



ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Report

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File #: 2024-4002

Agenda Date: 12/18/2024

Agenda Item No: 24.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2024-2026 MID-YEAR UPDATE

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024- 2026 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 Public Affairs team has developed a plan to span fiscal year 2024-25 and 2025-26, in support of OC San's adopted two-year budget. The Public Affairs Strategic Plan includes goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics to execute the various messages and efforts set forth by OC San's Strategic Plan and the General Manager's Work Plan. The two-year plan commenced July 1, 2024, and updates will be provided to the Administration Committee every six months.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

June 2024 - Board and Steering Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OC San's Public Affairs Office Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026 (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 Engagement Communications**
Goal: Optimize communication with internal audience including those operating in the field.
 - Conducted Employee Engagement Survey
 - 170 *The San Box* Posts (Intranet)
 - 26 *Three Things to Know* Emails (Weekly email)
 - Three (3) *Pipeline* issues
 - Hosted three (3) employee events

- **Industry Experts**
Goal: Establish and solidify OC San's reputation as infrastructure leaders in the wastewater and resource recovery industry.
 - Nine (9) awards received
 - 13 speaking engagements reaching over 600 people

- **Media Relations**
Goal: Cultivate relationships with traditional and social media journalists and influencers.
 - Eight (8) press releases issued
 - 300 social media posts across five (5) platforms with average reach of 6,300
 - 234 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.
 - Launched new website
 - Two (2) issues of Neighborhood Newsletter reaching an average of 4,500 per issue
 - Published 33 articles on the OC San website
 - Completed 87 graphic design projects

- **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.

- 43 tours reaching over 500 people
- Continue supporting the Heritage Museum of Orange County with their virtual and in-person teachings reaching approximately 2,500 people
- Participated in four (4) community events reaching over 325 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 3,700 people
 - 16 electronic messages issued
 - Held various meetings with project stakeholders
 - Presented at two (2) City Council meetings

- **Legislative Affairs**
Goal: Proactive engagement in legislative advocacy efforts that could impact OC San and the wastewater industry.
 - Finalized annual Legislative and Regulatory Plan
 - Issued five (5) State position letters

- **Grants Coordination**
Goal: Monitor, track, and apply for grants available to OC San.
 - Continue supporting the \$3.45 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 in-person State of OC San with approximately 150 participants
 - Six (6) "Five Minutes Per Month" published
 - Two (2) member-agency outreach toolkits produced and distributed

- **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.
 - Continue monitoring and updating 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.
 - Six (6) General Manager Monthly Reports
 - Monthly talking points preparation
 - Developed material for speaking engagements and presentations

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All items included in the Public Affairs Strategic Plan FY 2024-2026 are budgeted in the FY 2024-2026 Budget.

ATTACHMENT

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

- Public Affairs Strategic Plan, FY 2024-2026
- Presentation