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Subject: Public Comment Submission — MCWRA 2026 Strategic Plan Update
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Dear Clerk of the Board,

Please distribute the attached public comment letter to the MCWRA Planning Committee and Board of Directors, and include it in the public record for the 2026 Strategic Plan Update.

The letter responds to the Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Goals presented to the Planning Committee on August 5, 2026, and offers specific language intended to strengthen public clarity, strategic focus, and accountability.

Thank you for your assistance.

Kindest regards,
Bill Lipe
Salinas, California 93908
Resident of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin

MCWRA 2026 Strategic Plan Update

Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic Goals

TO	Monterey County Water Resources Agency Planning Committee and Board of Directors
SUBJECT	Public Comment on Proposed Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic Goals
DATE	August 5, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee:

This morning, the Planning Committee was presented with the current draft framework for MCWRA's 2026 Strategic Plan, including a revised Mission, Vision, Values, and five proposed Strategic Goals. The presentation reflects meaningful work by the Board, staff, consultants, and participating stakeholders. It also shows that the planning process is moving from workshop discussion into drafting, implementation planning, and performance measurement.

The proposed language is cleaner than the 2020 framework, but several elements remain too generic, too internally focused, or too detached from MCWRA's actual public responsibilities.

CORE CONCERN

The framework should do more than describe internal competence. It should state the public outcomes MCWRA exists to deliver.

What Was Presented

Mission: "Skillfully managing, protecting, and sustaining Monterey County's water resources."

Vision: "A thriving community where families, agriculture and businesses prosper together."

The Mission is concise and stronger than the prior wording, but it removes flood-risk reduction from the Agency's stated purpose and does not identify who benefits. The Vision is positive, but broad enough to describe almost any economic-development organization. It does not mention water, resilience, flood safety, the natural environment, or Monterey County by name.

The proposed Strategic Goals also lean heavily toward internal capacity, funding, infrastructure, communications, and planning. Those are necessary, but they are means, not the final public outcomes. The framework should speak more directly to water security, flood resilience, groundwater sustainability, infrastructure reliability, public trust, and measurable regional results.

Suggested Vision

A water-secure Monterey County where communities, agriculture, businesses, and nature thrive together.

This cures the current draft's lack of agency identity by placing water security at the center, naming Monterey County directly, and balancing economic, community, and environmental interests.

Suggested Mission

We manage, protect, and sustain Monterey County's water resources while reducing flood risk and building resilience for generations to come.

This preserves the strength and brevity of the proposed Mission while restoring flood-risk reduction and making the Agency's long-term public purpose explicit.

Suggested Values Language

Value	Behavioral Standard
Leadership & Expertise	We lead with knowledge, sound judgment, and accountable action.
Stewardship	We protect water, infrastructure, public funds, and natural systems with long-term discipline.
Transparency	We make our decisions, data, tradeoffs, and progress clear to the public.
Integrity	We act honestly, consistently, and without favoritism - especially when decisions are difficult.
Public Service	We serve Monterey County with professionalism, safety, fairness, and respect.
Collaboration	We bring communities, agriculture, agencies, and partners together to solve shared water and flood challenges.

These descriptions are intended to cure the current values language where it remains abstract or procedural. Values should operate as standards of conduct, not simply as agreeable nouns.

Suggested Strategic Goal Framing

1. Build Financial Strength

Secure and diversify the funding needed to meet Monterey County's evolving water and flood challenges.

2. Strengthen Infrastructure and Operations

Modernize, maintain, and improve the systems, projects, and programs that protect water reliability and public safety.

3. Lead Regional Water Strategy

Drive coordinated planning and investment for a more secure, sustainable, and resilient water future.

4. Earn Public Trust

Communicate clearly, educate consistently, and make Agency decisions and performance easier to understand.

5. Build a High-Performing Agency

Strengthen people, systems, expertise, and accountability so MCWRA can execute at a higher level.

These revisions are intended to cure the current goals' inward-facing emphasis by connecting internal capacity to public outcomes.

Public-Facing Theme

Water security. Flood resilience. A thriving Monterey County.

Closing

The Agency's strategic identity should do more than describe internal competence. It should tell the public what future MCWRA is working to secure, what work it performs, how it will behave, and what results it intends to deliver.

The current process is moving in the right direction. The remaining task is to ensure the final language is specific enough to guide priorities, budgets, performance measures, and hard decisions - not merely polished enough to fit on a slide.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Lipe

Salinas, California 93908

Resident of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin