

VISION '31

The ORS We Are Building

City of San José
Office of Retirement Services
FY2027 to FY2031

Strategic Plan

John Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

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About This Document

Both boards approved the strategic foundation governing this plan in March 2026: the mission, vision, core values, and six strategic themes with their goals and objectives. This document is the administration's translation of that foundation into a defined body of work. It describes what ORS is building, why the sequence matters, and how the boards will stay connected to progress over the five-year life of the plan.

The Strategic Foundation

Mission: *Our mission is to deliver accurate and timely retirement benefits and services while prudently managing the assets entrusted to us with integrity, accountability, and a long-term vision.*

Vision: *To be a leading public retirement system, recognized for fiduciary excellence, innovation, and trusted member service.*

Core Values: *Accountability. Transparency. Integrity. Service. Stewardship.*

Six Board-Approved Strategic Themes:

1. *Financial Stability and Stewardship*
2. *Member-Centered Service and Excellence*
3. *Transparent, Proactive Communication, and Engagement*
4. *Technology Enablement, Innovation, and Cybersecurity*
5. *Organizational Capacity, Talent, and Succession*
6. *Strong Governance and Effective Board Dynamics*

Vision '31: The ORS We Are Building

By the close of FY2031, ORS will be a demonstrably stronger organization than the one that begins this plan. Not different in mission or values, as those are enduring. Different in what it knows, what it can deliver, and how confidently it can account for its own performance. That difference begins with the member relationship.

Members will know what to expect from ORS. Service timelines and resource availability have depended more on circumstances than on design. That changes over the life of this plan. By FY2031, service will be measured against standards adopted by both boards. Progress against those standards will be reported transparently, and members at every career and retirement stage will have access to education and information designed specifically for where they are, whether in the early stages of their career or retired for many years.

ORS will know its members. The plan opens in FY2027 with a structured listening effort, a stratified survey of members across both Fed and PF, designed to understand how different members experience the organization at different stages. Those findings will shape what the retirement education program looks like, what communication channels ORS invests in, and how the member portal is modernized. The member relationship will be built on what members tell us, not on assumptions about what ORS thinks they want.

The organization will be built to sustain this work. A formal succession framework will identify the positions that pose the greatest continuity risk and establish what must be in place before any departure creates a gap: documentation, cross-training, backup coverage, and role-readiness criteria. The positions that will significantly expand ORS capacity, a Benefits Program Manager and a Deputy CIO, will be recruited, filled, and integrated. Compensation and retention practices will be grounded in real peer benchmarking data. The organization will have the depth it needs to absorb transitions without losing momentum.

Technology will have advanced through a deliberate modernization path. The member portal will be improved based on what members say they need and what our PAS vendor can deliver. Manually intensive internal processes will be inventoried and

redesigned, with automation applied where it solves a defined problem rather than as an end in itself. Cybersecurity will be governed by a formal agreement with City ITD that clearly defines services, deliverables, and accountability. Business continuity and disaster recovery will move beyond the theoretical and be tested annually.

Financial stewardship will be visible and verified. Actuarial valuations, funding policies, experience studies, and contribution rate communications will continue to happen on their established schedules, reliably and transparently. The investment oversight framework will be supported by a completed asset-liability study and structured risk reporting that provide both boards with a comprehensive view of what ORS is watching and why.

The boards will govern with clarity and confidence. New trustees will enter through a structured onboarding program that goes well beyond an orientation guide. Education will be ongoing, topic-driven by the boards themselves, and connected to what trustees need to fulfill their fiduciary role. The charters that govern board and staff roles, delegations, and decision rights will be current and clear. The committee structure across Fed and PF will reflect the maturity of a dual-board relationship that has grown more collaborative over time. Budget practices will be formally reviewed and benchmarked. Legislative, regulatory, and political developments that affect plan sustainability or board independence will be monitored actively and reported to both boards on a regular cadence.

Across all of this, ORS will have demonstrated that a public retirement organization of its size can do ambitious, thoughtful, member-centered work with the staff and resources it has and be transparent about what it accomplished, what took longer than expected, and what it is still building toward.

Delivering on the Vision: What the Plan Prioritizes

The six strategic themes do not operate independently. The most consequential work in this plan runs across themes simultaneously, with earlier investments supporting what comes later. This section describes those cross-cutting priorities. The action plan covers 35 initiatives in full; what follows is the logic that connects them.

Knowing Our Members and Being Known by Them

Member-Centered Service and Excellence and **Transparent, Proactive Communication, and Engagement** share a common ambition: ORS should have a genuine relationship with its members, grounded in what members experience and need at each stage of their working and retirement lives.

