

Community Engagement Plan for Long-Range Water Supply Plan Update (approved 2/12/2015; updated November 22, 2016)

Purpose

OWASA is updating its Long-Range Water Supply Plan (LRWSP) to ensure a reliable and high quality supply of water for the community for the next 50 years. As part of this process, OWASA will seek to involve and engage the community as we identify and evaluate our water supply and demand management options.

The intent of this community engagement plan is to set goals for this effort, identify meaningful engagement activities, identify resource needs, and provide a schedule for engagement activities.

Outcomes/Objectives

Goals for the public engagement process are:

- Involve stakeholders in the exchange of information and ideas, and in the Board of Directors' decision-making process so that we can better understand and incorporate public values, and ultimately improve the quality of the decisions;
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the findings, recommendations, and implementation of the plan;
- Obtain commitments from stakeholders that will have key roles in the implementation of the plan;
- Build trust in OWASA;
- Develop and implement outreach strategies to help engage minority communities and socio-economically disadvantaged individuals;
- Better understand and seek to minimize sources of conflict among interested and affected parties by building agreement on proposed strategies.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders we will seek to engage as the Plan proceeds include, but are not limited to, the following. Additional stakeholders may be identified and included once the project is underway.

- Our residential and non-residential customers
- Local government Boards and staff
- UNC-Chapel Hill
- UNC Health Care
- Community organizations
- Neighbors in our water supply watersheds
- Local government utility neighbors

Core Messages

1. Providing a high quality and reliable water supply is a key mission of OWASA and OWASA seeks to proactively inform and engage stakeholders as we update the LRWSP
2. OWASA values community feedback
3. OWASA wants to ensure an adequate, high quality supply of water while being mindful of affordability, social, and environmental issues

Key Topics Seeking Feedback from the Community

1. OWASA will develop a list of supply and demand management options to evaluate in the LRWSP. OWASA will seek feedback from the community on the list of options prior to evaluating the options to ensure we are not omitting any options important to the community to include in the LRWSP.
2. Alternatives analysis – OWASA would like feedback from the community on the alternatives being evaluated, how they compare to the goals and objectives in the project charter and other financial and non-financial factors.
3. Draft LRWSP

Key Information Provided To Community

1. Why is long-range water supply planning important?
2. Why is OWASA updating its Plan?
3. What are the proposed goals and objectives of the Plan?
4. How much water can OWASA provide?
5. How much water does our community need now and in the future?
6. What alternatives are available to meet future water supply needs?
7. What is the difference between demand management and water supply alternatives?
8. What alternatives will help OWASA meet the community's future water needs and what are the relative advantages and disadvantages (financial and non-financial) of those alternatives?
9. What is the preferred mix of water supply and demand management alternatives?
10. What opportunities will the public have to provide input to the LRSWP?
11. What is the schedule for public input?
12. What decisions has the OWASA Board of Directors made regarding the LRWSP, and what future decisions will the Board make after community engagement/feedback processes?

Communication/Engagement Methods

OWASA will use a variety of methods to inform and actively engage stakeholders and evaluate the success of our engagement effort. For the purposes of this Community Engagement Plan, informing stakeholders provides them with information while engagement provides stakeholders with information and an opportunity for them to provide feedback to inform the Board of

Directors' decision making process. Three core strategies are proposed that will be common to all our information, engagement, and evaluation efforts:

1. Establish and publicize a LRWSP project webpage to convey information about the project and enable interested stakeholders to submit their questions, comments, and suggestions on-line.
2. Establish an email distribution list, which includes all Board of Directors' members that helps us convey project information and public participation opportunities to stakeholders in a timely and efficient way through our Constant Contact service.
3. Include informal survey and feedback opportunities as a feature of our project website, public meetings on the project, and presentations to stakeholder groups.

Other information efforts include: Blue Thumb articles, news releases, and LRWSP tweets.

Engagement efforts include:

- Offers of presentations at meetings of local elected Boards; if not accepted, make short announcement during public comment period of an elected Board meeting
- Participation at project-related community outreach meetings
- Face-to-face meetings with stakeholder groups
- Participation at meetings of the OWASA Board of Directors

Table 1 includes a summary of proposed information and engagement efforts for this project. Staff will provide additional information on potential costs or support needs as we proceed in the engagement process.

Staff also proposes to establish an informal Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of local experts. The Committee could include water resource, environmental and public policy experts from UNC-Chapel Hill, other customers with expertise in water resources or decision processes, and other regional experts in water resources planning. The TAC would provide peer review of information before it was provided to stakeholders.

