



ORANGE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT

**CONSTRUCTION  
OUTREACH  
COMMUNICATIONS**

REVIEW AND AUDIT

**2021**



Prepared by





Dear Ms. Covarrubias:

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) has continuously fulfilled its mission to protect public health by spearheading notable sewer treatment service projects throughout Orange County. As OC San continues to lead large-scale projects, it is important to the public and to the OC San Construction Outreach Team that the district is transparent and proactive with communications regarding pending and ongoing impacts and benefits resulting from OC San's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

As the team at the helm of both internal and external communications, OC San's Outreach Team connects OC San and the public. Ensuring that your team has the resources, tools and insight to inform OC San's audiences is essential to the agency's ongoing success.

To assist your office in gauging the effectiveness of your current community outreach communications and to assess any areas for growth, Communications LAB embarked on an audit of OC San's communications and construction outreach program in February 2021. Our intensive assessment consisted of three tasks: 1) an audit of OC San's existing communications materials, outreach program and tactics, 2) internal ascertainties (surveys and interviews with OC San's internal stakeholders) and 3) external ascertainties (surveys and interviews with OC San city partners, residents and business owners). We also analyzed public agencies with service areas or missions comparable to OC San.

How well is OC San currently communicating with its ratepayers and city partners? How satisfied are stakeholders with OC San's outreach efforts during construction impacting their homes or businesses? What communication methods are most effective when communicating with stakeholders? These are some of the stakeholder perceptions we sought to understand.

Given the scope of the data collected, this report is divided into eight sections: Section 1: Purpose of the Audit and Assessments, Section 2: Methodology, Section 3: Communications Audit, Section 4: Internal Ascertainments, Section 5: Community Ascertainments, Section 6: Comparative Review, Section 7: SWOT Analysis and Section 8: Key Recommendations. It is our goal to work with OC San's Construction Outreach Team to further strengthen OC San's community outreach efforts and optimize your agency's success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'APBarn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**CEO, COMMUNICATIONS LAB**

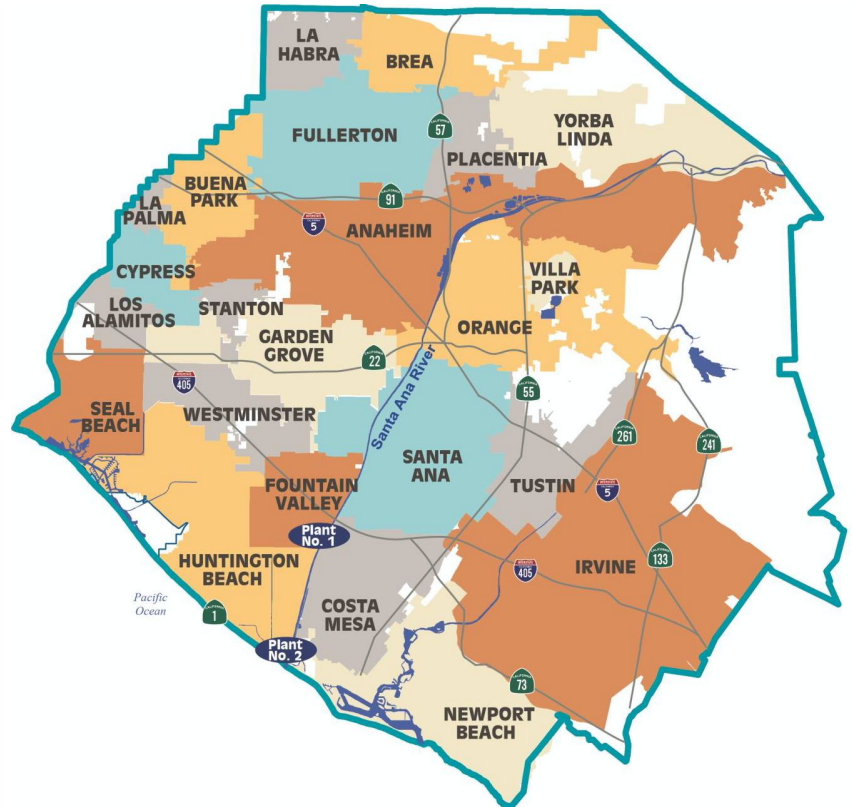
# Section 1: Purpose of Audit & Assessments

With 25 capital projects with a total construction value of more than \$550 million during the 2020-21 Fiscal Year alone, OC San's Construction Outreach Team is working diligently to deliver proactive, thorough and transparent communications.

Despite OC San's readiness, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about new communications challenges that effectively eliminated in-person interactions for more than 12 months, leading organizations like OC San and its partners to "think outside the box." Through these challenges, OC San's Construction Outreach Team continued to have the unique responsibility of communicating project benefits and impacts to the public.

In the face of new shifts in communication and given many projects on OC San's docket, the Construction Outreach Team felt the timing was right to conduct a thorough review and audit of OC San's construction outreach communications, with the goal of identifying the office's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Specifically, we sought to understand how well OC San communicates when relaying information regarding its capital improvement projects. In this way, this forward-looking team can prepare their office and enhance communications for future projects.



## Section 2: Methodology & Assessment Techniques

### Task 1: Audit: *Let's Look Back*

There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to community outreach. Each agency is as unique as its audience. To understand and effectively assess OC San's construction outreach communications, we began our engagement by taking a "**snapshot**" of OC San's past and current outreach efforts.

As part of our approach, we requested information and content from past outreach efforts. This included collateral materials, electronic communications and tactical plans. OC San staff presented us with more than 30 communications materials, including flyers, PowerPoint presentations, notices, fact sheets, project maps, community surveys, postcards, brochures and newsletters. Communications LAB staff then analyzed each communication material presented.



Among the metrics considered were platforms, tools, appropriate use for the targeted audiences, messaging, image/visual consistency, feedback loops and whether the communication material aligned with the outreach team's stated community outreach goals. We also evaluated OC San's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube) to ensure that the platforms are effective and that messaging is consistent across platforms. Audit findings were recorded and will be explored further in our **Audit Findings-Marketing Materials/Branding section (pg.16)**.

### Task 2: Internal Ascertainments: *What do OC San's Internal Stakeholders Think?*

Before we delved into public opinions, we wanted first to understand how OC San's internal stakeholders view the construction outreach communications program. As the stakeholders with the most intimate knowledge of the program, it was necessary to gauge the feelings and opinions of this critical stakeholder pool before we looked outward. This internal assessment

consisted of **surveys and interviews**. Understanding the sensitivities that may come from expressing honest views about one's place of work, the survey and interviews were conducted with the understanding that individuals would not be named within the report, thereby encouraging honest feedback.

**Internal Survey Process:** Working in conjunction with OC San's Construction Outreach Team, we quickly realized that there would be a need to design two internal surveys: **Internal Survey I** for a broad audience of internal stakeholders with varying degrees of knowledge regarding the construction outreach communications program and **Internal Survey II**, which included all of the questions posed in Survey I with three additional questions intended for staff who are part of the community outreach team. The extended survey questions specifically sought to measure workload and capacity.

**Internal Survey Questions:** **Internal Survey I** consisted of 16 questions, while **Internal Survey II** consisted of 19 questions. Below are the questions posed:

1. How many years have you worked with OC San?
2. What is your affiliation with OC San?
3. How are you involved with OC San's community/customer communications?
4. In your opinion, what should be OC San's number-one goal as it seeks to inform community stakeholders of project benefits/impacts?
5. Construction Information: What do you think is OC San's best community outreach tool to relay construction information to the community?
6. Public Meetings: What do you think is OC San's best outreach tool to inform the community of public meetings?
7. Emergency Communications: What do you think is OC San's best community outreach tool to reach people in case of an emergency?
8. OC San's top community outreach strength is (select from the options provided)
9. Are there any areas where OC San's community outreach program can improve/grow?
10. If you answered YES or I am not sure to question 9, in what areas can OC San's community outreach program improve?
11. How could OC San reach a broader audience when conducting community outreach efforts, especially now that COVID-19 has restricted in-person outreach? Are there any tactics or strategies that you think OC San is not currently engaging in that would be more efficient?
12. What three words describe your working relationship with OC San's community outreach representatives/liaisons?
13. Do you feel you are given sufficient opportunities to provide input regarding the messages that are related to the community by the community outreach team?

14. What is the number-one complaint/a common complaint you hear from the community regarding OC San capital improvement projects? Anything outreach related? If this question does not apply to you, please write N/A in the box.
15. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being completely agree, 1 being completely disagree) rate your agreement with the following statements regarding the role of OC San's community outreach representatives/liaisons.
16. Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding OC San's current outreach program?

**Internal Survey II** included the additional three questions:

1. If applicable to your OC San job responsibilities, on average, how many hours per week do you spend working on general OC San communications specific for outreach purposes (employees, community, board of directors) and or in preparation for messages going out to the same audiences?
2. If applicable, what OC San communications task takes the most of your time?
3. If applicable to your OC San job responsibilities, at this time, do you have any bandwidth/capacity to accommodate additional communications responsibilities?

Copies of the surveys are available in [Appendix A \(Internal Survey I\)](#) and [Appendix B \(Internal Survey II\)](#).

