



TBPE Firm No. F-3043

Memorandum

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From: Megan Klein, Rifeline

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*Subject: Water Forward - Integrated Water Resource Plan
Draft Public Outreach Plan
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1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Austin Water is leading the development of Water Forward – an integrated water resources plan. The plan will evaluate mid- to long-term water supply and demand management options for the City of Austin. This plan will provide a holistic and inclusive approach to water resource planning – including significant public outreach and engagement, with a focus on gathering meaningful public input to develop a plan that is representative of Austin community values.

2. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

The purpose of the Public Outreach and Participation Plan (POPP) is to guide communication efforts that inform and engage stakeholders, including Austin Water customers, community groups, elected officials, media, and the general public about the development of the Integrated Water Resource Plan (IWRP). The POPP will be updated and adjusted as needed to forecast, plan, and coordinate activities.

2.1 Goals

Informative, timely and concise communications are essential for building trust and relationships between the community and the project team. Communication strategies will be implemented to meet the following goals:

- Identify community values around water and reflect them in the IWRP
- Make project information available through various communication channels throughout the plan development process to maximize communication with stakeholders
- Build on existing community partnerships and communication networks to gain, maintain and support stakeholder communication
- Provide stakeholders with opportunities to interact with the project team and ask questions
- Respond promptly to public questions and concerns

- Seek input that reflects the diversity of Austin
Examples of diversity include:
 - Race and ethnic diversity
 - Diversity in age groups, including students and young people
 - Diversity in socioeconomic status
 - Geographic diversity
 - Renters and homeowners

2.2 Objectives

To ensure the goals outlined above are met, the project team will:

- Identify stakeholders and respond to their needs and concerns
- Establish general schedule and staffing for outreach and engagement activities
- Document public outreach efforts and participation and adjust outreach as needed to reflect the diversity of Austin

3. STAKEHOLDERS

The following stakeholders are the main audiences for key messages and will be the project team's priority for information sharing regarding the project's progress and development. Below are several examples for the types of stakeholders in each target category. More information is included in the stakeholder list attached to this document.

- **Target 1: Austin Water Customers**
 - Residential
 - Multi-family
 - Commercial
 - Wholesale
 - Large volume users
- **Target 2: Community at Large Stakeholders**
 - General Austin, Texas, Audience
 - General Audience Outside of Austin, Texas
 - Neighborhood groups (HOA's, POA's, MUD's)
 - Schools and universities (University of Texas, Austin Independent School District, Huston-Tillotson University, Austin Community College, Concordia University)
- **Target 3: Community Leaders**
 - Elected and appointed officials
 - Mayor Adler
 - City Council Members

- City of Austin Boards and Commissions
 - Austin Integrated Water Resource Planning Community Task Force
 - Water and Wastewater Commission
 - Resource Management Commission
 - Environmental Commission
 - Local and regional agencies
 - Capital Area Council of Governments
 - Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)
 - Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District
 - Nonprofit and advocacy organizations
- **Target 4: Business, Professional, and Civic Organizations**
- Industry Organizations, including:
 - *Landscape Professionals, including Landscape Architects*
 - *Recreational water users*
 - *Developers*
 - *Homebuilders*
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Professional organizations and councils
- **Target 5: General News Media**
- Local print media
 - Local radio stations
 - Local TV stations

3.1 Stakeholder Database

A stakeholder database will be created to identify organizations and individuals with an interest in the project. The stakeholder database will be created by combining contact information from existing databases.

Information in the database will include contact information for residents, businesses, collaborating partners, and the general public interested in the project. This information will also be utilized to send out e-mail communications, including eNewsletters. The database will be updated regularly per stakeholder request and identification.

A regularly updated stakeholder list is attached as an appendix to the Public Outreach Plan.

4. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The communications strategy will vary to accommodate the project's specific stakeholder groups. To provide an effective communications and engagement program, various information-sharing tools will be utilized to engage the public with the project as often and appropriate as possible, and

to ensure valuable two-way communication and a widespread reach to audiences in a proactive manner.

