

Public Outreach Plan

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The proposed "Public Relations Plan for The Arkansas River Corridor Master Plan Implementation" prepared by Schnake Turnbo Frank PR dated November 18, 2009 was provided to CH2M HILL for review and comment. This Technical Memorandum summarizes the project team's comments and suggestions regarding public involvement and outreach for the project during 2010. To present a consolidated outreach plan, material included in the November 18 draft is included in this document as italicized text. Additional proposed elements are included using standard fonts.

An action plan that establishes a schedule and responsible parties for implementation of various aspects of the plan is recommended.

Overview

The Arkansas River Corridor Master Plan Implementation recently held a series of public meetings to present and discuss the status and details of the project. While the meetings were well-attended and media coverage was solid, it is important to keep the project top-of-mind for the public.

Goals

- *Keep the public aware of current and future developments and projects.*
- *Build support by enlisting stakeholders throughout the process.*
- Identify concerns of the general public, stakeholders and resource/regulatory agencies so that they can be addressed during studies when appropriate and through public information vehicles.
- Keep elected officials and key opinion leaders apprised of project developments and issues and keep them engaged in the project.
- Ensure that the public has an opportunity to provide input prior to major milestone decisions.

Objectives

- *Utilize media relations to disperse information about future plans and projects. (e.g., status, overall project vision, USACE-funded project components, other project elements)*
- *Plan for future public meetings to solicit input and demonstrate willingness to receive input from the public.*

- *Build a base of stakeholders through constant use of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter as well as traditional communication tools such as email or hardcopy newsletters.*
- *Address public comments, suggestions and concerns into the project studies and design when possible considering project budget and schedule considerations.*
- *Acknowledge and respond to comments received from the public during meetings, through social media and from other sources.*

Strategies and Tactics

Media relations

- *Set periodic meetings with Tulsa World reporter Kevin Canfield to discuss ongoing activities. Try to check in with Kevin at least once a quarter even if no updates are available. It is important to keep this on his radar.*
- *Prepare a fact sheet update that can be distributed to media at least every six months. Again, even if little has changed, the media should constantly be reminded of the project. These fact sheets will not always result in media coverage, but will often peak the interest of a reporter who may need a story.*
- *Plan to hold a media open house after the next round of public meetings. This event would give the media time to gather information and ask questions based on the public meetings. It would allow the broadcast media to get footage of the maps, graphs and other collateral material. [Suggest having the media “training” or open house prior to the public meeting to ensure reporters and columnists have a baseline of information regarding the project.]*
- *Meet with the Tulsa World editorial board at key project milestones to seek endorsement for the project*
- *Produce press releases and arrange interviews with print and broadcast media when key milestones for the project are reached (e.g., when funding is approved, key approvals received,, etc.)*
- *Track media stories, letters to the editor and other public discussions regarding the project to gauge trends in public awareness and support.*

Public meetings and engagement

- *Encourage Tulsa County Commissioners and other county and city elected officials to include information about the project in any district/neighborhood meetings attended.*
- *Hold at least one public meeting each year during the implementation process with updates to funding levels, engineering, construction, any right-of-way acquisitions or other project steps. Even though federal guidelines may not dictate a need for public meetings, these sessions will keep the public engaged and give interested parties an opportunity to see and hear details of the project.*
- *Meeting should be hosted by elected officials and have their involvement in planning.*
- *Using information from sign-in sheets from 2009 meetings and contact information from written comments received during September 2009 scoping meetings, develop a*

contact database for periodic email newsletters, meeting notice distribution and similar information. Content of the newsletters should reflect findings of the technical work and address issues that the public has voiced an interest in. From time to time, the mailing list could be used to solicit information through surveys if feedback is desired on a certain issue.

- Develop key messages and fact sheets that can be used by the sponsoring agencies, Stakeholder Committee and Arkansas River Corridor Master Plan Advisory Committee members, and others engaged in the project to share up-to-date project information and consistent messages to the public.
- Host a river clean-up event to engage individuals at the water's edge. Include some information booths and activities for children. Seek sponsors for food, t-shirts, etc. This will get people to the river, may improve the aesthetics, and provides an opportunity for press releases and information about the project to be distributed. Plus, the t-shirts would be a constant reminder of the project.

Interactive and social media

- *Set up a public website with information specific to the Arkansas River Corridor Master Plan. This should have renderings and information from the last round of public meetings and an overall project status.*
- *Establish Twitter and Facebook accounts for the project. This would allow for periodic updates to a group of specific followers. It will allow for images and photos to be distributed as well. The point here is to engage the audience that doesn't necessarily attend public meetings or neighborhood gatherings. There are many young people interested in the river, but are not interested in traditional modes of gathering information.*
- Twitter and Facebook pages should be linked to the overall public website.