### Internal Survey Distribution Overview:

**Audience:** With the guidance of OC San staff, we identified a pool of 175 stakeholders to take **Internal Survey I** and seven stakeholders to take **Internal Survey II**.

**Platform:** The survey was hosted on **SurveyMonkey**, a trusted and user-friendly platform that allows for in-depth data analysis.

**Distribution Method:** Both surveys were delivered to internal stakeholders via a **Constant Contact** email. The email explained the purpose of the survey and directed stakeholders to the **SurveyMonkey** link with their corresponding survey. A copy of the email shared with stakeholders is available as [Appendix C \(Email Blast\)](#)

**Survey Window:** Both surveys were distributed simultaneously on March 31, 2021. The survey window remained open for a period of **21 days** through April 20, 2021. During this time, we sent three email reminders to encourage stakeholders to submit their feedback.

**Responses:** At the conclusion of the internal survey window, we received 65 responses, **60 responses for Internal Survey I** and **five responses for Internal Survey II**.

**Internal Interview Process:** Building off the survey, we collaborated with the OC San staff to identify key stakeholders—such as board members, engineers, project managers, outreach

consultants and an assistant general manager— they felt would give meaningful, in-depth feedback on how they perceive the OC San's construction outreach communications.

From March 8 to May 14, 2021, our team conducted six stakeholder interviews, which lasted on average 30 minutes, via Zoom. During this time, we sent four reminders to stakeholders inviting them to participate. Considering the varied experience of this diverse stakeholder pool, internal stakeholders were asked questions depending on their stakeholder category; the questions are included below and categorized by stakeholder group:

**Internal Interview Questions:**

**All interviewees answered the following questions:**

1. In your opinion, what is the number-one goal of OC San's community outreach program?
2. Of the following, what do you think is OC San's most efficient community outreach tool?
  - i. Emails
  - ii. Text Messages
  - iii. Website
  - iv. Mailed Flyers/Notices/Newsletters
  - v. In-Person Presentations
  - vi. Social Media
3. What would you say OC San does well with regards to community outreach?
4. Are there any areas where OC San's community outreach program can improve/grow?
5. How could OC San reach a broader audience when conducting community outreach efforts, especially now that COVID-19 has restricted in-person outreach? Are there any tactics or strategies that you think they're not currently engaging in that would be more efficient?

**For board members only:**

6. Do you feel the updates you receive regarding OC San's Community outreach efforts are adequate in keeping you informed of what's happening in the community?
7. What are your overall expectations of OC San's Community Outreach program?

**For staff and contractors/consultants only:**

8. What three words describe your working relationship with OC San's Community outreach representatives/liaisons?
9. Do you feel you are given sufficient opportunities to provide input regarding the messages that are related to the community by the community outreach team?
  - a. *Follow up:* In your assessment, are there any opportunities for increased collaboration with the community outreach team?

10. (If applicable) What is the number-one complaint/a common complaint you hear from the community regarding OC San capital improvement projects? Anything outreach related?
11. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being completely agree, 1 being completely disagree) rate your agreement with the following statements:
  - a. "OC San's Community Outreach representatives/liaisons play a critical role in the success of OC San's construction projects."
  - b. "I view OC San's Community Outreach representatives/liaisons as partners whom I can work with to enhance my project's performance."
  - c. "I understand that constant communication with OC San's Community Outreach representatives/liaisons regarding a project's status is key in the delivery of a successful project."

**For staff with first-hand knowledge, oversight of the program (Contractor & Agency Staff in oversight role)**

12. (If applicable) On average, how many hours per week do you spend working on regular OC San communications vs. project-based communications?
  - i. Follow up: What communications task takes the most of your time?
13. (If applicable) At this time, do you have any bandwidth to accommodate additional communications responsibilities?

### **Task 3: External Ascertainments: *What do OC San's ratepayers and partners think?***

The next critical step in our process was to gauge the opinions and experiences of external stakeholders—specifically ratepayers (residents and business owners) and city partners—who can provide first-hand accounts of their experience with OC San's construction outreach program. For these external ascertainment assessments, we conducted a similar two-pronged approach modeled after the internal assessment process. We designed a communications survey through the online platform Survey Monkey and interview questions for the pool of stakeholders identified.





**Community Survey Process:** Shifting our focus to external stakeholders, we worked with OC San staff to draft a community communications survey. The survey was intended to understand how effective OC San is when communicating project benefits/impacts to ratepayers impacted by sewer construction projects. The survey needed to be clear in what it sought to achieve and directed stakeholders to focus solely on their experience with OC San construction outreach communications, not with construction-related impacts such as noise levels, traffic restrictions, access limitations, etc. Construction-related impacts, while a priority, fell out of the scope of this assessment. To encourage honest opinions, we did not collect any names as part of this survey, but we offered stakeholders the opportunity to provide their home or business addresses.

**Community Survey Questions:** The community survey consisted of 12 questions:

1. Is your address a business or residence?
2. Would you like to provide us with your address?
3. Which major OC San construction project has impacted your home/business?
  - a. State College Sewer Construction (Anaheim/Fullerton)
  - b. Westminster Blvd. Sewer Project (Seal Beach/Westminster)
  - c. Fountain Valley Plant (Ellis/Euclid Avenue)
  - d. Huntington Beach Plant (Brookhurst Street)
  - e. Headquarters Complex (Fountain Valley)
  - f. Not sure
4. Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:
  - a. I was notified before the project near my home/business began.
  - b. I was informed of how the project would impact me (for example, noise, vibration, traffic, restricted turns into my track, etc.).
  - c. Once the project began, I knew the anticipated project schedule and/or project duration.
  - d. As the project was underway, I knew how to contact OC San with questions or concerns.
5. Did you have any contact with OC San staff during the project construction?
6. If you answered "yes" to question 5 above, please rate your level of satisfaction with the interaction(s) you had with OC San staff. (*5 stars=very satisfied, 1 star=very dissatisfied*)
7. Was there anything about the project that you wished you had known more about? Please type your response below.
8. OC San used the following methods of communication to reach out to residents affected by major construction projects. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the quality of the information you received or note that you did not receive/notice the form of outreach.

9. Overall, what was your level of satisfaction with OC San's efforts to keep you informed during the project that impacted your home/business?
10. In the future, what is the best way for OC San to inform you of the benefits/impacts of construction projects? *(You may mark more than one option)*
11. OC San engages community members and partner agencies (cities, districts, etc.) well before a construction project begins, often years in advance. Please share your level of familiarity with the following communications outreach efforts.
12. Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding OC San's communications outreach?

A copy of the survey is available in [Appendix D \(Community Survey\)](#).

### Community Survey Distribution:



**Audience:** With the guidance of OC San staff, we determined that this survey would be intended for the community at large and would be made available to any member of the public who accessed the survey link.

**Platform:** The survey was hosted on **SurveyMonkey**, a trusted and user-friendly platform that allows for in-depth data analysis.

**Distribution Method:** After discussing the distribution plan with OC San staff, we determined that the survey should be distributed via OC San's Facebook page and a text message to stakeholders on OC San's distribution list. This would allow community stakeholders who have some level of engagement with OC San and its projects to participate in the survey.

**Survey Window:** The community survey was distributed on April 26, 2021. The

survey window remained open for a period of **14 days** through May 10, 2021. At the conclusion of the survey window, we received 24 responses from throughout OC San's service area.

**Community Interview Process:** The last component of our community assessment was a series of interviews with ratepayers (residents and business owners) impacted by OC San projects and city partners in Anaheim, Seal Beach and Westminster. From April 29 to May 14, 2021, our team

conducted seven stakeholder interviews, which lasted on average 20 minutes, via Zoom. During this time, we sent two reminders to stakeholders inviting them to participate. Given the different experiences of residents compared to city partners, we developed two sets of questions catered to the stakeholder's experience. Again, when soliciting this public input, we made it clear that our assessment focused solely on construction outreach communications, not construction-related impacts.

## **Community Interview Questions:**

### **Residents & Businesses**

1. When the project began, were you aware that the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) was the agency leading the construction of the project near your home/business?
2. OC San begins engaging stakeholders who will be impacted by projects years before the start of construction. Were you aware of or did you attend any of OC San's public meetings on the construction project near your home/business?
3. In your opinion, do you feel you were adequately notified before the project near your home/business began? What would be the appropriate time for advanced notification?
4. Did you understand how the project would impact you directly? (*For example, were you informed of lane reductions, turn restrictions, vibrations, bus stop closures, night work, etc.*)
5. Once the project began, did you know what was the anticipated project schedule/how long the project was scheduled to last?
6. Do you feel OC San kept you informed of new potential project impacts that arose during construction?
7. Are you aware that OC San has a 24/7 construction hotline for questions or concerns regarding construction?
8. How satisfied were you with your level of interaction with OC San's community liaison?
9. Did you feel that the information you received regarding the project was easy to understand—not enough/too much information?
  - a. Did you feel the content gave you enough background information on the project?
  - b. What information would you have liked to receive that you didn't get?
10. OC San uses many different methods of communication (*mailed notices, door hangers, construction signs, social media, text messages, construction web pages, in-person presentations*) to reach out to residents affected by major construction projects. What form of outreach did you receive?

