



# STEERING COMMITTEE

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2023-3064

**Agenda Date:** 6/28/2023

**Agenda Item No:** 4.

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**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2022-2024 YEAR-END REPORT**

**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 Year-End Report.

### **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.

**TIMING CONCERNS**

N/A

**RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION**

N/A

**PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

July 2022 - Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 received and filed.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

OC San's Public Affairs Office Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 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. The Public Affairs Strategic Plan offers a vision to unify OC San's communication efforts and focus resources to achieve the greatest impact and results. The Public Affairs Strategic Plan consists of 11 categories. Below is a recap of the first year of the plan:

**1. Employee Communications**

Goal: Optimize communication with our internal audience including those operating in the field.

- 790 The San Box Posts (Intranet)
- 6 Digester publications (Monthly bulletin - discontinued in December 2022)
- 52 Three Things to Know Emails (Weekly email)
- 6 Pipeline issues - Including a Special Yearbook Edition (Newsletter)

**2. Industry Experts**

Goal: Establish and solidify OC San's reputation as infrastructure leaders in the wastewater and resource recovery industry.

- 13 agency awards received
- 24 Speaking Engagements reaching over 1,500 people

**3. Media Relations**

Goal: Cultivate relationships with traditional and social media journalists and influencers.

- 11 press releases issued
- 41 news article mentions
- 719 social media posts across four platforms with average reach of 5,300 per month
- 960 new followers
- OC Register Water insert

**4. 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.

- Four issues of Neighborhood Newsletter reaching an average of 4,500 per issue
- Website Redesign Request for Proposal
- Educational display for new Headquarters Building
- OC Register Water Insert
- Launched permittee award program

**5. 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.

- 46 tours reaching 550 people
- Hosted Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy with 30 graduates
- Continue partnership with the Heritage Museum of Orange County with their virtual and in-person teachings
  - Industry award received for partnership
- Participated in seven community events reaching over 5,000 people

**6. Capital and Maintenance Outreach**

Goal: Develop and implement outreach programs that will engage the communities affected by OC San construction and maintenance activities.

- 24 notifications distributed reaching over 70,000 people
- Two virtual Vendor Outreach Workshops hosted
- Three City Council presentations

**7. Legislative Affairs**

Goal: Proactive engagement in legislative advocacy efforts that could impact OC San and the wastewater industry.

- Created annual Legislative Plan
- Issued seven State position letters and 20 Federal position letters
- Hosted Congressman visit and tour

**8. Grant Coordination**

Goal: Monitor, track, and apply for grants available to OC San.

- Secured for \$3.45 million in community project funding

**9. 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
- 12 -Five Minutes Per Month published
- Four member agency outreach toolkits distributed
- Developed outreach program for inflow and infiltration issues within sewer service area

#### 10. Crisis Management

Goal: Ensure the PAO 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 PAO
- Updated PAO's Continuity of Operations Plan

#### 11. 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.

- 12 General Manager Monthly Reports
- Monthly talking points preparation
- Preparation of GM Work Plan Update
- Developed material for speaking engagements and presentations
- Strategic Plan support and development

### **CEQA**

N/A

### **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
- Presentation