



# STEERING COMMITTEE

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2023-2822

**Agenda Date:** 2/22/2023

**Agenda Item No:** 21.

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**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

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

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION:

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.

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**PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

July 2022 - Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 approved.

**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 greatest 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.
    - 347 The San Box Posts (Internet)
    - Six Digester publications (Monthly bulletin)
    - 26 Three Things to Know Emails (Weekly email)
    - Four *Pipeline* issues - Special Yearbook Edition (Newsletter)
- Industry Experts
  - Goal: Establish and solidify OC San's reputation as infrastructure leaders in the wastewater and resource recovery industry.
    - Five awards received
    - 19 speaking engagements reaching over 1,000 people
- Media Relations
  - Goal: Cultivate relationships with traditional and social media journalists and influencers.
    - Three press releases issued
    - 41 news article mentions
    - 357 social media posts with average reach of 4,000
    - 140 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, advertising, which includes maintaining a positive experience for OC San visitors.
    - Two issues of Neighborhood Newsletter reaching an average of 4,500 per issue
    - Award received for OC San in-house branding
    - Panel participation on OC San branding and messaging
- 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.
    - 17 tours reaching 270 people
    - Hosted Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy

- Continue supporting the Heritage Museum of Orange County with their virtual and in-person teachings
- Participated in five 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.
  - 49 notifications distributed reaching over 43,000 people
  - Hosted virtual presentations and meetings for projects
  - Three virtual Vendor Outreach Workshops hosted helping to add more than 350 potential vendors to our bidder list
  - Three City Council presentations
  
- Legislative Affairs  
Goal: Proactive engagement in legislative advocacy efforts that could impact OC San and the wastewater industry.
  - Created annual Legislative Plan
  - Issued 10 State position letters
  
- Grant Coordination  
Goal: Monitor, track, and apply for grants available to OC San.
  - Approved for \$3.35 million in community project funding
  
- 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 State of OC San with 150 virtual participants
  - Six "Five Minutes Per Month" published
  - Two 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 Managers are supported with information necessary to communicate to the varied OC San audiences.
  - Six 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