11. What is the best way for OC San to contact you to share information regarding project benefits/impacts? (*example: mailed notices, door hangers, construction signs, social media, text messages, construction web pages, in-person presentations*)
12. Are you aware that OC San coordinates with cities to mitigate potential construction impacts to the community?
13. Overall, what was your level of satisfaction with OC San's outreach during the construction impacting your home or business? Any areas for improvement?

**City Staff:**

1. What department do you work for?
  - a. What is your current involvement with OC San's outreach team?
2. In your opinion, which city departments/offices/groups should the OC San community outreach team coordinate with in regard to community outreach?
3. Do you feel you were informed of new project updates in a timely manner?
4. **(If applicable)** What was the most common complaint you heard from the community regarding the OC San capital improvement project impacting your city? Anything outreach related
5. How can we reduce the number of calls going to your agency? How can OC San better support you?
6. Was there anything about OC San's Community Outreach approach you wish you had known more about? Anything OC San could have done better?
7. What would you say OC San does well with regards to community outreach?
8. Based on your interactions/communications with OC San, what do you think is the number-one goal of OC San's Community Outreach program?
9. How could OC San reach a broader audience when conducting community outreach efforts, especially now that COVID-19 has restricted in-person outreach? Are there any tactics or strategies that you think they're not currently engaging in that would be more efficient? *For example, many public agencies have begun hosting virtual interactive town halls where residents can tune in to learn about a project and ask questions in real time. Is there anything you've seen that would make a great addition?*
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

With the methods and framework of our assessments in place, we move on to discussing the findings of our audit and assessments.

## Section 3: Communications Audit

### Background

Since 1954, OC San has protected public health and the environment by providing effective wastewater collection, treatment and recycling. To achieve this mission, OC San leads many projects of varying duration, value and impact. In the last year and a half alone, OC San has invested \$500 million in wastewater infrastructure throughout Orange County.

To meet the ever-growing communication demands of OC San, the agency maintains a **Public Affairs Office** located in the **General Manager's Office**. The Public Affairs Office is responsible for OC San's media relations, internal and external communications, community relations, public education and outreach, social media, website, special events, agency branding, collateral materials, graphic design and crisis communications.

The office's goal is to develop and manage a total communications program in accordance with OC San's Core Values and Strategic Plan. Communications LAB began our audit by first understanding the composition and role of the Public Affairs Office, which leads community communications.

The Capital Improvement Project (CIP) construction outreach program is a collaborative effort between OC San's Public Affairs Office and Engineering Administration staff. The CIP Outreach Program organizational structure is composed of one manager, two program leads and six support staff.

### Staffing Overview

NAME	TITLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Jennifer Cabral	Administration Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oversight of CIP Outreach Program.</li><li>• Coordination of communications with the Executive Management Team, Assistant General Managers, General Managers and Board of Directors.</li></ul>

<b>Daisy Covarrubias</b>	Principal Public Affairs Specialist	Co-manage program including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Outreach plans</li> <li>● Collateral materials</li> <li>● Website development</li> <li>● Social media</li> <li>● Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>● Coordinate with cities</li> <li>● Complaint management,</li> <li>● Day-to-day oversight of project activities, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Tanya Chong</b>	Principal Staff Analyst (Engineering)	
<b>Belen Carrillo</b>	Public Affairs Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Video creation</li> <li>● Notification development</li> <li>● Stakeholder identification</li> <li>● Distribute information</li> <li>● Social Media coordination</li> </ul>
<b>Kelly Newell</b>	Public Affairs Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notification development</li> <li>● Stakeholder identification</li> <li>● Distribute information</li> </ul>
<b>Jennifer Wein</b>	Engineering Staff Analyst (Engineering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notification development</li> <li>● Stakeholder identification</li> <li>● Distribute information</li> </ul>
<b>Gregg Deterding</b>	Graphic Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Graphic design</li> </ul>
<b>Cheryl Scott</b>	Administrative Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clerical support</li> <li>● Invoicing</li> <li>● Assist with distribution and miscellaneous tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Rebecca Long</b>	Senior Public Affairs Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Legislative relations/outreach</li> <li>● NOTE: Staff is not typically involved in construction outreach except for crises or emergencies.</li> </ul>

### **Outreach Support**

OC San's Construction Outreach Team receives additional outreach support via sub-consultants provided by the project's design consultant (i.e. State College Sewer Construction Program). They do not have a direct contractor/consultant relationship with OC San.

CATEGORY	TITLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Contractor	Community Outreach Representative/Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent OC San</li> <li>• Serve as the face of the community and the organization</li> <li>• Develop and implement community outreach plan,</li> <li>• Work in tandem with the technical team and contractors.</li> <li>• Serve as reference for questions and updates about the project.</li> <li>• Provide information to the public.</li> <li>• Provide quick responses and resolutions to community concerns to keep the project moving forward.</li> </ul>

## Current Projects

At the time of this assessment, the Construction Outreach Team reported working on communications for the following construction projects.

- Four collections projects
  - State College Sewer Construction (Anaheim)
  - Westminster Blvd. Sewer Project (Westminster)
  - Los Alamitos Trunk Sewer (Los Alamitos)
  - Bay Bridge Pump Station (Newport Beach)
- Plant No. 1 (P1) Fountain Valley Headquarters
  - Headquarters Complex Site Preparation
  - Perimeter Security Project
  - Overall P1 activity
- Plant No. 2 (P2) Huntington Beach
  - GWRS
  - Primary Clarifiers
  - Food Waste
  - Overall P2 activity



**Total reported: *nine defined projects*** in addition to the overall activity at Plants No. 1 and 2 and small projects throughout OC San's service area. Especially noteworthy are the **four collections projects** that have increased impact on the community. Two of these collections' projects are active construction projects while the other two are in the pre-construction phase which also requires coordination and outreach.

## Future Projects

To understand the Construction Outreach Team's future workload, we asked them to share a list of upcoming projects. A full list of projects planned is available in [Appendix E \(OC San Construction Advertising Schedule\)](#).

Listed below are projects occurring over the next three to four years, which are expected to require more effort according to staff. Collections projects are of special importance to the team because they are within the community. Projects at Plant No. 1 and Plant No. 2 are of note because of their size, duration, and visibility or impact to neighbors. It is important to note that pre-construction outreach efforts begin well before construction begins, thereby expanding the outreach team's workload far beyond what is listed below.

- Collections:*
  - Orange-Western Sewer Rehab (Anaheim, Buena Park, Cypress) –*Start Year:* 2021
  - Los Alamitos Trunk Sewer (Los Alamitos, Seal Beach) - *Start Year:* 2021
  - Gisler - Red Hill Interceptor Rehabilitation (Irvine, Santa Ana, Costa Mesa) - *Start Year:* 2022
  - Bay Bridge Pump Station and Force Main (Newport Beach) - *Start Year:* 2023
  - Seal Beach Pump Station (Seal Beach) – *Start Year:* 2023
  - Cypress Trunk Sewer east/west – Cypress, Los Alamitos, La Palma -2023
  - Taft Improvements (Orange) – *Start Year:* 2024
- Plant No. 1:*
  - Headworks Rehabilitation - *Start Year:* 2021
  - Headquarters - *Start Year:* 2021
  - Perimeter improvements - *Start Year:* 2021
- Plant No. 2:*
  - Ongoing GWRS activity
  - Food waste
  - Digester Rehab - *Start Year:* 2026
  - Clarifiers Replacement - *Start Year:* 2021

**Total reported: 14 defined projects** in addition to the overall activity at Plants No. 1 and 2 and small projects throughout OC San's service area. Especially noteworthy are the **seven collections systems projects, which will require extensive outreach efforts. In 2023 alone, OC San will have projects in Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, Irvine, Newport Beach, Seal Beach, Cypress, Los Alamitos and La Palma.**



## Audit Findings

During our internal communications audit conducted in February 2021, we assessed OC San's existing communications materials, strategies, tactics, media tools, messaging, frequency of the message, platforms, image/visual consistency and metrics used for measuring results. From the beginning of the audit, it was evident that OC San had a strong construction outreach program.

### Community Outreach Plan

When asked to share their community outreach plan, OC San presented an outreach outline in a document in draft form, available as [Appendix F \(Community Outreach Plan\)](#). The document detailed goals, the role of the community outreach representative/liaison, factors considered to determine outreach strategy, collateral material types, information to include in notices, distribution boundaries, notice schedules, methods of distribution, meeting types and other ways to keep stakeholders informed.

The communications plan was analyzed by our team, which includes staff with decades of experience in community outreach and public noticing. We compared the plan to the outreach plans of similar public agencies we have worked with and determined the plan has clear goals, is thorough and considers the uniqueness of each project and the community impact. We recommend the Construction Outreach Team formalize the adoption of this outreach plan so that all staff within the team recognize it as the guide for all outreach efforts.

- **Construction 24/7 Hotline**

In addition to the outreach plan, the office reported having a 24/7 Construction Hotline available in English and Spanish. Feedback received through the hotline is tracked by month and project. We reviewed the logs for the Westminster Sewer Project Construction Hotline for March 2020-February 2021 and the State College Sewer Construction log for December 2020. The records showed that the bulk of the community's concerns are related to construction impacts including debris, noise levels, detours and vibrations.

- **In-Language Communications:** Understanding that it serves a diverse community, OC San reported translating materials into Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese based on the demographics of the impacted area.

- **Media Relations:** When questioned about outreach to local media outlets, OC San reported it does not typically inform the media of outreach projects. OC San mainly responds reactively to media inquiries.

## Marketing Materials/Branding

When asked to share outreach materials shared with stakeholders, OC San presented more than 30 collateral pieces. Each piece was analyzed to assess its effectiveness considering the following: communication platform, communication tools, target audience, visual consistency, messaging, the availability of a feedback loop and whether the piece was appropriate for the targeted audience. The full audit review is available in [Appendix G \(Audit Materials\)](#). Overall, the materials presented were deemed to be effective in both messaging and visual consistency. We also evaluated each piece to determine whether it aligned with the stated goals of the outreach team as memorialized in the draft outreach plan. All pieces followed a clear theme of orange and blue (colors found in OC San's logo) and were written using clear, user-friendly terminology.

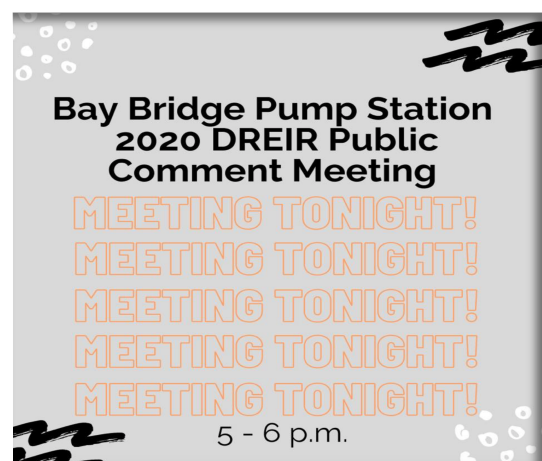
During this analysis, we found some instances where a project name differed from one piece to the next. It's important to ensure that project names are the same across communications to avoid any confusion. Some communications utilized font colors and backgrounds that may be difficult to read, especially for older residents. We also discovered that while OC San has a Corp ID Standards Manual that serves as the style guide for the agency, **it does not cover social media postings**. Incorporating social media postings into the manual will help further establish OC San's internal and external position and will be explored further in this report.

## Social Media

Following the evaluation of OC San's marketing materials, we evaluated OC San's social media channels to ensure alignment in messaging. We reviewed the following platforms: Facebook (@OCSanDistrict), Instagram (@OCSanDistrict), Twitter (@OCSanDistrict), and YouTube (@2OCSanDistrict).

Overall, we found good use of social media, informative and engaging posts, with relevant content. There is also a consistent use of blue and orange colors and good use of dedicated hashtags (example: #ocsdstatecollege). OC San reported not using the paid features to promote its posts (boosts, ads). In our evaluation of social media graphics, we found that fonts and images vary significantly by post. For example, see the two Facebook posts below:

Although social media posts should be unique, it is important to have some degree of visual consistency so that stakeholders who follow OC San's social media channels can recognize the communications as being those of the district.



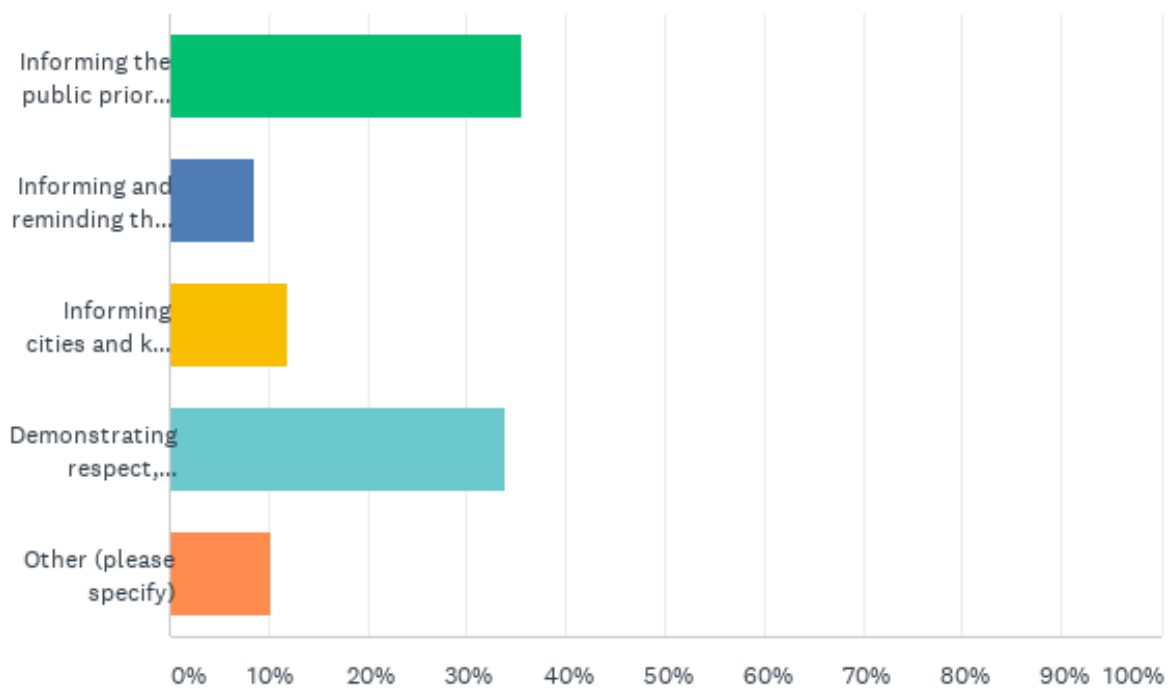
## Section 4: Internal Ascertainments

### Survey Takeaways

The internal survey gave stakeholders numerous opportunities to share their personal opinions, feelings and observations. A full copy of the internal survey responses is available in [Appendix H \(Internal Survey I Responses\)](#) and [Appendix I \(Internal Survey II Responses\)](#). Because the questions for both internal surveys were the same, except for three supplemental questions asked of staff who are part of the outreach team, we aggregated the data of the questions that were the same for both groups.

**From these 65 responses, we collected several key takeaways.**

Q8 OC San's top community outreach strength is:



There was a virtual tie regarding what respondents see as the outreach team's top strength:

- 37%** of respondents believe OC San's top community outreach strength is informing the public prior to the start of construction to minimize surprises and complaints, while **32%** felt OC San's top community outreach strength is demonstrating respect, concern and good faith by quickly responding to address issues and providing reasonable solutions to concerns or complaints.

- ❑ When asked about OC San's goals as it seeks to inform the community, there was a pattern in the goals identified. Transparency, increased understanding of project benefits/impacts, advance notifications, proactive communications and informing residents of the value of OC San projects were the most common goals stated.

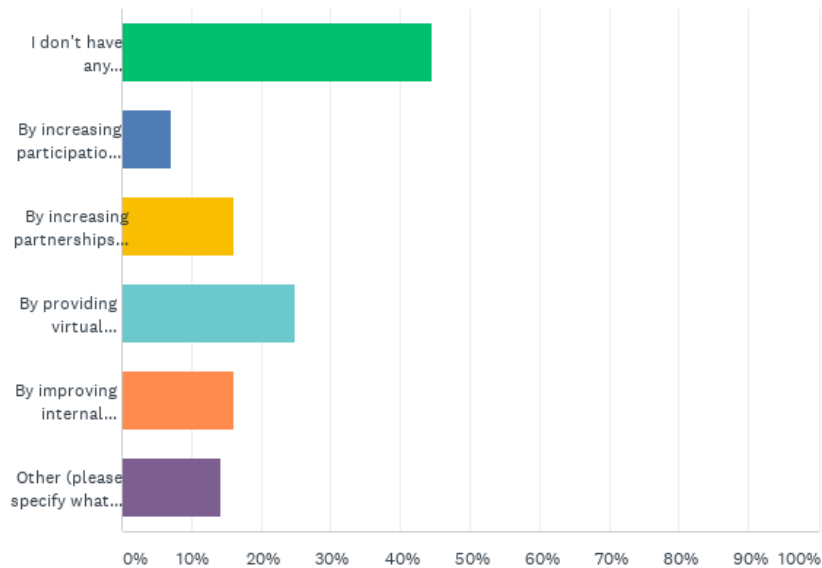
**Effective Communications Platforms**

- ❑ **Construction Information: 52%** of respondents believe 'Mailed Flyers/Notices and Newsletters' are the top outreach tool to relay construction information to the community.
- ❑ **Public Meeting Information: 59%** of respondents believe 'Mailed Flyers/Notices/Newsletters' are the top outreach tool to relay public meeting information to the community.
- ❑ **Emergency Communications: 51%** of respondents believe "Text Messages" are the top outreach tool to reach people in case of an emergency, followed by "Social Media," which was selected by **19%** of respondents.