The work begins in the first quarter of FY2027 with a stratified membership voice survey. Separate instruments will be developed for Fed and PF, each covering different categories of members. This is foundational. ORS has served just over 16,000 members across two plans, but has not previously conducted a systematic, structured effort to understand how members experience the organization across the full range of career and retirement stages. The survey findings will directly shape the retirement education program, the communications expansion, and the portal modernization roadmap. These are a single effort to build an ORS that its members recognize as knowing them.

The retirement education program will grow from its current foundation of six annual virtual pre-retirement workshops into a structured program organized by career stage, with content relevant to where a member is, not just where they are going. That expansion requires the communications infrastructure to support it, which means defining the communications program, establishing a dedicated communications function, and building out the channels and formats members have told us they prefer.

Service standards will provide accountability for this work. ORS is enrolling in CEM Benchmarking in FY2027 to collect a baseline of service performance metrics across both plans. Those baselines, combined with peer benchmarking data, will inform proposed standards that both boards will be asked to adopt. Once standards are in

place, ORS will report against them publicly annually. Members will be able to hold ORS to its commitments.

The capacity that makes this entire body of work possible runs through two connected investments. First, the establishment of a dedicated communications function is the infrastructure on which the retirement education program and the expansion of member communications both depend. Without it, the design, production, and delivery of member-facing work cannot happen at scale. Second, the Benefits Program Manager position, pending FY2027 budget approval, addresses succession risk in the Benefits Division and creates the operational depth the division needs to take on new work without overextending the people already carrying it.

ORS has not built a curriculum, a communications program, or a systematic member listening practice at this scale. The capacity to do this work is being built in parallel, and some of what is designed will need to be adjusted based on what the survey surfaces and what the communications function can actually support at any given stage of its development. The plan is sequenced to account for this. The survey comes first, the design follows, and the program is planned to be fully operational in FY2030.

Building an Organization That Lasts

Organizational Capacity, Talent, and Succession is the theme that makes everything else in this plan sustainable. The initiatives here are not about programs. They are about ensuring that ORS retains the knowledge, leadership depth, and organizational structure needed to keep delivering on its mission through turnover, growth in complexity, and whatever external conditions the next five years bring and beyond.

The succession planning framework that launches in FY2027 will formally identify which positions carry the most acute continuity risk and establish what needs to be in place before any departure creates a crisis: documentation, cross-training, backup coverage, and readiness criteria. The Benefits Division Manager transition, which is the most immediate risk in the organization right now, will be addressed directly.

The investment professional compensation study is completed and will be brought to the boards and submitted to the City in FY2027. An ongoing compensation benchmarking practice using CALAPRS, NCPERS, and peer system data will be established for all critical roles. ORS will also begin tracking workforce retention

statistics and comparing them annually against the City as a benchmark. Together, compensation benchmarking and retention tracking give ORS the data it needs to make the case for the staffing plan it depends on.

The legal services assessment will examine whether the current fully outsourced model remains the right operating model as the complexity and volume of legal work grows. It is an analysis completed in FY2027, with findings presented to both boards in time to inform the FY2028 budget. Regardless of what the assessment indicates, both boards will receive the findings with a full comparison of options and transparent cost information.

ORS carries significant organizational complexity across two legally distinct plans, dual fiduciary boards, and a broad scope of member-facing and administrative responsibilities. Building depth, transferring knowledge, and creating the structural capacity to absorb new responsibilities without overloading the people already carrying the work is the answer this plan offers to that reality. Establishing a dedicated communications function is one response. The legal services assessment and the two new positions pending FY2027 budget approval are others. The broader question of how ORS is structured to carry this work will require ongoing attention as the plan matures.

Technology That Serves People

Technology Enablement, Innovation, and Cybersecurity is anchored by a principle established in the action plan: technology is applied where it solves a defined problem, not imposed on the organization because it is available.

The member portal modernization starts with an assessment. ORS will conduct a structured review of three things: what capabilities the pension administration system vendor has not yet implemented, what members have told us they want, and how peer systems compare. That assessment produces a prioritized roadmap that both boards will receive, distinguishing configuration changes from new development. Portal improvements will then be implemented in phases, beginning with whatever delivers the greatest member value most efficiently.

In parallel, ORS will assess its manually intensive internal processes: the places where staff are rekeying data, following workarounds, or absorbing inefficiencies that

technology could address. We will look to redesign or automate priority workflows where the process inventory identifies real concerns that can be addressed.

ORS will seek to formalize its IT and Cybersecurity relations with Central ITD through an MOU with City ITD that clearly defines the services ORS receives, the deliverables City ITD is accountable for, the scope of the ORS-funded position on the City cyber team, and the oversight role ORS plays. The objective is not to duplicate City capabilities. It is to have a clear, verified, documented agreement about what City ITD provides and what ORS can confirm is in place. The existing business continuity plan will be reviewed and enhanced as needed, and an annual tabletop exercise with board member participation will confirm the plan is operational and current.

