



## AGENDA ITEM #8

## 18 Month Communications Plan

### SUMMARY

Included in the Board-approved 2020-2021 Work Plan, is the development of a comprehensive Communications Plan to support the activities outlined in the Work Plan. The purpose of the Communications Plan is to provide direction to the OCCOG staff and consultant team and guide consistent communication to OCCOG's members, partners, and stakeholders.

The following plan has been reviewed by the Executive Management Committee on two occasions and their comments have been incorporated.

### DRAFT PLAN

The Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG) is a voluntary Joint Powers Authority that serves as the County's sub-regional planning organization.

- In partnership with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), OCCOG leads the development of Orange County's planning documents so the county can compete for state and federal funding.
- OCCOG representatives on the SCAG Board make sure Orange County's voice is heard when regional policy-making takes place.
- OCCOG convenes member agencies to engage cooperatively on five policy areas that are important to the County as a whole – air quality, water, mobility, energy and land use.

All 34 Orange County cities and 25 special districts are members of OCCOG, underscoring the value of consolidating regional planning efforts to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness, pool technical expertise, share best practices, and speak with a unified voice.

#### Mission

OCCOG convenes jurisdictions throughout the County to address land use, energy, mobility, air quality, and water issues facing our residents and ensure our county is represented in regional decision-making. Through implementing effective governance practices, we deliver value to our member agencies and the tax-payers of Orange County.

#### Vision

OCCOG strives to be the most well-regarded sub-regional planning organization in the State through cultivating excellence and leadership at the technical, executive and governing board levels.



Core Values

- Accuracy
- Collaboration
- Efficiency
- Cost-Effectiveness
- Transparency
- Tenacity

**COMMUNICATIONS GOALS:**

1. Build trust and awareness by implementing consistent communication tactics and messaging to OCCOG’s primary audience and secondary audiences.
  - a. Grow email list to include representatives and opinion leaders from all OCCOG’s primary and secondary audiences.
2. Increase sponsorship revenue and attendance at OCCOG’s 2021 General Assembly.
  - a. Attendance: 300
  - b. Sponsorship Revenue: \$50,000
3. Increase awareness of the following:
  - a. OCCOG’s value to jurisdictions and agencies
  - b. OCCOG’s technical expertise
  - c. OCCOG’s five policy areas
  - d. OCCOG’s core values
  - e. Areas of differentiation
4. Raise the awareness of the OCCOG Chair’s and member jurisdictions’ accomplishments in OCCOG’s five policy areas.
5. Communicate the progress of OCCOG’s 2020/2021 Work Plan initiatives.
  - a. Strategic Plan
  - b. 2021 General Assembly
  - c. Orange County Data Acquisition Partnership (OCDAP)
  - d. REAP Grant Program Process and Projects
    1. Support for Orange County’s housing trusts
    2. Support for jurisdictions updating housing elements
    3. Providing tools for jurisdictions to accelerate housing production
  - e. Regional Planning Documents (RHNA, RTP/SCS, etc.)
  - f. Legislation
  - g. Grants



**AUDIENCES:**

All communication is to be Orange County-centric.

Primary Audience

- Orange County Elected Officials – local, special districts, state, federal
- City Managers, County of Orange Executives
- Planning Commissioners
- Planning and Development city and county staff

Secondary Audience

- Practitioners in the industries that serve OCCOG member jurisdictions:
  - Planning
  - Construction Engineers
  - Developers
  - Energy
  - Refuse and Recycling
  - Cable
  - Municipal Services
  - Social Support Service Providers

**DIFFERENTIATORS – WHAT MAKES OCCOG UNIQUE?**

OCCOG:

- Is the official legally-designated SCAG sub-region for Orange County.
- As a volunteer Joint Powers Authority (JPA), pools technical planning expertise and promotes collaboration among Orange County’s jurisdictions in five policy areas: air quality, water, energy, mobility and land use – ONLY. These are the five infrastructure and environmental issues that cross Orange County jurisdictions.
- Provides a common voice for Orange County jurisdictions in OCCOG’s five policy areas.
- Provides a forum to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness for local government to work through issues in OCCOG’s five policy areas in a regional manner rather than in silos.
- Through active leadership at the technical level and engaged elected leaders provides oversight of SCAG on behalf of Orange County.
- Partners with ex-officio members to elevate stakeholder voices and inform the decision-making process.