**Areas for Improvement**

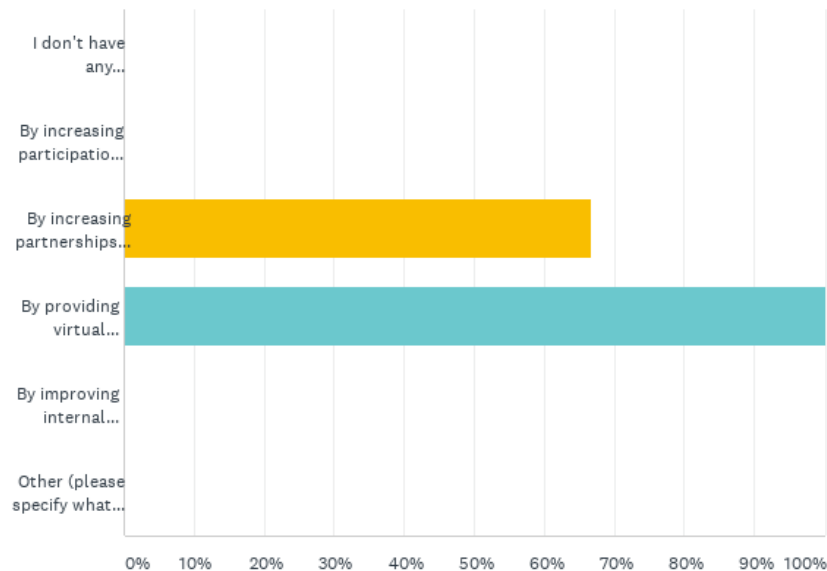
**Internal Survey I**

Q10 If you answered YES or I am not sure to question 9, in what areas can OC San's community outreach program improve? (You may mark more than one choice)



## Internal Survey II

Q10 If you answered YES or I am not sure to question 9, in what areas can OC San's community outreach program improve? (You may mark more than one choice)



- 68%** of combined respondents were "not sure" when asked if there were any areas where OC San's community outreach program could improve/grow.
- Among those stakeholders who had a recommendation for improvement, **more virtual outreach options was selected as the top recommendation**, followed by increased partnerships with community organizations and improved internal communications between OC San team members.

### **Reaching Broader Audiences**

- When asked how OC San could reach broader audiences, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents mentioned **social media** more than any other outreach method, followed by **emails** and OC San's **website**.

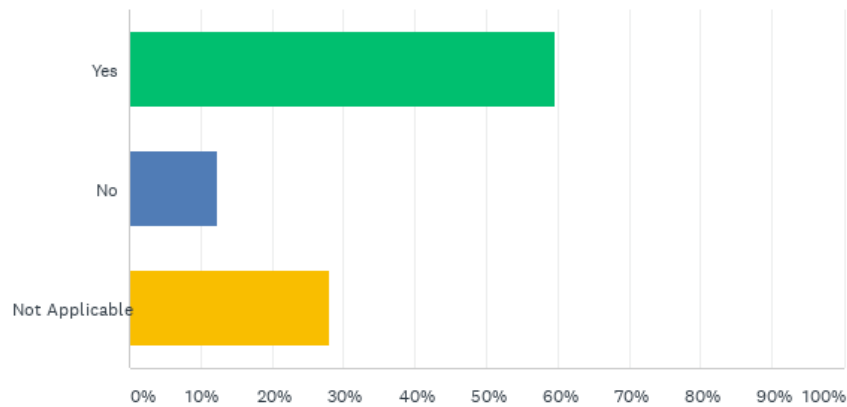
### **Views Regarding the Construction Outreach Team**

- Staff who are not part of the Construction Outreach Team used overwhelmingly **positive adjectives** to describe their working relationship with the outreach team/liaisons; among the most mentioned descriptors were "**good,**" "**collaborative**" and "**helpful.**"
- Among the outreach team, respondents used words like "**teamwork/collaborative,**" "**strong**" and "**transparent**" to define the working relationship within their team.

### Opportunities for Input

- **60%** of OC San staff who are not part of the Construction Outreach Team reported feeling they are given sufficient opportunities to provide input regarding the messages relayed to the community by the outreach team. **(See chart below)**

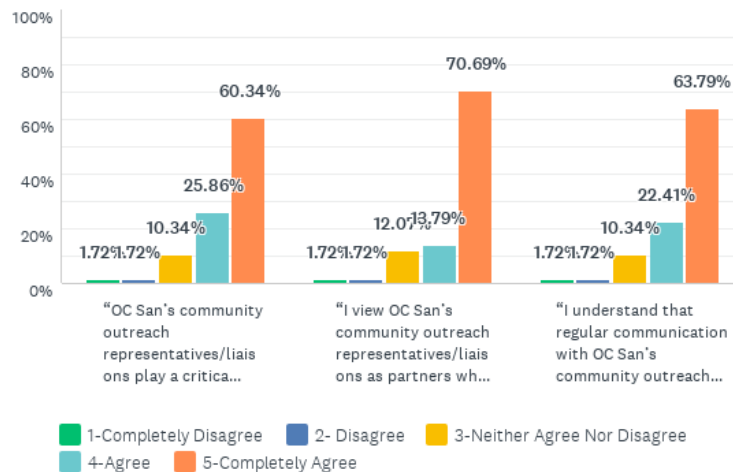
Q13 Do you feel you are given sufficient opportunities to provide input regarding the messages that are related to the community by the community outreach team?



### Perceived Value of Outreach Team

- OC Staff who are not part of the Construction Outreach Team understand the value of the team’s efforts.

Q15 On a scale of 1-5 (5 being Completely agree, 1 being Completely Disagree) Rate your agreement with the following statements:



- ❑ **86%** of respondents **completely agree or agree** that outreach representatives play a critical role in OC San's success of OC San's Construction Projects.
- ❑ **85% completely agree or agree** that OC San's outreach representatives/liaisons are partners who enhance the performance of OC San projects.
- ❑ **86% completely agree or agree** that regular communication with OC San's outreach representatives/liaisons regarding a project's status is important in the delivery of a successful project.

#### **Top Complaint:**

- ❑ The number-one complaint heard from the community regarding OC San capital improvement projects is **"noise and traffic."** Neither complaint is outreach related.

### **Interview Takeaways**

- ❑ Internal stakeholders interviewed had an overwhelmingly positive opinion of OC San's outreach efforts and team.
- ❑ Comparatively, interviewees who have worked with other agencies believed OC San stands out for the quality of their outreach.
- ❑ When asked about the perceived number-one goal of OC San's efforts, interviewees believe OC San's goal is to be proactive, inform residents about impacts and who to contact; OC San should also take ownership of its projects - owning the communication channels with community stakeholders.
- ❑ **Best Communications Methods:** While there was no consensus on which outreach tool is most efficient, social media, mailers (especially for older residents), emails and text messages were the most mentioned.
  - ❑ A few interviewees felt that the website might not be the ideal method to communicate information.
- ❑ **What does OC San do well with regard to community outreach?**
  - ❑ *Responsiveness* - OC San staff are responsive to resident concerns and requests and conduct communications in a personalized manner.
  - ❑ *Prioritizing public impacts* - When choosing between contractor preference or community impacts, OC San focuses on resolving public impacts, which can at times result in redesigns, something which engineers understand.
- ❑ Interviewees believe OC San can reach a broader audience through webinars, social media, flyers, emails and text messages.
- ❑ Interviewees describe their relationship with OC San as **"responsive," "productive," "easy," "successful," "positive," "proactive," "professional" and "caring."**
- ❑ **The top complaints received are not outreach related** and focus on construction, from the length of the project to traffic and businesses concerned about access.

- ❑ **When asked to rate the role that OC San's outreach representatives play on a scale of 1-5, all interviewees gave staff a rating of 5**, meaning they "completely agree" that the outreach team plays a crucial role.

### **Areas for improvement identified by internal stakeholders:**

- ❑ **Streamline In-Person Community updates:** A board member identified the opportunity to streamline in-person presentations by focusing more on information that residents may be interested in (ex. project impacts). The stakeholder felt that at times, in-person presentations can get "too into the weeds" with staff providing too many technical details.
- ❑ **Content Package:** Board member did not recall receiving any direct information from OC San in their capacity as a council member in one of the cities impacted by one of OC San's most recent construction projects.
- ❑ **Contractors are reportedly not following agreed-upon plans.**
- ❑ **Expand Partnerships with Community Partners** by using existing websites of community partners to share impacts to the community (cities, schools, Angels-notify residents via their website).

Notes from the interviews with internal stakeholders are available as [Appendix J \(Internal Interview Notes\)](#)

## **Section 5: Community Ascertainment**

### **Survey Takeaways**

We shifted the second portion of our assessment outward to gauge the opinions of community stakeholders. As with the internal ascertainments, we worked with OC San's community outreach team to identify external stakeholders who could provide insight into the program. We began our external assessment with a community survey. A copy of the complete survey responses is available in [Appendix L \(Community Survey Responses\)](#).

