing garbage, recycling, yard debris, and food scraps; and the design our sanitary sewer facilities. In all cases, Redmond's Utilities meet our regulatory obligations. When it is in the community's best interest, the City chooses to exceed regulatory standards.

Our work encompasses several overlapping functions: utility system and related project design, review, installation, and oversight; infrastructure operation, maintenance, repair, and replacement; data collection, analysis, and reporting; community outreach and engagement; financial management; and system planning to prepare for future conditions. The following diagram provides an overview of key functions across the Utilities.



Six Objectives and 20 Strategies for 2050

During strategic planning conversations, six objectives – or general areas of discussion – arose again and again among the City staff working in all four Utilities. These objectives highlight areas of our work where we must focus to maintain current service levels and fulfill our mission.

- Protect and restore the natural environment
- Safely and responsibly manage City infrastructure
- Be the employer of choice for Utility staff
- Provide outstanding customer support and equitable services
- Coordinate City programs and processes to prepare for the future
- Demonstrate regional leadership

Utility staff identified a series of strategies to support each objective. Many of the 20 Strategic Framework strategies pertain to all four Utilities (Wastewater, Drinking Water, Stormwater, and Garbage and Recycling). Others are specific to only one or a subset of Utilities. An icon next to each strategy identifies which Utilities it supports.



Wastewater



Stormwater



Drinking
Water



Garbage and
Recycling

We have purposefully selected strategies that directly tackle the major challenges and opportunities the Utilities will likely face to fulfill our obligations to our customers and to support the City of Redmond's Vision. We consciously targeted actions that are within the Utilities' control and that are achievable. While implementing these strategies will be a stretch for the Utilities, we are confident that with the right tools and resources, with careful planning, and by working together, we can accomplish all of them by 2050.



OBJECTIVE

Protect and restore the natural environment.

STRATEGY

1

Protect and restore degraded stream and wildlife habitat

Target: Four urban streams achieve a BIBI score of “fair/good” or better by 2050.

Measure: Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (BIBI) scores

Background: Redmond strives to protect and restore stream and wetland areas that are important habitats for salmon and other native wildlife. The City will coordinate efforts to restore four Redmond streams to the level of “fair/good” as defined by a standard method of stream health monitoring called “Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (BIBI)” by 2050. A “fair/good” score indicates a rich and diverse bug community, an important indicator of successful stream. “Restoring” means working in streams and in the drainage areas that surround and feed them. Activities may include: building facilities that control and treat stormwater runoff; adding woody material to streams; planting native plants removing invasive weeds; removing barriers to fish movement; enhanced street sweeping; and offering environmental education opportunities.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

2

Eliminate high priority septic systems within City’s wastewater service area

Target: Zero high-priority septic systems¹ are in use within City limits by 2050.

Measure: Number of high-priority septic systems remaining in City limits

Background: Septic system failures can impair streams, ponds, lakes, and ground water (e.g., drinking water aquifer) health by introducing harmful bacteria, pathogens, and other unwanted chemicals. The City is especially concerned about eliminating high-priority septic systems. These may include failing or aging septic systems, commercial/industrial septic systems, those located in Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas or near streams in priority watersheds.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

3

Redmond residents, businesses, and city facilities send less garbage to the landfill each year

Target: Achieve a 75%¹ diversion rate citywide by 2040.

Measure: The amount of garbage sent to landfill

Background: Redmond aims to minimize the amount of trash going to the landfill and to recycle and compost as much as possible. We will continue to work with solid waste utility customers, our solid waste contractor, and regional partners, to promote daily practices that support this goal.

Utilities Supported:



¹ The percentage within this target/measure requires additional investigation to better determine what degree of implementation is realistic and at what cost.

OBJECTIVE

Protect and restore the natural environment.

STRATEGY

4

Reduce “cross-contamination” within garbage, recycling and compost waste streams

Target: Achieve a contamination rate for all waste streams of less than 10% by 2040.

Measure: Contamination rate as measured by waste stream audits (by volume or weight) of garbage in compost, garbage in recycling and recycling or compost in garbage

Background: When garbage is placed in a recycling or compost bin, it can “contaminate” an entire load of collected materials; making all of it garbage that must be taken to a landfill. To reduce the contamination rate for waste collected within Redmond, the City works with residents, businesses, our solid waste contractor, and regional partners, to ensure “the right item goes in the right place.”

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

5

Responsibly manage the City’s groundwater resources

Target: Fully meet water supply expectations associated with municipal wells to maintain senior membership with Cascade Water Alliance.

Measure: Amount of water delivered from City water wells as compared to Cascade Water Alliance water supply commitments

Background: Redmond’s drinking water aquifer provides roughly 40% of Redmond’s drinking water needs. The remaining 60% comes from a regional water supplier, the Cascade Water Alliance (CWA). Using this local groundwater resource reduces the cost of drinking water for Redmond water utility customers, helps secure Redmond’s response to future water-related climate change issues, and provides a local supply water if the region ever faces a large-scale emergency. Redmond manages our groundwater resources in a manner that maintains this resource over time so that it can be leveraged in a coordinated fashion with the drinking water supplied by CWA.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

6

Protect the quality of drinking water delivered to our customers

Target: No contaminants make it into the City water distribution system.

Measure: # investigations taken to address potential issues at the monitoring or supply wells

Background: Redmond is committed to supplying drinking water that is safe, reliable, and aesthetically pleasing. Redmond takes numerous actions to ensure drinking water quality is maintained. The City oversees construction activities to ensure drinking water infrastructure meets City standards, regularly inspects and maintains City-owned Water Utility infrastructure, and works with business to enact practices that help protect our drinking water aquifer. In addition, Redmond regularly tests groundwater samples from monitoring wells located throughout the City. These wells enable the City to look for emerging issues that will impact the water flowing to our drinking water supply wells. Redmond also tests the drinking water produced at drinking water supply wells, to ensure it meets City’s standards for quality and can be distributed.

Utilities Supported:



OBJECTIVE

Safely and responsibly manage City infrastructure.



STRATEGY 7

Minimize the number and duration of unplanned utility service disruptions

Target: (1) No more than one road is closed due to a storm related flooding event per year; (2) Experience fewer than six water main breaks per hundred miles of pipe with < 12-hour repair time; and (3) Experience no more than one sanitary sewer overflow per year.

Measure: Score Card detailing # of unplanned utility disruptions: (1) # and duration of arterial road closures due to storm-related flooding, (2) # of water main breaks per mile of pipe and average repair time, and (3) # of sanitary sewer overflows from the publicly owned sanitary sewer system

Background: It takes a host of coordinated efforts to ensure our customers receive uninterrupted utility services. To reduce service outages, the City: ensures buildings and infrastructure are built to City standards; runs pollution prevention programs; oversees contracts with outside service providers; and cleans, repairs, and replaces infrastructure. When it is necessary to interrupt services to respond to an emergency, expand services, or repair infrastructure, the City notifies affected customers and seeks to minimize disruptions to service.

Utilities Supported:    

STRATEGY 8

Identify, leverage, implement and support technologies to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness

Target: 100% of stormwater pipes are inspected using Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) every five years.¹

Measure: % of stormwater pipes inspected using CCTV

Background: Redmond is known worldwide as the headquarters for multi-national technology companies, but as a City, we have not yet fully leveraged the use of technology to better manage our utility infrastructure. By appropriately deploying the right technology in the right circumstances, data collected by utility staff can inform decisions regarding utility systems maintenance, replacement, expansion, and upgrades.

Utilities Supported:    

STRATEGY 9

Prepare for and respond to Citywide emergencies

Target: Annually review PW emergency plan and utility-specific plans, and update as appropriate.

Measure: Status of the Public Works emergency plan and utility-specific plans

Background: Redmond's Utilities play a critical role in the City's response to flooding, extreme weather events, earthquakes, and other emergencies. When there is an emergency, it is critical that utility staff have the knowledge and easy access to information necessary to respond. The Public Work Emergency Response Plan details how the City's Utilities: prepare for emergency situations; coordinate with the City's Emergency Response Center during events; and help bring the community get back to normal after events.

Utilities Supported:    

¹ The percentage within this target/measure requires additional investigation to better determine what degree of implementation is realistic and at what cost.

OBJECTIVE

Be the employer of choice for Redmond Utilities staff.



STRATEGY 10

Offer Utility staff easy access to professional development opportunities to advance their careers

Target: 25% of job applicants being considered for Utilities positions come from within Utilities ranks.

Measure: % of qualified job applicants that come from Utilities staff

Background: As Utilities, we want to make sure that we have qualified internal candidates when positions open. Investing in the professional development of Utility staff improves the quality of services we provide by: making sure that team members can “step in” when other team members are unavailable; providing staff with a comprehensive view of the activities needed to run a utility; and helping ensure that institutional knowledge does not leave the City. Professional development opportunities include training, job shadowing and mentoring.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY 11

Staff feel appreciated for their work

Target: 85% positive responses every year by 2025 to an annual survey sent to all Utility staff.

Measure: Percentage of positive responses to an annual survey questionnaire

Background: The Utilities recognize that the quality of our service delivery is maximized when the people providing these services are well supported, well managed and feel connected to their work. Staff satisfaction with their work environment also helps reduce turnover. Cultivating a rewarding work environment means ensuring that people have a safe place to work, have the equipment that they need to do their job, are informed of decisions that affect their work, are acknowledged for their work, and feel that their ideas are fully considered.

