

Oak Lodge Sanitary District

Public Outreach Plan

MAY 2008

Introduction

To address the pressing wastewater treatment issues in North Clackamas County planning is underway to chart the course for new and improved treatment facilities and expanded conveyance systems. In early 2007, Oak Lodge Sanitary District (OLSD) completed a Master Plan for its future facilities that outlined substantial improvements needed to upgrade the OLSD wastewater treatment plant to meet current and future service demand and permit standards. Now, engineering pre-design work is underway to plan for the facilities upgrades.

In December 2007, Oak Lodge Sanitary District retained Barney & Worth, Inc. to assist the agency with public outreach. The firm's role is to develop a plan for an expanded program for ratepayer information and outreach, to build awareness in anticipation of treatment facility improvements and in coordination with the pre-design work.

Goals

Design and implement an effective public outreach program to inform, educate, and involve ratepayers in the pre-design for wastewater treatment facility upgrades.

Ensure all public outreach efforts required for land use permitting are completed successfully, in coordination with the facility pre-design.

Build support for timely implementation and funding of OLSD facility improvements.

Approach

- Conduct the public education in phases: first raising awareness regarding the treatment plant's current condition; then announcing and explaining the cost-effective upgrades developed during the pre-design phase, along with funding options.
- Utilize the District's existing outreach tools – quarterly newsletter, website, others – and increase their effectiveness.
- Communicate directly with ratepayers, and others, person-to-person, face-to-face as often as possible.
- Go directly to ratepayers and key stakeholders, communicating with them in the community, rather than expecting them to come to OLSD.
- Use the expanded outreach effort to lay the groundwork for a lasting, trusting relationship with OLSD customers.

- Maintain good relations with treatment plant neighbors; ensure the wastewater treatment facility itself is regarded as a “good neighbor.”
- Extend outreach to other agencies: local governmental units in the area, Clackamas County, regulatory and resource agencies. Strengthen intergovernmental coordination.
- Seek the advice of the Master Plan Community Advisory Committee in the development and implementation of public outreach methods and materials.

Target Audiences

1. Master Plan Community Advisory Committee
2. OLSD ratepayers: residential, business
3. Treatment plant neighbors
4. CPOs / CIA
5. Interested community groups: civic, business, service
6. Interested / affected governmental agencies

Key Messages

- Wastewater treatment is a critical service for the health and welfare of the community and environment; needs ongoing re-investment.
- Most parts of the OLSD treatment plant are old and in poor condition; why improvements are needed.
- Tougher regulatory standards are on the horizon, and our existing plant cannot meet them.
- Cost / value of re-investment
- Rates will rise, but OLSD still compares favorably with peer utilities.
- OLSD is acting in customers' best interest, building a reliable, flexible system, with the lowest impact on rates. Board is being fiscally responsible by evaluating all options.
- Upgrading the existing OLSD treatment plant is the most cost-effective solution.
- Treatment plant upgrades will allow the District to remain local and autonomous.
- OLSD is committed to enhancing ratepayer communications, consulting with customers, building awareness.

Public Outreach Activities

Task 1: Public Outreach Plan

The OLSD Board will adopt a work plan that guides public outreach during the predesign process. The Public Outreach Plan will identify goals and objectives for public outreach, and outline specific methods to inform and involve citizens.

Task 2: Getting to Know the OLSD Customer

A key audience for this outreach effort is ratepayers (customers) – the people who pay the bill. It has been a number of years since OLSD issued a survey with the goal to understand customer awareness of current wastewater issues, where customers stand on issues and options in Oak Lodge. A survey will be completed early in the process to gauge customer support for the needed rate increases and OLSD in general. Survey results will be used to further inform the public outreach approach, refine messaging, and select effective outreach methods, as well as provide background for future funding decisions.

Task 3: Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (MPCAC)

For the recent Master Plan process, the OLSD Board appointed a 17-member Master Plan Community Advisory Committee. This volunteer citizen body adopted a vision for the District's future wastewater system upgrades, and advised the District on many aspects of the Master Plan.