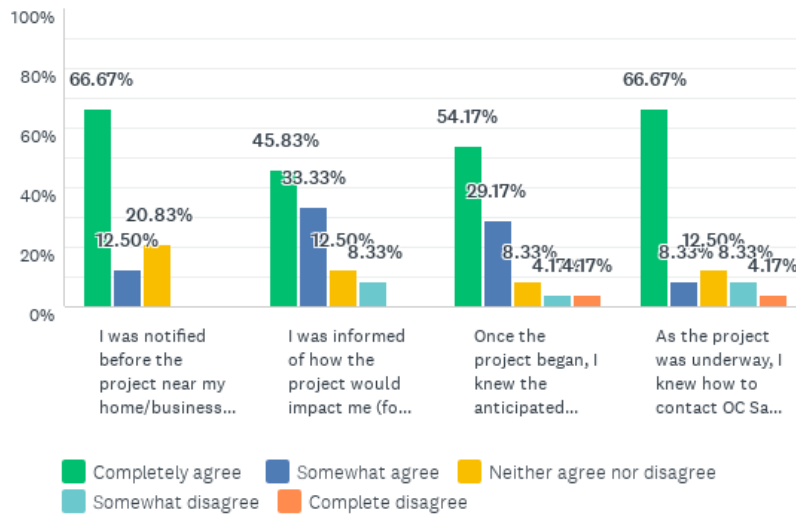
**From these 24 community responses, we collected several key takeaways.**

- ❑ **54%** were impacted by the State College Sewer Construction, **38%** were impacted by the Westminster Blvd. Sewer Project and **4%** were impacted by the Huntington Beach Complex project.

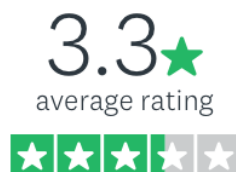


- ❑ **79% completely agreed or somewhat agreed** with the statement "*I was notified before the project near my home of business began.*" The remainder of the respondents "neither agree nor disagree." None disagreed with the statement.
- ❑ **79% completely agreed or somewhat agreed** with the statement "*I was informed of how the project would impact me.*"
- ❑ **83% completely agreed or somewhat agreed** with the statement "*Once the project began, I knew the anticipated project schedule and/or project duration.*"
- ❑ **75% completely agreed or somewhat agreed** with the statement "*As the project was underway, I knew how to contact OC San with questions or concerns.*" **13% somewhat or completely disagreed** with the statement. **(See chart below)**

Q4 Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:



- ❑ The average satisfaction rating from residents who interacted with OC San staff was **3.3 out of 5 stars. (See star rating below)**



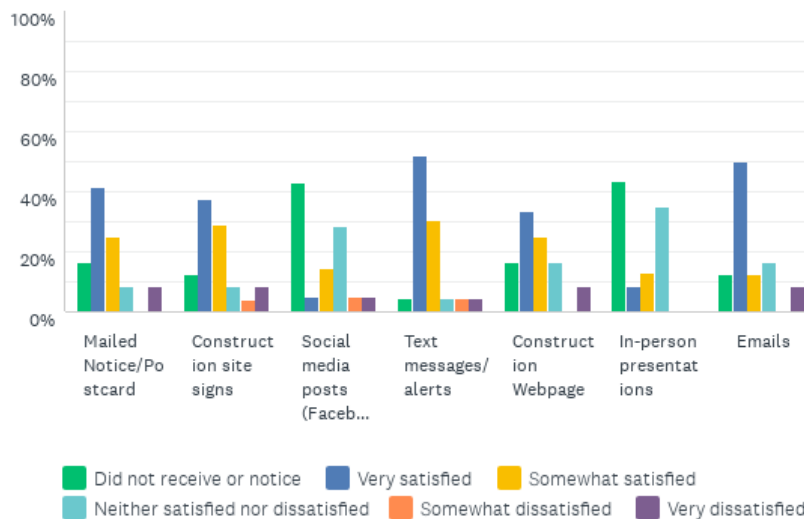
**NOTE:** in our experience, most residents who interact with an agency during a construction project tend to report problems/concerns that may impact their perceived satisfaction.

- ❑ **Noise, project duration** and **vibration** are some of the topics on which residents would like more information.

### Effective Communications Platforms

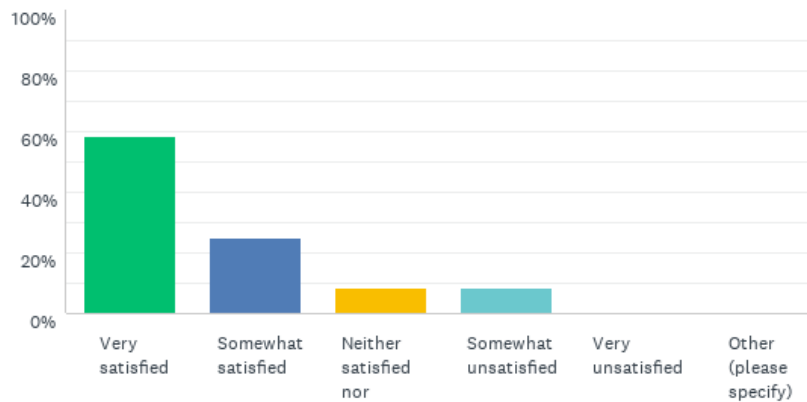
- ❑ **43%** of residents reported not noticing OC San's social media posts. Of those who noticed, only **33%** reported being **somewhat or very satisfied** with the quality of social media communications.
- ❑ **44%** of residents reported not seeing OC San's in-person presentations. Of those who reported noticing in-person presentations, only **39%** reported being **somewhat or very satisfied** with the quality of the information.
- ❑ **86%** of residents reported being **somewhat or very satisfied** with text messages.
- ❑ **70%** of residents reported being **somewhat or very satisfied** with the construction web pages.
- ❑ **71%** of residents reported being **somewhat or very satisfied** with the quality of information of the emails. *(See chart below for details)*

Q8 OC San used the following methods of communication to reach out to residents affected by major construction projects. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the quality of the information you received, or note that you did not receive/notice the form of outreach.



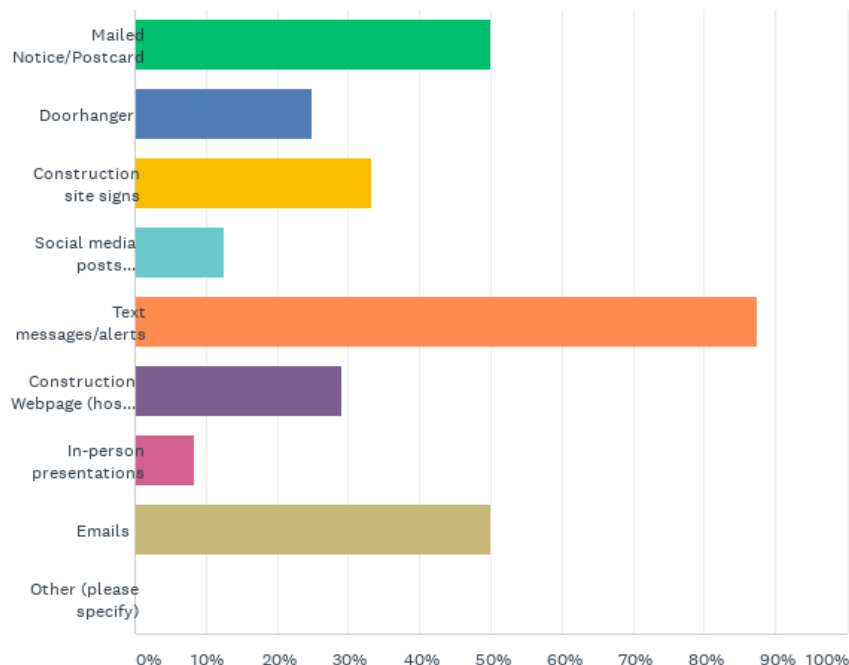
- Overall, **83%** of residents reported being **very or somewhat satisfied** with OC San's efforts to keep them informed during the project that impacted their homes/businesses. **(See chart below for details)**

Q9 Overall, what was your level of satisfaction with OC San's efforts to keep you informed during the project that impacted your home/business?



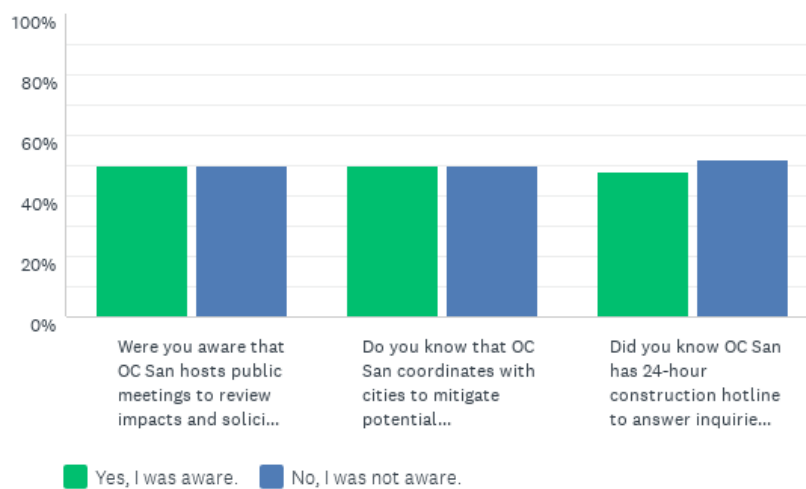
- Residents identified text messages as the top platform to learn of project benefit/impacts. **(See chart below)**

Q10 In the future, what is the best way for OC San to inform you of benefits/impacts of construction projects? (You may mark more than one option)



- ❑ **52%** of residents reported not being aware that OC San has a 24-hour construction hotline.
- ❑ **50%** of residents knew that OC San coordinates with city partners to mitigate impacts to the community and that the agency hosts public meetings to review impacts before a project begins. *(See chart on next page for details)*

Q11 OC San engages community members and partner agencies (cities, districts etc.) well before a construction project begins, often years in advance. Please share your level of familiarity with the following communications outreach efforts.