**MESSAGES:**

**“OCCOG facilitates regional planning in Orange County for five policy issues – air quality, water, energy, mobility and land use.”**

- Infrastructure issues cannot be contained and solved within city boundaries in a county like Orange County which is the densest county in the state of California with 34 cities and 25 special districts.
- OCCOG developed the Smart Streets guidelines and tool kit as a resource for city planning initiatives.
- Through its programming and annual General Assembly, OCCOG provides speakers and information, and is a clearing house for best practices and collaboration in the five infrastructure policy areas.
- OCCOG tracks and takes positions on legislation that will support or harm the five infrastructure policy areas.
- OCCOG coordinates closely with established government organizations that focus on air quality (AQMD), transportation (OCTA & TCA), and water (MWDOD & OCWD) to communicate and support policy and programs that address OCCOG’s five infrastructure policy areas.

**“OCCOG is Orange County’s legally designated sub-regional planning organization, ensuring that Orange County’s unique perspective is included in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) federally- and state-mandated planning efforts.”**

- OCCOG is one of 15 subregions that represent portions of Southern California with shared interests, issues and geography. Subregions play an important role as a conduit between SCAG and the cities and counties of the region by participating and providing input on SCAG’s planning activities. This involvement helps the Regional Council and its committees make better-informed decisions.
- Sixteen Orange County elected officials are members of the SCAG Regional Board. They work together with the support of OCCOG to represent Orange County’s interests in regional planning policy.

**“Orange County is strongest when we speak with one voice on critical infrastructure planning and policy issues.”**

- As the officially-designated sub-region of SCAG for Orange County, OCCOG coordinates Orange County elected officials who serve as delegates and committee representatives involved at various levels of SCAG’s governing and policy structure.



- Orange County’s SCAG Delegates and Committee Representatives provide a unified voice from Orange County that can have an impact on regional decision making.

**“Orange County is a technical leader in planning and infrastructure issues.”**

- Technical experts from Orange County agencies are in leadership roles in multiple regional planning working groups.
- OCCOG’s Executive Director, Marnie Primmer is the chair of SCAG’s sub-regional executive director’s group.
- The Center for Demographic Research located at CSUF works with all 35 Orange County jurisdictions and provides OCCOG and Orange County agencies with accurate and complete data to support regional planning.
- OCCOG’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meets monthly with technical and planning representatives with nearly every jurisdiction attending on a regular basis. The TAC works through complex technical issues that most jurisdictions face, shares best practices and works collaboratively to address planning issues.

**“Orange County includes 34 cities and 25 special districts who work together through the OCCOG JPA to collaborate, facilitate and promote cooperation and best practices on planning issues that cross borders to set infrastructure policies that will benefit the quality of life of all Orange County residents.”**

**“Orange County has 3.2 million residents and is the sixth largest county in the U.S. by population. Based on population alone, Orange County could be a stand-alone metropolitan area.”**

- Orange County is home to 8 percent of California’s population within only 0.5 percent of the state’s land mass. (2019-2020 Orange County Community Indicators Report; OCBC.org)
- Orange County’s population density is significantly higher than the surrounding counties at 4,033 persons per square mile. Los Angeles County is home to 2,527 persons per square mile and in San Diego County the number is 797. (2019-2020 Orange County Community Indicators Report; OCBC.org)
- Orange County is the 3rd largest county in California by population and has more residents than 20 states as of 2019 (U.S. Census Bureau).



- Orange County is a net importer of workers. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 167,000 workers commuted into Orange County every day. (2019-2020 Orange County Community Indicators Report; OCBC.org)
- Orange County's gross domestic product in 2018 was the third highest in California at \$230 billion. Los Angeles was number 1 with \$711 billion and number 2 was Santa Clara with \$317 billion. (2019-2020 Orange County Community Indicators Report; OCBC.org)
- Orange County's gross domestic product in 2018 (\$230 billion) ranked 8th in the United States and equaled the GDP of Iraq. The nine U.S. County economies ahead of Orange County are, in order, 1) Los Angeles, 2) New York, 3) Cook (Illinois), 4) Harris (Texas), 5) Santa Clara, 6) King (Washington), and 7) Dallas. ("California's economic recovery may surprise you" OC Register, Jan. 25, 2020)

**TACTICS & ACTION ITEMS:**

- **Website** (Central holding place for OCCOG communication materials)  
The OCCOG website will house all communication materials and information to support key messages.
  1. Add a newsroom and post e-newsletters, email blasts and press releases.
  2. Add a page to reinforce OCCOG's five policy areas.
  3. Add a page listing the FY20-21 Work Plan and status.

*Primary: Marnie Primmer, OCCOG*

*Support: Communications LAB*

- **OCCOG Update** – (Best way to reach primary audience)  
The purpose of the monthly e-newsletter (**OCCOG Update**) is to:
  - Increase OCCOG leadership visibility
  - Communicate news and best practices in OCCOG's five policy areas
  - Share Ex-Officio member events
  - Keep OCCOG top of mind

To reinforce communication consistency, an electronic newsletter will be sent on the same day each month with, at the minimum, the following information:

- Letter from the chair – includes most current OCCOG news or activities
- Innovation Corner, powered by UCI (content provided by UCI)
- Member jurisdiction news
- Upcoming events of interest
- Upcoming OCCOG meetings

1. Grow email list to include primary and secondary audiences.



2. Set hard schedule and ensure content and approval deadlines are included on outlook calendars.
3. Create an editorial calendar that tracks upcoming Board decisions and news that can reinforce OCCOG's key messages and five policy areas.
4. Outline procedures and responsibility for developing and distribution of e-newsletters. Set clear chain of command for approval.
5. Post to website.

*Primary: Communications LAB*

*Support: Lisa Telles Communications*

- **OCCOG Board Meeting Spotlight** – (Sent to Board Members only)  
Compile highlights of OCCOG Board Meetings for quick distribution to Board Members that summarizes Board actions and reinforces OCCOG messaging. This document can be used by Board Members as a tool to update colleagues in the district they represent.
  1. Outline procedures and responsibility for developing and distribution of Board Meeting summaries.
  2. Consider posting Board Meeting actions to social media the day of meetings with photos to support messaging (collaboration).

*Primary: Lisa Telles Communications*

*Support: Marnie Primmer, OCCOG*

- **Email blasts** – (Best way to reach primary audience)  
Email blasts focus on one topic sent to the OCCOG mailing list to announce:
  - Events for partner organizations.
  - Significant Board decisions and OCCOG wins
  - Grant opportunities and deadline reminders
  - Legislation or regulatory news impacting one of the five policy areas that is time sensitive.
  1. Identify contact people for partners who can provide information about upcoming events for distribution to OCCOG's list.
  2. Identify partners who will distribute OCCOG event information to their lists.
  3. Include upcoming events on communications editorial calendar.
  4. Outline procedures and responsibility for developing and distribution of email blasts.





5. Send 1 to 2 email blasts a month.
6. Post upcoming partner events on OCCOG website calendar.

*Primary: Communications LAB*

*Support: Lisa Telles Communications*

- **Social Media** -- (Use to reinforce email communication) Facebook and Twitter posts will focus on reinforcing information included in the monthly **OCCOG Update** and email blasts, promoting OCCOG-hosted events, and sharing announcements from member jurisdictions and ex-officio members that reinforce OCCOG's five policy areas.

A stand-alone social media campaign will be developed to promote General Assembly attendance.

1. Develop and manage a social media calendar with a maximum of four original content posts to Facebook and Twitter per month.
  - a. Develop list of evergreen social media posts.
  - b. Share an average of four OCCOG ex-officio member and/or partner social media posts that support OCCOG's five policy areas per month.
  - c. Determine if OCCOG should create and maintain a LinkedIn page.
2. To achieve greater parity for OCCOG among peer organizations, increase OCCOG's Facebook and Twitter followers to 500 for each platform
  - a. Consider developing a marketing plan to spend up to \$100 a month on Facebook advertising and post boosting to supplement organic growth in followers, likes, reach and engagement.
  - b. Develop and implement strategies to increase Twitter followers.

*Primary: Communications LAB*

*Support: Marnie Primmer and Lisa Telles Communications*

- **Editorial Placements (Op-Eds)** -- (Promote OCCOG leadership)  
Submit op-eds to news and trade publications to raise profile of OCCOG leadership and subject matter expertise.
  1. Identify topics and schedule
  2. Identify targeted publications
  3. Plan to submit one op-ed a quarter

*Primary: Communications LAB*

*Support: Marnie Primmer*





▪ **Annual Report** (Presented at the 2021 General Assembly)

1. Develop scope of work and format for Annual Report
2. Present draft Annual Report to the Technical Advisory Committee and EMC prior to the General Assembly for review and comment
3. Develop a multi-media presentation of the Annual Report for the General Assembly.
4. Distribute the Annual Report to key stakeholders after the General Assembly.

*Primary: Marnie Primmer, OCCOG*

*Support: Lisa Telles Communications*

▪ **Audience Awareness Survey**

A survey is planned as part of the updated OCCOG strategic plan that is currently being developed. Questions to support the communication plan and benchmarks for future measurement will be included in the Strategic Plan survey.

- Send survey to the OCCOG mailing list using Survey Monkey to determine awareness of OCCOG's purpose, Work Plan initiatives, the strength of messages, what type of content they wish to receive, and preferred way to receive information and news from OCCOG.
- Based on survey results, set benchmarks, identify opportunities for improvement, set goals, and adjust communication plan to meet goals.
- Plan to conduct annual surveys to measure results compared to 2020 benchmarks.
  1. Develop survey questions to support communications plan
  2. Coordinate with Strategic Plan survey
  3. Conduct survey
  4. Compile and report results
  5. Identify opportunities to adjust communication plan to meet goals

*Primary: Lisa Telles Communications*

*Support: Marnie Primmer, OCCOG*



## STAFF REPORT January 28, 2021

Orange County Council of Governments

### METRICS:

The following metrics will be tracked to monitor the success of the Communications Plan.

Tactic	Metric	Current/ Average	Goal
<b>Website</b>	Page views	Average 927 per month	1400 per month by June 30, 2022.
<b>Annual Report</b>	Meet deadline	N/A	April 2021 GA
<b>Housing Videos</b>	Meet deadlines	N/A	One video per month beginning April 2021
<b>General Assembly</b>	Registrations	200	300
	Sponsorship \$	20,000	\$50,000
	# Sponsors	20	30
<b>OCCOG Update</b>	Open rate	18%	30%
	Click-thru rate	2.5%	7.5%
<b>OCCOG Board Spotlight</b>	Meet deadlines	N/A	Distribute Monday after Board Meeting
<b>OCCOG E-blasts</b>	Open rate	20%	35%
<b>Distribution List</b>	List members	775	900 by June 30, 2021
<b>Editorial Placements</b>	No. of placements	N/A	2 annually
<b>Social Media</b>	Facebook followers	229	500 by June 30, 2022
	Post reach- FB **	Aug 26 – Sept 22: Average 23 people per post Total reach: 69 people	30 per post; 200 per month by June 30, 2022
	Page likes- FB**	Aug 26 – Sept 22: 17	30 per month by June 30, 2022
	Twitter followers	240	500 by June 30, 2022
<b>Benchmark Survey</b>	Replies	N/A	30% reply rate

\*\* Facebook goals will be amended if funding is allotted for Facebook advertising in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget.

**Note:** Message awareness metrics will be identified after the benchmark survey is completed.



**BUDGET AND RESOURCES:**

OCCOG's existing consulting team consisting of Communications LAB, Lisa Telles Communications, AJ Design and Kathryn Morrison will be able to implement a majority of the work outlined in the Draft Communication Plan as presented under their current contracts. The need for additional funding and consultant resources to support the website, social media and the annual report tactics will be assessed and brought back to the Board of Directors for approval if required to meet the goals outlined in the plan as part of the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 budget process.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Approve 18-month Communications plan as presented or amended.

**STAFF CONTACT**

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