Utilities Supported:



OBJECTIVE

Provide outstanding customer support and equitable services.

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER

STRATEGY

12

Provide timely and quality responses to customer service requests

Target: By 2025, 90% of Q-Alerts are responded to within two business days.

Measure: % of Q-Alerts responded to within two business days

Background: The City values our customers' input and concerns. When a customer contacts Redmond Utilities with a utility-specific concern, a representative from the appropriate Utility is assigned to contact the customer within 24 hours, to let them know that we have received their request.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

13

Communicate with Utility customers in the language of their preference

Target: By 2025, all communications identified as "essential for translation" by the Cultural Inclusion Team are translated into Redmond's top five languages.

Measure: Percentage of "essential materials" translated into top five languages

Background: Currently, more than 80 languages are spoken in Redmond – the most common (besides English) being Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Hindi. The City's Cultural Inclusion Team has determined that specific types of communication from the City are "essential" and must be translated to protect people's health and safety or provide quality services to everyone who lives and works in our community. By ensuring that "essential communications" are delivered in Redmond's top five languages and providing translations services to all Utility customers, Redmond is expressing our commitment to inclusiveness.

Utilities Supported:



OBJECTIVE

Provide outstanding customer support and equitable services.



STRATEGY

14

Work in a manner that respects and honors the diversity found in Redmond

Target: 100% of Utilities staff receive Cultural Diversity training by 2020.

Measure: % of Utilities staff participating in the Cultural Diversity training

Background: Redmond is the most diverse city in east King County. To ensure the Utilities' actions meet the needs of our community, we must be prepared to engage a diverse spectrum of individuals who live and work here, including those who have been historically underserved by City initiatives. To help ensure our actions are inclusive, the Utilities provide all staff with meaningful Cultural Diversity training.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

15

Manage the Utilities' fiscal resources in a responsible and strategic manner

Target: Stable or improving Bond rating on an annual basis.

Measure: The City's Bond Rating

Background: Each year, the City undergoes a bond rating review. This process includes a complete and thorough review of the Utilities' past financial performance, funding structures, fiscal policies and practices, and long-term planning. The City's AAA bond rating demonstrates that the Utilities' fiscal management is considered above average and provides Redmond opportunities to reduce costs associated with financing City projects.

Utilities Supported:



OBJECTIVE

Align projects, programs, and processes with other City programs.

STRATEGY

16

Implement Utility design standards that successfully balance the needs of dense, urban development and utility operations

Target: By 2030, Percentage of projects with approved deviations decreases by 50% from 2019 levels..

Measure: Number of utility deviations requested in urban centers (Downtown, Overlake, Marymoor) on an annual basis

Background: Redmond's design standards were established to accommodate development in a low-density, suburban environment. The City is becoming a larger, more dense community. As the City grows, and development density increases, Redmond's design standards must adapt to balance utility service and capacity requirements with other City requirements (e.g., street width, setbacks, tree spacing).

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

17

Build new City infrastructure to allow for access and maintenance

Target: No projects are constructed with inadequate utility access.

Measure: # of access design issues identified each year

Background: The City establishes detailed design standards to reflect and accommodate anticipated growth, optimize utility system performance and respond to a dynamic environment. New development project designs—public and private—must be carefully reviewed to ensure they can be integrated into our utility systems. The City must also inspect these construction projects to confirm they are installed as designed and provide sufficient access to utility infrastructure.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY

18

Prepare for and respond to climate change impacts

Target: 100% of Capital Projects apply a "Climate Resiliency" filter by 2025.

Measure: Percent of Capital Projects that apply a "Climate Resiliency" filter

Background: Climate change is predicted to alter rainfall patterns and increase the number of large, powerful storms in the Pacific Northwest. The City must implement design standards that anticipate future weather conditions, build utility infrastructure that can be expanded to meet changing climate conditions, retrofit exist facilities when necessary, and evaluate additional or alternative maintenance and operation needs.

Utilities Supported:



OBJECTIVE

Demonstrate regional leadership.

STRATEGY 19

Reduce the energy consumption required to operate the Utilities' infrastructure, facilities and equipment

Target: 50% of the Utility fleet uses green fuels by 2050.

Measure: Percentage of Utility fleet that uses green fuels

Background: Redmond's Utilities look for ways to reduce our energy consumption while maintaining the quality of our service delivery. This can be accomplished by such actions as: using energy efficient vehicles; selecting high-efficiency pumps and other electrical machinery; and altering our operations. These actions reduce the Utilities' carbon footprint, help plan for climate change impacts and lower operating costs.

Utilities Supported:



STRATEGY 20

Participate in regional efforts that can enhance the delivery of utility services and protection of the environment

Target: Staff in each of the four Utilities play leadership roles in regional forums.