## Interview Takeaways

External interviewees included staff from city agencies who partner with OC San in Anaheim, Seal Beach and Westminster, as well as residents and business owners in the areas above. These three cities have been impacted by some of OC San's recent construction projects.

### City Partners Interview Takeaways:

- ❑ **City partners have a favorable view** of OC San's outreach team and trust that staff handles city and resident inquiries promptly.
- ❑ **City partners believe OC San has a strong outreach program when compared to other agency partners** (County of Orange, Caltrans).
- ❑ City partners believe OC San does a **good job coordinating with construction services** in the respective cities through project status meetings.
- ❑ **The most common complaint received is once again not outreach related** but rather regarding the duration of the project, traffic and business impacts.
- ❑ **City partners would like to see better construction management** as contractors are reportedly not following agreed-upon plans (for example: beginning new segments

without first finishing construction of segments already underway or changing construction schedules). This can impact the ability to notify the affected area/neighborhood.

- While there is a recognition that there are issues with the contractors and subcontractors, **OC San's outreach team receives high marks.**
- The outreach team is identified as **OC San's "shining star."**
- City partners believe **current methods of communication are effective.**
- Partners believe the number-one goal of OC San's community outreach program is **keeping people informed.**
- Text messages and online platforms** were highlighted as effective platforms.

### ***Areas for improvement identified by City Partners:***

- Construction Signs:**
  - Use more changeable message signs.
  - Use more updated project maps (assuming the schedule is followed).
  - Consider posting more "big boards" so that those who drive through construction areas recognize the project as being an OC San improvement and can have access to contact information (phone number and website).
- PIO Communications:** Build relationships with city public information officers who can push out notifications via city platforms.
- Streamline In-Person Community Updates:** When conducting in-person presentations, engineers may over-explain things. City partners would like to see a focus on community impacts, mitigation efforts and resources for affected residents.
- Contractor/Subcontractor Relationships:** There are reported disagreements between city partners and OC San regarding project specifications and restrictions on contractors.

### **Business and Resident Interview Takeaways**

- Residents interviewed had an **awareness of OC San's role in the project** that impacted their homes/businesses.
- Residents felt they were **informed in a timely manner** of the project and impacts and gave **OC San's outreach team and community liaison high marks for communications responsiveness.**
- Emails** were identified as a great method of communication.

### **Areas for improvement identified by residents/business owners:**

- ❑ **Vibration Notifications:** Residents reported unexpectedly high levels of vibration. They would have liked to understand more about this particular impact before construction began.
- ❑ **Coordination with Cities:** Residents reported that construction projects were conducted back-to-back, causing extended construction periods in their neighborhood.
- ❑ **Updates:** A business owner interviewed would have liked to receive more regular updates; the interviewee was not aware of the availability of website sign-ups for project updates.
- ❑ **Damages (not outreach related):** One interviewee reported property damage allegedly caused by construction, specifically vibration, and is seeking compensation for the repairs. As of now, the interviewee reported this matter has not been resolved in his favor.
  - ❑ A second community member reported similar property damage, but in that case, the contractor has reportedly agreed to repair the damages. Both residents were impacted by the State College Sewer Construction project.

**NOTE:** *In both instances it is important to note that damages reported to OC San are forwarded to the contractor for follow up and handling as required by the contract. As the construction contractor is required by contract to indemnify OC San, the district does not determine if claims are approved or denied.*

Notes from the interviews with external stakeholders are available in [Appendix K \(External Stakeholder Interview Notes\)](#).

## **Construction Outreach Team Capacity Assessment**

As OC San looks towards the future and takes on more large-scale projects that impact the community directly, having a robust construction outreach program is as important as having the right sized team. With this in mind, we sought to understand the workload of the current team executing outreach tasks, as well as identify what tasks take the most time and what additional capacity (if any) is available.

For this assessment, we asked staff who are part of the Construction Outreach Team six supplemental questions:

1. Please describe your role (job duties) within the OC San Public Affairs Office.
2. Which of your job responsibilities takes the most of your time?

3. At this time, do you have any bandwidth/capacity to accommodate additional communications responsibilities?
4. Is there any job duty with which you would like assistance/outside support?
5. Are there any additional resources that you need to be successful in your current role?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

## **Assessment Takeaways**

- Three staff who execute outreach tasks reported having **no additional capacity**.
- One staff member **would like outside support** generating social media content. Upon request, Communications LAB can provide information on how some Orange County public agencies receive external social media support.
- We recommend OC San explore staffing support options to meet the future needs of the Construction Outreach Team, especially as three members reported having no additional capacity and there are projects in the next three to four years that will generate a significant workload. Section 6 reviews how other public agencies with missions and outreach programs comparable to OC San structure their public outreach divisions. This information may be helpful as OC San's looks to strengthen its staffing.

A copy of the supplemental survey responses summarized above can also be found as [Appendix N: Supplemental Survey-Outreach Staff](#)

## **Section 6: Comparative Review**

After completing our internal and external assessments, we wanted to understand how OC San's construction outreach program measures up to comparable public agencies. We compared and contrasted each agency to the efforts of OC San to understand if there were any strategies, tools, or tactics that may be appropriate for OC San to pursue. The agencies reviewed were:

- Los Angeles Sanitation District (LASAN-City of Los Angeles)
- Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (LACSD)
- Orange County Water District (OCWD)
- Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)

Our review consisted of assessing project websites, notices, flyers, community meeting videos, methods of sending notifications and social media accounts/platforms. A full copy of this review is available in [Appendix M \(Agency Comparison\)](#).

## Review Takeaways

- ❑ Overall, OC San's **outreach program is similar** in scope and quality to that of the agencies analyzed.
- ❑ OC San's "construction program projects" page is under the "residents" tab, which **requires some extra navigation**. OCTA and LASAN have project tabs available on their main page, which makes locating the information easier.
- ❑ To register for text messages, OC San requires residents to visit the project website; OCTA simplifies the enrollment process by **allowing residents to register by texting** a number provided on outreach materials (example: Text SouthOCInfo at 67076)
- ❑ OCTA and LACSD post **virtual community meetings and construction updates on their websites/social media** where residents can view them at any time to learn about a project.
- ❑ LASAN and LACSD use the platform **NextDoor** to share updates with residents.
- ❑ LASAN features a "**community collaboration section**" on their project pages, which details their outreach and mitigation efforts.
- ❑ LACSD's **in-person construction update presentations** include **neighborhood councils, breakfast clubs, rotary clubs, chambers of commerce and neighborhood association** updates. This information is subsequently published on project pages.
- ❑ OC San's Facebook presence is almost the same as OCWD and LACSD. LASAN has 13K followers and OCTA has 6K followers.
- ❑ OCTA and LACSD create project-specific social media pages to keep residents informed.
- ❑ LACSD posts construction update videos and updates in Spanish on their project web pages.
- ❑ OCTA partners with Waze.com to provide navigation updates, construction alerts and detour information through project areas.
- ❑ LACSD provides a "request a presentation" option on their project pages to request presentations before a group/organization.

## Agency Staffing Comparison

In addition to evaluating communications, we collected staffing information from the public information sections at LASAN, LACSD, OCWD and OCTA. Our goal is to provide OC San with an overview on how agencies with comparable outreach programs and missions are staffed.

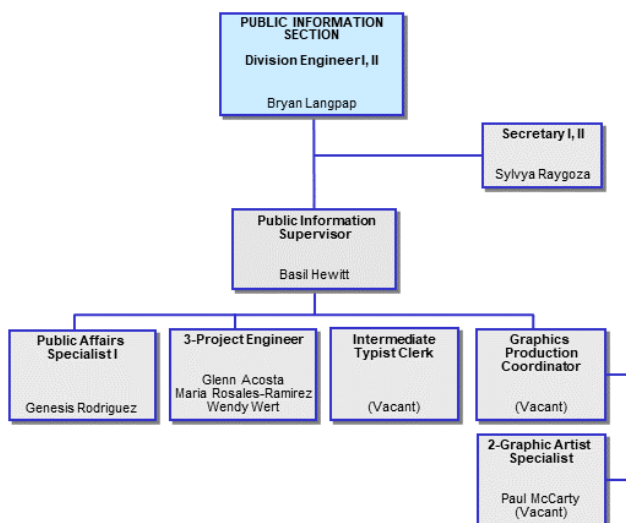
### Los Angeles County Sanitation District (LACSD)

LACSD's Public Information Section is within the Facilities Planning Department and is composed of 11 staff:



## Facilities Planning Department Public Information Section

Authorized staffing as of 03-21



LACSD's PIO reported that they have recently filled the Graphic Artist Specialist vacancy. One of the two graphic artists may get promoted to the Graphics Production Coordinator position (a lead position) but they reported they will try to get by with two graphics specialists. They are also seeking to fill the intermediate typist clerk position once they return to the office. The typist clerk position fields calls and manages tour logistics.