In the early stages of the pre-design work, the MPCAC will be reconvened once again to advise District policymakers. The MPCAC's assignment will be to:

1. Advise the Oak Lodge Sanitary District Board on issues related to the implementation of the Master Plan and Value Planning processes, and the Wastewater Treatment Facilities Predesign.
2. Consult with the District on how best to inform and involve OLSD ratepayers, treatment plant neighbors and other interested parties. Assist OLSD to develop a Public Outreach Plan and a Good Neighbor Plan for the Oak Lodge wastewater treatment plant.
3. Serve as ambassadors for the Oak Lodge Sanitary District in the community. (OLSD staff and consultants will provide materials and support these activities.)
4. Act as a sounding board representing OLSD customers at large.

Task 4: Listening Process

As a means to ensure OLSD has open channels of communications with key stakeholders, as well as a good understanding of all significant wastewater issues – and to quell rumors and forestall the emergence of new "issues," the District's General Manager and Board members will visit key stakeholders. Each listening session presents an opportunity to update stakeholders on the District's plans, but more important to listen to their perceptions, concerns and questions. The listening process is designed to allow stakeholders a unique opportunity to express themselves without rebuttal.

Task 5: Public Information Materials & Tools

New and updated materials and tools will be developed to inform citizens about wastewater infrastructure needs, the predesign process and funding options.

Develop new information materials: fact sheets, targeted mailings (e-mails), web information, newsletter inserts for community organizations, PowerPoint presentation, portable displays, citizen feedback forms, media news releases; photographs, and other tools.

Update website: A review of the OLSD web pages reveals opportunities to increase the usability of the site for communication to customers and other stakeholders. Updates might include an interactive Service District boundary map, updated FAQs (frequently asked questions), a Pre-design Project Information page, an on-line quick comment form for customers, on-line surveys on timely topics, and a monthly electronic newsletter to supplement the current quarterly mailer.

Update OLSD newsletter: A new "look and feel" for the OLSD newsletter will help generate an increase in the number of customers who read the newsletter. Newsletter content will be coordinated with the pre-design work.

Task 6: Community Outreach and Involvement

A series of "community briefings," will be scheduled to reach a cross-section of the Oak Lodge community in regular meetings of their own organizations. Following the presentations, the project team will gather, tabulate and analyze community feedback, and respond to information requests from the public. Treatment plant tours will be arranged for the public to show the facility's current status, and public meeting(s) to share with the community results of the pre-design process and funding options.

Task 7: Media Outreach

Area news media will receive information on OLSD's current situation and long-term plans, emphasizing the messages keyed to OLSD ratepayers. Media outreach will include:

- Periodic media briefings (to groom in-depth newspaper coverage)
- Media releases timed to announce public meetings, Board decisions, rate increases, etc.
- Other supportive materials

Task 8: Intergovernmental Coordination

The public outreach consultants will support OLSD staff, Board and MPCAC in expanding intergovernmental coordination activities: with DEQ and other regulatory / resource agencies, Clackamas County and WES, nearby cities – Milwaukie, Gladstone, and others. Intergovernmental coordination will be enhanced through targeted communications and an Intergovernmental Coordination Meeting to bring agencies up-to-speed on the pre-design process, which will also allow OLSD to share the results of public outreach.

Task 9: Good Neighbor Plan

The District will work with the MPCAC and neighbors of OLSD facilities to develop a "Good Neighbor Plan." The plan will be utilized during the predesign process and to guide future construction / improvement activities. The Good Neighbor Plan will reflect the values and goals

adopted by the OLSD Board and MPCAC. Two meetings with site neighbors are anticipated to answer questions and incorporate their suggestions.

Task 10: Land Use Permitting

Public outreach activities will also support the pre-design team, by providing for the required public involvement to fulfill requirements of the anticipated Clackamas County land use permit review process for OLSD's upgraded treatment facilities.

Task 11: Documentation

The public outreach process and its results will be documented for later review by the OLSD Board and management, MPCAC members, regulators, and interested parties. A summary will be prepared to highlight material public comment prior to decision points for the pre-design.

Public Outreach Schedule

April 2008	Task 1: Public Outreach Plan
May	Task 2: Getting to Know the OLSD Customer
April 29 – October	Task 3: Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (MPCAC)
May – June	Task 4: Listening Process
May – June	Task 5: Public Information Materials & Tools
May – ongoing	Task 6: Community Outreach and Involvement
Ongoing	Task 7: Media Outreach
Ongoing	Task 8: Intergovernmental Coordination
October	Task 9: Good Neighbor Plan
Ongoing	Task 10: Land Use Permitting
Ongoing	Task 11: Documentation
December 2008	Final completion of 2008 public outreach tasks