



## Agenda Report

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File #: 2024-3562, Version: 1

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**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2024-2026**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024- 2026.

### **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 concludes in June 2024. To continue meeting the agency's goals, the Public Affairs team has developed a plan to span from fiscal year 2024-25 to 2025-26. 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, 2024, and updates will be provided to the Steering Committee every six months.

## **PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

January 2024 - Board and Steering Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 Mid-Year Update.

June 2023 - Board and Steering Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 Year-End Report.

February 2023 - Board and Steering Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 Mid-Year Update.

July 2022 - Board and Legislative and Public Affairs Committee received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024.

## **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 results. The Plan consists of 11 categories.

- Employee Communications  
Goal: Optimize communication with internal audience including those operating in the field.
- Industry Experts  
Goal: Establish and solidify OC San's reputation as infrastructure leaders in the wastewater and resource recovery industry.
- Media Relations  
Goal: Cultivate relationships with traditional and social media journalists and influencers.
- 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, and advertising, which includes maintaining a positive experience for OC San visitors.
- 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.
- Capital and Maintenance Outreach  
Goal: Develop and implement outreach programs that will engage the communities affected by OC San construction and maintenance activities.

- **Legislative Affairs**  
Goal: Proactive engagement in legislative advocacy efforts that could impact OC San and the wastewater industry.
- **Grant Coordination**  
Goal: Monitor, track, and apply for grants available to OC San.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

## **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](http://www.ocsan.gov)) with the complete agenda package:*

- Public Affairs Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2024-2026