



# STEERING COMMITTEE

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2023-3363

**Agenda Date:** 1/17/2024

**Agenda Item No:** 5.

**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2022-2024 MID-YEAR UPDATE**

#### **GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022- 2024 Mid-Year Update.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Orange County Sanitation District's (OC San) Public Affairs Office is responsible for creating, organizing, and disseminating all internal and external communication. The primary objective of the Public Affairs team is to deliver messages that are accurate, transparent, and designed to foster trust and confidence. An integrated Public Affairs Strategic Plan is essential to effectively manage the variety of audiences served.

#### **RELEVANT STANDARDS**

- Build brand, trust, and support with policy makers and community leaders
- Maintain collaborative and cooperative relationships with regulators, stakeholders, and neighboring communities
- Make it easy for people to understand OC San's roles and value to the community
- Maintain influential legislative advocacy and a public outreach program

#### **PROBLEM**

There are various initiatives and messages that the Public Affairs Office must share with internal and external stakeholders for continued operation and efficiency of OC San. The messaging must be consistent, concise, and thoroughly planned to be efficient and effective.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

The current Public Affairs Strategic Plan includes goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics to execute the various messages and efforts set forth by OC San. The two-year plan will be in place until June 2024, with updates provided to the Steering Committee every six months.

## **PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

June 2023 - Board and Steering Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 Year-End Report.

February 2023 - Board and Steering Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 Mid-Year Update.

July 2022 - Board and Legislative and Public Affairs Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

OC San's Public Affairs Office Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 (Plan) was developed based upon the principles of OC San's mission of protecting public health and the environment and to support the implementation of OC San's Strategic Plan. This Plan offers a vision to unify communication efforts and focus resources to achieve the greatest impact and results. The Plan consists of 11 categories. Below is a recap of the first six months of the plan.

- **Employee Communications**  
Goal: Optimize communication with internal audience including those operating in the field.
  - 505 The San Box Posts (Intranet)
  - 26 Three Things to Know Emails (Weekly email)
  - Three (3) *Pipeline* issues
- **Industry Experts**  
Goal: Establish and solidify OC San's reputation as infrastructure leaders in the wastewater and resource recovery industry.
  - Seven (7) awards received
  - 15 speaking engagements reaching almost 1,000 people
- **Media Relations**  
Goal: Cultivate relationships with traditional and social media journalists and influencers.
  - Four (4) press releases issued
  - 350 social media posts across five platforms with average reach of 5,000
  - 1,222 new followers
- **Agency Branding and Messaging**  
Goal: Enhance OC San's image and branding by utilizing proper messaging in external communication pieces such as OC San's website, presentations, digital media, and advertising, which includes maintaining a positive experience for OC San visitors.
  - Two (2) issues of Neighborhood Newsletter reaching an average of 4,500 per issue
  - Published 39 articles on the OC San website

- **Educational Outreach**  
Goal: Identify and implement avenues for education and outreach within OC San's service area to promote OC San's mission and vision.
  - 41 tours reaching almost 600 people
  - Continue supporting the Heritage Museum of Orange County with their virtual and in-person teachings reaching approximately 2,500 people
  - Participated in five (5) community events reaching over 500 people
  
- **Capital and Maintenance Outreach**  
Goal: Develop and implement outreach programs that will engage the communities affected by OC San construction and maintenance activities.
  - Four (4) printed notifications distributed reaching over 7,000 people
  - 18 electronic messages issued
  - Held individual meetings with project stakeholders
  
- **Legislative Affairs**  
Goal: Proactive engagement in legislative advocacy efforts that could impact OC San and the wastewater industry.
  - Created annual Legislative Plan
  - Issued seven (7) State position letters and two (2) Federal position letters
  
- **Grant Coordination**  
Goal: Monitor, track, and apply for grants available to OC San.
  - Approved for \$3.45 million in community project funding
  - Received \$40,000 grant for Headquarters Building educational display
  
- **Local Government Affairs**  
Goal: Ensure that local elected officials, member agencies, stakeholders, and OC San Board Members are actively engaged in the work of OC San.
  - Board Member Speaking Points issued monthly
  - Developed OC San's Annual Report
  - Hosted in-person State of OC San with 150 participants
  - Six "Five Minutes Per Month" published
  - Two (2) member-agency outreach toolkits produced
  - Developed outreach program for inflow and infiltration issues within sewer service area
  
- **Crisis Management**  
Goal: Ensure the Public Affairs Office serves as the primary spokesperson for OC San during normal business and crisis scenarios and facilitates the dissemination of information.
  - Updated Integrated Emergency Response Plan areas pertaining to the Public Affairs Office
  - Updated the Public Affairs Office's Continuity of Operations Plan

- General Manager Support  
Goal: Ensure the General Manager and Assistant General Manager are supported with information necessary to communicate to the varied OC San audiences.
  - Strategic Plan update
  - Six (6) General Manager Monthly Reports
  - Monthly talking points preparation
  - Preparation of GM Work Plan Update
  - Developed material for speaking engagements and presentations

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All items included in the Public Affairs Strategic Plan FY 2022-2024 are budgeted in the FY 2022-2024 Budget.

## **ATTACHMENT**

*The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OC San website ([www.ocsan.gov](http://www.ocsan.gov)) with the complete agenda package:*

- Public Affairs Strategic Plan, FY 2022-2024