



ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Headquarters
18480 Bandilier Circle
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
(714) 593-7433

Agenda Report

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Agenda Item No: 11.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager
Originator: Jennifer Cabral, Director of Communications

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026-2028

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Proposed Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2028.

BACKGROUND

The Orange County Sanitation District’s (OC San) Public Affairs Office (PAO) manages internal and external communications to ensure OC San’s messages are accurate, transparent, and aligned with the agency’s mission of protecting public health and the environment. PAO is responsible for creating, organizing, and disseminating all communications with the primary objective of delivering 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 PAO 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 concludes June 30, 2026. To continue meeting the agency’s goals, the Public Affairs team has developed a plan to span from fiscal year 2026-27 to 2027-28. It 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 commences July 1, 2026, with updates made to the Administration Committee every six months.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

June 2024 - Received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This Strategic Plan (Plan) establishes priorities for Fiscal Years 2026-2028 to ensure consistent messaging, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and effective communication that supports OC San's strategic goals. This Plan aligns with OC San's Strategic Plan and reinforces PAO's role as a strategic partner in achieving agency-wide objectives. The Plan focuses on measurable outcomes while maintaining flexibility to respond to emerging issues, Board direction, and external factors. The Plan consists of eight categories with the following goals:

1. Internal Communication & Employee Engagement

Foster a well-informed, connected workforce by improving communication channels, increasing participation, and creating opportunities for employee engagement across the organization.

2. Public Awareness & Education

Enhance understanding of OC San's role, services, and environmental impact through expanded outreach, educational programs, and community engagement.

3. Media & Digital Communication

Grow visibility and public trust by increasing positive media coverage and strengthening OC San's digital platforms, including the website and social media.

4. Brand Management & Creative Services

Maintain a unified, professional identity across all communications, materials, facilities, and public-facing efforts.

5. Government & Legislative Affairs

Build and maintain strong partnerships with elected officials, member agencies, and industry stakeholders while supporting legislative priorities and advocacy efforts.

6. Capital Project & Community Outreach

Provide proactive, transparent communication to communities impacted by construction and infrastructure projects to build awareness and trust.

7. Crisis & Emergency Communication

Ensure readiness to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies or unexpected events with clear, coordinated messaging.

8. General Manager & Executive Support

Provide strategic communication support to the General Manager and executive team to ensure clear, consistent messaging to stakeholders and the Board.

Collectively, these goals are designed to improve communication effectiveness, strengthen relationships, increase transparency, and build trust with all audiences-both internally and externally.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All items included in the Public Affairs Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2026-2028 are budgeted in the Proposed FY 2026-2028 Budget.

ATTACHMENT

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

- Proposed Public Affairs Strategic Plan FY 2026-28
- Presentation