Stewardship That Is Visible and Verified

Financial Stability and Stewardship is the theme most closely aligned with this organization's core fiduciary purpose. These initiatives formalize and strengthen existing practices, so that our stakeholders can be confident that the underlying financial management of the plans is disciplined, documented, and clearly reported.

The actuarial and investment oversight work described in the action plan is an ongoing fiduciary function: valuations on schedule, experience studies on their required cycle, contribution rates communicated to the City in time for the budget process, and investment performance reported quarterly. A formal funding policy will be adopted in FY2027, covering amortization policies and actuarial assumption governance, so that the disciplined practices ORS already follows are codified and subject to a regular review cycle rather than operating inside the actuarial process. An asset-liability study, coordinated by the CIO with the actuarial and investment consulting teams, will be completed and its implications incorporated into the subsequent asset allocation review cycle.

The external risk reporting that ORS provides to both boards will be expanded over FY2027 and FY2028 to include investment operations. A consolidated strategic risk register will be developed, drawing on risk monitoring activities across every function of the organization. The register is designed as a tool that provides both boards with a single view of what ORS is watching, including descriptions, likelihood and impact assessments, and mitigation postures for each risk.

The investment function at ORS operates with its own governance structure, as the CIO reports directly to both boards. That distinction is respected throughout this plan. The CEO ensures that the administrative infrastructure supporting the investment program is in place, accurate, and timely. Investment decisions, execution, and direct board reporting remain with the CIO.

Governing Well, Together

Strong Governance and Effective Board Dynamics treats governance as a deliberate investment. The returns are measured in years, not quarters: in the confidence with which new trustees step into their fiduciary role, in the clarity of charters as personnel changes on both sides, and in the strength of joint practices across two legally distinct boards that share a single administrative support team.

The trustee onboarding program will be rebuilt from its current foundation into a structured program covering fiduciary duties, the governance framework, charters, key operations, and fund-specific context. Ongoing board education will be quarterly, topic-driven by the trustees themselves, and connected to what trustees need to govern effectively.

The charter review will examine how the relationship between boards, committees, and staff is formally defined: delegations of authority, decision rights, and governance boundaries. Where charters have drifted from current practice, or where current practice has evolved beyond what the charters anticipated, they will be updated. A regular charter review cycle will be established so this work does not need to be reinvented in the next plan period.

The committee structure across Fed and PF will be reviewed to ensure it supports clear, effective governance within each board's independent authority. Any recommendations will be presented to both boards for their separate consideration and action.

Legislative, regulatory, and political developments that affect plan sustainability or board independence will be actively monitored, with biennial reporting to both boards and a commitment to flag time-sensitive developments at the next board meeting. This monitoring function connects directly to the strategic risk register, so that external legal and political risks are part of the consolidated picture both boards receive.

How the Boards Will Stay Connected

This plan covers five years and 35 initiatives. The boards approved the strategic direction. Staying connected to how that direction is being executed, what is on track, what has shifted, and what decisions need board engagement is a governance responsibility.

The accountability mechanism established under the strategic plan includes several interlocking elements. Written progress reports will appear on board agendas quarterly, providing both boards with a consistent view of the plan's status. Each year, the fourth-quarter report will serve as both an annual accounting of progress and an occasion to adopt an annual work plan for the coming fiscal year. That annual work plan, once adopted by both boards, becomes the foundation for the CEO performance evaluation for the year it covers.

For larger initiatives, including the trustee onboarding program, the strategic risk register, the communications function, and the member survey findings, dedicated board presentations will be held as those deliverables are completed. The boards will not learn about these through a progress report bullet. They will receive them as substantive agenda items with time for presentation and discussion. Budget requests and staffing proposals that emerge from the initiatives will also come to both boards as formal action items, with sufficient context and lead time to support informed decision-making.

The exception path matters as much as the regular rhythm. If a dependency breaks, a major initiative needs to be rescoped, or something in the external environment materially changes the assumptions the plan rests on, that should come to both boards promptly rather than be held for the next quarterly report.

The annual workplan adoption and CEO performance evaluation link creates a direct line between the strategic plan, day-to-day execution, and board authority over organizational leadership.

A Final Word

ORS has undertaken focused strategic initiatives in the past. This plan is different in size and scope. It is the first comprehensive, board-governed strategic plan in the organization's recent history, covering all six dimensions of ORS operations within a single approved framework with formal accountability mechanisms. This plan establishes the reporting rhythm, the governance infrastructure, and the accountability mechanisms that will define how ORS manages and communicates strategic progress going forward.

Some of what is described here will take longer than planned. Some will surface complications that are not visible today. The plan is designed with that reality in mind, sequenced to build foundational capacity before adding complexity, and structured with an annual review mechanism so the boards and the administration can adjust together as conditions change.

Through all of it, the measure of this plan is simple: whether the members ORS exists to serve are better off for the work it describes.