Measure: # of Utilities staff in leadership roles in regional forums

Background: Some issues are too large for Redmond to tackle alone. The City must coordinate and communicate with local, state and federal governments, non-governmental organizations, business associations, and other potential partners to ensure that Redmond's interests are fully represented during the formation of regional, state and national efforts. Such efforts external could include: supporting or opposing federal or state legislation; jointly applying for grants with other jurisdictions; working with neighboring cities to coordinate education and outreach activities or establish a durable regional water supply system; working with manufactures to find least hazardous materials or ensure products can be re-used and recycled; and ensuring that regional waste and wastewater facilities have the capacity to meet future demand.

Utilities Supported:



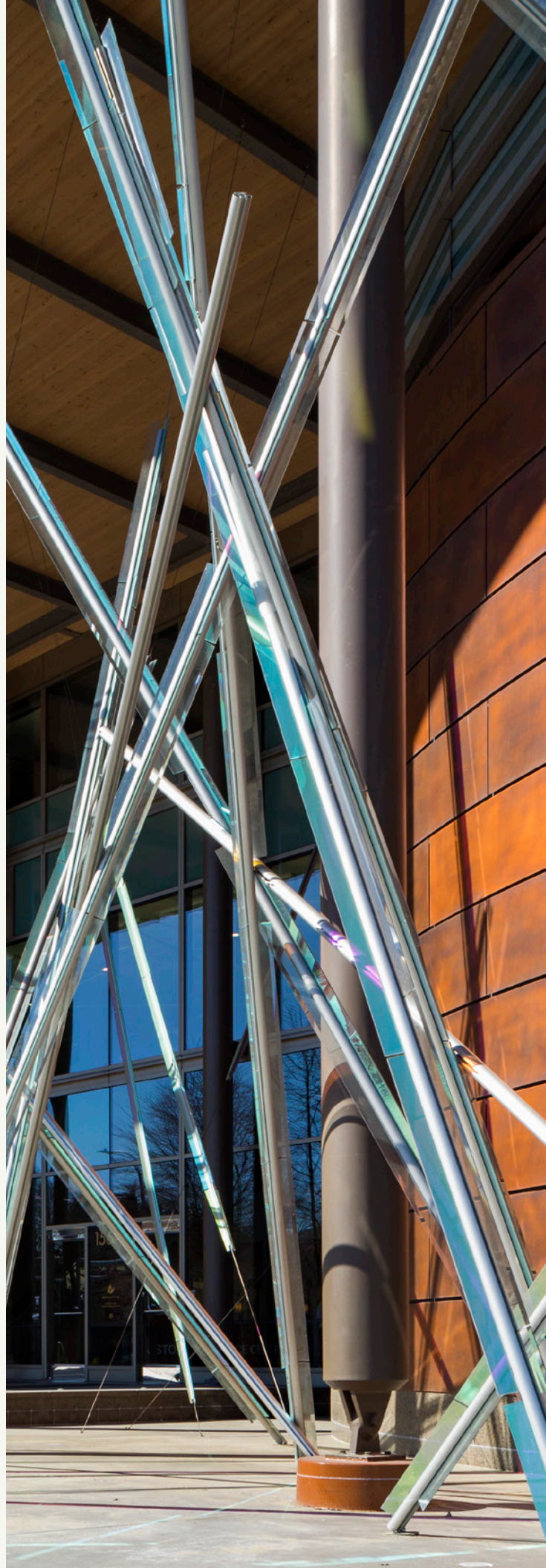
Building on the Utilities Strategic Framework

The Utilities Strategic Framework will inform Strategic (or Master) Plans for each Utility. These Strategic Plans will offer more specific information on operational activities and capital investments (together, projects) that each Utility will undertake to fulfill the Strategic Framework strategies. These Strategic Plans will, in turn, inform individual staff work plans and other management decisions.

In the first phase of Strategic Plan development, supervisors and managers from Utility workgroups will map out specific projects necessary to advance the 20 strategies. During this analysis, managers will consider the options and pathways for implementation, analyze the costs and benefits of these options, develop additional performance targets, assess baseline conditions (against which performance target progress will be measured), schedule individual projects and prioritize among various sets of activities. As part of this analysis, some strategies and/or performance measures in this Strategic Framework may change – including, dropping out altogether.

The success in implementing this Framework will be determined by regularly evaluating the performance targets associated with each strategy. The Strategic Framework is considered a living foundational document and may change in response to these evaluations, the City's broader strategic goals, or as new circumstances emerge that require a new or different response from one or more of Redmond's Utilities.

Contact information:
redmond.gov/218/Environmental-Utility-Services
425-556-2701





The City of Redmond assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or gender, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. For more information about Title VI, please visit redmond.gov/TitleVI.

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