### Los Angeles Sanitation District (LASAN)

LASAN's Public Affairs Office has a unique composition. LASAN's Public Affairs Office is funded by LASAN but serves the entire Department of Public Works, Los Angeles City Council Board Offices and Bureaus. **The office is currently staffed by eight members:**

- One Public Information Director (PID)
- 1 Graphics Supervisor
- 1 Graphics Designer
- 3 three Principle PR Reps
- 1 PR Specialist
- 1 Part time temporary admin

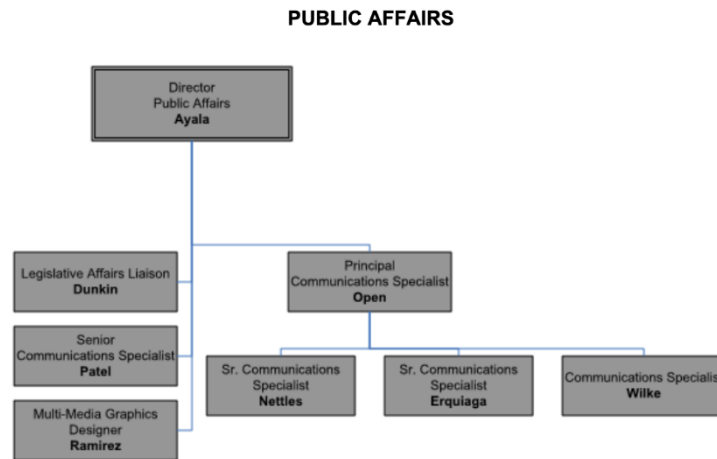
According to LASAN's PID, the current staffing composition of their department is below their desired levels. As background, six years ago, the department had 12 positions and one consultant:

- 3 Public Information Officers
- 3 Graphic Designers
- 3 Principal PR Reps

- 3 PR Specialists
- 1 Full Time Admin/Consultant

### Orange County Water District (OCWD)

OCWD’s Public Affairs Office is within the General Manager’s Office and has an existing staff of eight composed of:



#### Summary Information

##### Existing Staff –8 FTEs

- 1 – Director of Public Affairs
- 1 – Legislative Affairs Liaison
- 1 – Principal Communications Specialist (open)
- 3 – Senior Communications Specialist
- 1 – Communications Specialist
- 1 – Multi-Media Graphics Designer

### Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)

OCTA’s Community Relations Unit is composed of 10 staff and three interns:

- Department Manager
- Section Manager III
- Four Principal Community Relations Specialist
- Senior Community Relations Specialist
- Three Community Relations Specialist
- Three Interns

### Contractor Work Parameters

As part of this assessment, OC San staff asked our team to poll external agencies on how they decided to seek outside contract support. We identified the following scenarios:

- **Project-based support-** when an agency needs targeted support for a project to enhance its capacity, it is often more cost efficient to hire a contractor for a limited period than to hire a new staff member.

- **Specialty services** - agencies often utilize contractors to assist with work in specialty areas such as video production, graphic design and social media management.

## Section 7: SWOT Analysis

Upon completion of the internal, community and capacity assessments, our next step in the process was to conduct a **SWOT** analysis of the organization to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as it relates to OC San's Construction Outreach. The SWOT analysis is available in [Appendix O: SWOT Analysis](#)

## Section 8: Key Recommendations and Look Ahead

### Key Recommendations

#### ❑ **Adopt OC San Outreach Plan**

OC San's Construction Outreach Team presented a thorough and effective outreach plan in draft format. If not already adopted as the official outreach plan, the team should formalize the adoption of this plan so that all staff uses it as their outreach guide. The plan should be evaluated and updated accordingly as new communications platforms and needs arise.

#### ❑ **Virtual Outreach Options**

Time and again, OC San stakeholders expressed an interest in expanded virtual outreach options, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. While stay-at-home orders have been lifted and some regular activities have resumed, the pandemic set a standard for virtual information availability that will not soon disappear. With this in mind, we recommend that OC San consider the following virtual outreach options, which would make information available to a wider audience.

- ❑ *Virtual community meetings/workshops*- OC San can use the same information presented at community meetings and archive the content on the social media channels and website. This will allow residents who cannot attend in-person meetings to meet the project managers and receive information in a more personalized manner. These programs can be live or pre-recorded presentations.

#### ❑ **Simplify Text Message Registration**

Text messages were overwhelmingly selected by **88%** of community respondents as the top communication platform to receive information on project impacts. They also had a

high satisfaction rating among those who reported receiving these communications. OC San already provides a mechanism for residents to register for project updates, but this requires a visit to the OC San website. Agencies like OCTA offer residents the option to register for a project update via text message by texting a number rather than visiting the website. This mechanism simplifies the enrollment process. The text message enrollment information can be included in OC San's existing collateral pieces.

❑ **Incorporate Social Media into OC San Corp ID Standards Manual**

During our internal analysis, we discovered some inconsistencies in the graphics and fonts used in OC San's social media communications. We found that while OC San has a Corp ID Standards Manual that serves as the style guide for the agency, it does not cover social media postings. Social media channels are, in our assessment, one of the top communication platforms. As such, social media guidelines should be incorporated into OC San's Corp ID Standards Manual as soon as possible to ensure that communications follow a consistent style and build upon OC San's digital footprint.

❑ **Set Budget for Social Media Advertising to Expand Reach**

To increase the visibility of OC San's social media posts (which 43% of community stakeholders reported not noticing), we recommend that the agency consider allocating a budget to take advantage of the basic advertising features available on Facebook and Instagram. Organic reach on Facebook and Instagram is low across the board, meaning that a post may only reach a small portion of the intended audience. With projects of large-scale impact ongoing and on the horizon, OC San can easily boost posts or run ads that target areas geographically. Beyond ensuring that ratepayers see information on social media, some platforms, like Facebook, allow targeting of audiences who have recently visited or traveled through an area; this feature would allow OC San to target commuters traveling through impacted areas, thereby expanding OC San's reach. In the same manner that a budget is allocated for mailed notices, we recommend that a budget should be set to inform stakeholders on digital platforms.

❑ **Improve In-Person Presentations**

To address the concerns raised by some stakeholders regarding too much detail in OC San's in-person presentations and the low satisfaction reported among those who reported seeing the presentations, we recommend that community presentations are more focused, zeroing in on community impacts and reducing construction-focused portions led by engineers. These presentations would also be a good opportunity to tout OC San's ongoing efforts to mitigate impacts on residents and business owners. This would help increase awareness among residents, **50%** of whom reported not knowing that OC San coordinates with city partners to mitigate impacts to the community and that the agency hosts public meetings to review impacts before a project begins.

❑ **Highlight OC San Efforts to Mitigate Project Impacts**

Focusing on the 50% of stakeholders who reported not knowing that OC San coordinates with city partners to mitigate impacts and hosts public meetings before a project begins, we believe there is an opportunity to increase awareness by showcasing OC San's robust mitigation efforts on existing project pages. LASAN devotes a section on its project page to highlight its efforts to mitigate impacts to the community, from signs inviting patrons to visit businesses to information booths. The message is clear when one visits the project page: LASAN works with the community. OC San can easily implement this recommendation showcasing its robust mitigation efforts on project pages and social media channels.

❑ **Develop Monthly Content Packages for Stakeholders**

Various stakeholders spoke of the importance of OC San distributing information through community partners. Many community agencies have existing communications channels like newsletters and social media channels to share OC San news. We recommend developing a monthly content package with timely updates that can be shared with city council members, public information officers and community partners, especially in areas impacted by large construction projects.

❑ **Establish Clear Communications Expectations with Contractors**

The biggest threat the Construction Outreach Team faces is, unfortunately, one out of its control. Time and again, we heard stakeholders speak of contractors not following agreed-upon plans. It is imperative that at the onset and throughout these projects, OC San delineates expectations for contractors. The Construction Outreach Team is only as effective as the information it receives. If a contractor does not inform OC San of changes in the project construction schedule, this impacts the team's ability to inform residents promptly, which can, in the long run, erode trust.

❑ **Evaluate Public Affairs Office Staffing/External Support**

In the next three to four years, OC San will embark on at least six collections projects of significant impact to the community in a wide geographic area. This does not include projects at Plants No.1 and No.2, which will also require community outreach. An evaluation of the capacity of the outreach team revealed that three staff members do not have additional bandwidth to take on new responsibilities and one of them would like support generating social media content. At this time, it may be warranted for OC San to assess the staffing structure of the outreach team, specifically the responsibilities assigned to the three staff who reported they are at capacity. Three staff in the outreach team reported they have additional bandwidth, so there may be room to reassign responsibilities to these team members. OC San may also explore outside support/contractor options to strengthen the team's capacity. Communications LAB can present options as to how some public agencies receive external support.