4.1 Project Website

To create branding continuity, the previously established Water Forward website developed by Austin Water will be used to provide information and updates about the IWRP to the public. Austin Water hosts the website and will continue to update content with input from the project team on an as needed basis.

4.2 Communications Collateral

In an effort to build a project brand and provide consistent information to the public the following materials will be developed and distributed:

- The existing Water Forward logo will be used in all communication collateral materials to build on the existing brand
- As needed, multi-language materials will be developed for appropriate communications collateral
- Media Releases will be developed as needed for the project to convey updates in the plan development process and notice for public events
- Water Forward brochures will be used at community events to communicate information about the project
- Surveys will be developed to collect input at Workshops and community events

Below is a summary of how the communications collateral will be used to connect with the targeted groups for this project.

Material/Tool	Audience	Frequency	Delivery
Email communication	All project stakeholders	Monthly and as needed	Website/eNewsletter
Presentations	Targets 1, 2, 3, 4	Updated as needed	In-person delivery, subsequently posted to web
Multi-language Materials	Non-English-speaking project stakeholders	Update as needed	Printed, website
Media Releases	Target 5	Update as needed	Press Releases per standard protocols
Brochures	Targets 1, 2, 3, 4	Update as needed	Community events, eNewsletter
Surveys	Targets 1, 2, 3, 4	Developed for each workshop, with others for use at community events	Workshops, community events, website

4.3 E-mail Communications

E-mail communications will be utilized by Austin Water to provide information to stakeholders and the general public. Examples of content to be provided by email include information about meetings, public workshops and events, and other project-related information. Stakeholders will be able to submit questions and inquiries through the project website. The Q&A forum will be monitored by City of Austin Water staff and questions will be responded to in a timely manner.

4.4 Twitter Account

The existing Austin Water Twitter account will be utilized to provide information and updates. The existing #atxwaterforward hashtag will be used to help social media users easily access postings about updates.

4.5 Outreach Activities/Events

The project team is planning three Public Workshops designed to inform the public about objectives of the IWRP, demand-side and supply options, and portfolio development/scoring. Efforts will be made to hold workshops at convenient times and locations that are accessible by multiple transit options and with adequate parking, such as city facilities, local schools, and community centers.

- Workshop 1, September 7, 2016 – Objectives of IWRP, Review Criteria
- Workshop 2, Tentatively February 2017 – Baseline Water Balance, Demand-side and Supply Options
- Workshop 3, Tentatively July 2017 – Portfolio Development and Scoring, Initial Recommendations

The project team is also planning additional outreach activities throughout the duration of the process to engage and inform stakeholders and the general public about the plan. Some examples could include:

- **Presentations to stakeholder groups** – Presentations that communicate information about the plan to community groups (e.g., chambers of commerce, neighborhood associations, churches, etc.).
- **Existing community events** – As applicable, the project team will attend high traffic community events and collaborate with cultural centers especially in communities that are traditionally less represented at public workshops. Examples include festivals, large church events, football games, etc.

Tracking and reporting

The demographics of participants will be collected throughout the process through surveys and efforts will be made to reflect the diversity of Austin as much as possible. Outreach strategies will be developed to address potential gaps. Demographic data that will be reported, as provided by participants through surveys, include:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Council district or Zip Code
- Household yearly income
- Type of residence (single-family, duplex or triplex, multi-family, other)

Participation rates at public workshops and other events will also be tracked and reported as practicable. Outreach at meetings, community presentations, and attendance at community events will also be tracked and summarized within the plan report.

4.6 Media Relations

Media relations are fundamental for maximizing the reach of information to the general public. The project team will strive to gain local media support and to develop proactive media relations by using the following tools:

- Media spokesperson will be provided by Austin Water.
- Media list will be developed or enhanced to identify the contact information for outlets and media organizations, including key City and business reporters in both English and multi-lingual media.
- Informative materials will be compiled in English and other languages to provide consistent project information to the media, and will be available on the project website.