Table 1: Summary of Potential Community Engagement Activities, Target Audiences, and Methods for the Long-Range Water Supply Plan

ID	Description	Activity Type*	Responsibility	Schedule	Target Audience	Communication Methods	Resources	Comments
1	Dedicated project webpage	Information	Staff	Established Sept. 2016	Stakeholders	Information provided via Internet; on-line methods for stakeholder comment and feedback	TBD	Potential resource need depending on amount of activity
2	Project stakeholder email list and dedicated project email	Information	Staff	Established Sept. 2016	Stakeholders	Email distribution through Constant Contact to provide timely e-mail updates to stakeholders with notice of opportunities for participation and feedback; dedicated project email address to accept comments from public	TBD	Need to have staff to respond to emails that come in; potential resource need depending on amount of activity
3	LRWSP Tweets	Information	Staff	Established Sept. 2016	Stakeholders	LRWSP-specific Tweets about information availability and opportunities to be involved	TBD	Need to have staff to respond; potential resource need depending on amount of activity
4a	Background on LRWSP process	Information & Engagement	Board/Staff	Fall 2016 (Completed)	Elected officials and customers	Letter to elected officials from Board Chair providing information and offering to make presentation. Presentation on LRWSP process at Board/Council meetings if requested	Board and Staff time	Information item provided to Assembly of Governments in November 2016 Included link to project charter and project webpage
4b		Information	Staff	Fall 2016	Customers	Electronic and paper mailings; Blue Thumb newsletter; local media outlets	Staff time	Include link to project charter and project webpage
5	Goals/Objectives - weighing financial and non-financial metrics	Engagement	Board/Staff	4th Qtr CY 2016 (Completed)	Stakeholders	Board work session	Staff time	Publicize through project webpage, email distribution list Discussed at November 2016 Board work session
6	Water demands	Engagement	Staff	1st Qtr CY 2017	Local Govt Staff, UNC staff, UNC-H staff	Meetings with local govt staff to ensure they concur with our methods to extend their growth projections to 2065 and our use of their information	Staff time	May be multiple meetings; will QA/QC demand process with local govt staff, UNC, and UNC-H
7	Water demands and yield	Engagement	Board, Staff and consultant	2nd Qtr CY 2017	Stakeholders	Board work session	Staff time	Publicize through project webpage, email distribution list, and LRWSP tweet
8	Identify Supply and Demand Management Options to evaluate	Information & Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Board work session	Board and Staff time	Publicize through project webpage, email distribution list, and LRWSP tweet
9a	Alternatives evaluation	Information & Engagement	Board, Staff and consultant	TBD	Stakeholders	Board work session	TBD	Publicize through project webpage, email distribution list, and LRWSP tweet
9b		Information & Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Elected officials and customers	Letter to elected officials regarding alternatives and offering to make presentation. Presentation at Board meetings upon request.	Board and Staff time	
9c		Information & Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Targeted stakeholder groups	Meetings with targeted stakeholder groups to provide opportunity for input on goals/objectives (financial/non-financial metrics), future water supply needs, and water supply and demand management alternatives to meet those needs. Alternatives will be evaluated against metrics.	TBD	Provide opportunity for attendees to provide feedback on the stakeholder group session
9d		Information & Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Board work session - provide follow up information regarding alternatives from targeted stakeholder groups	Staff time	Publicize through project webpage, email distribution list, and LRWSP tweet
10a	Draft LRWSP	Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Board Work Session	Staff time	
10b		Information	Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Media notice of upcoming Open House along with notification through webpage, email distribution list, Twitter, and Blue Thumb (if time)		
10c		Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Public Information Open House between Board Work Session and Board meeting on Draft Plan	TBD	Provide opportunity for attendees to provide feedback on the Open House format
10d		Information & Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Elected officials	Letter to elected officials from Board Chair, providing information regarding the LRWSP and offering to make presentations. Presentations made upon request.	Board and Staff time	
10e		Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Board Meeting	Staff time	
11a	Final LRWSP	Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Board Work Session	Staff time	Publicize through media, project webpage, email distribution list, LRWSP tweet; make clear that this is discussion about final LRWSP
11b		Engagement	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Board Meeting	Staff time	Publicize through media, project webpage, email distribution list, LRWSP tweet; make clear that this is discussion and action around final LRWSP
11c		Information	Board/Staff	TBD	Elected Officials	Letter to elected officials informing them of final LRWSP. Presentation at Board meetings upon request.	Board and Staff time	
11d		Information	Board/Staff	TBD	Stakeholders	Information provided regarding the approval of LRWSP		Publicize through media, project webpage, email distribution list, LRWSP tweet; include link to final plan
12a	Measure effectiveness of stakeholder engagement process	Survey external stakeholders	Staff	Ongoing	Stakeholders	Electronic and paper survey methods	Staff time	Provide opportunities through website or Survey Monkey; paper surveys at targeted stakeholder meetings and public meetings
12b		Survey Board	Board/Staff	TBD (end of project)	Board	Electronic survey	Board and staff time	
12c		After Action Review By Board and Staff	Board/Staff	TBD (end of project)	Board and Staff	After-Action-Review meeting with documentation for future reference	Board and staff time	

* Written communication is typically labeled as "information", but material will also include information on how to provide feedback or obtain additional information in the written package.

* Engagement typically means that there is a face-to-face meeting or conversation occurring.