

Tualatin Valley Water District

Delivering the Best Water • Service • Value



BOARD WORK SESSION AGENDA

July 5, 2016

Board President Marilyn McWilliams

Vice President Dick Schmidt

Treasurer Jim Doane

Secretary Jim Duggan

Acting Secretary Richard Burke

Assistive listening devices are available upon request 48 hours prior to the day of the meeting by calling (503) 848-3000. For additional questions or assistance, see the District Recorder seated near the windows.

For online meeting information, Commissioner bios and more, visit www.tvwd.org.

VISION

Delivering the best water • service • value

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide our community quality water and customer service

VALUES

Reliability • Integrity • Stewardship • Excellence • Safety

WORK SESSION – 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Financial Forecast Update and 2016-17 Water Rates
- B. Update on the Rate Advisory Committee for the 2016-17 Water Rate Study
- C. Board Officer and Committee Appointments
- D. Draft Strategic Communications Plan for the District

ADJOURNMENT

Tualatin Valley Water District



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To: Board of Commissioners

From: Paul Matthews, Chief Financial Officer
Tod Burton, Financial Planning & Debt Project Manager

Date: July 5, 2016

Subject: Financial Forecast Update and 2016-17 Water Rates

Background:

The District continues to evaluate its revenue needs as it plans to fund the second year of the 2015-17 biennial budget and long-term capital improvement plans. The biennial budget includes funding infrastructure investment within the District as well as the Willamette Water Supply Program (WWSP). Planning for these long-term investments is a necessary part of the District's financial planning and water rate development process.

Consistent with past practices and current needs, staff is proposing that the Board consider adjusting water rates at a rate hearing during the August 17 regular board meeting. To prepare for that rate hearing, staff will:

1. Provide an update of the District's long-term financial forecast, which includes the most recent projected cash flow requirements for the WWSP and expenditure adjustments for purchased water stemming from the 10.2% wholesale water increase by the City of Portland, effective July 1, 2016;
2. Present to the Board water rate increase alternatives and their impacts to customers, and answer questions the Board may have on the rate development process; and
3. Receive input from Board to assist staff in preparing customer communications and water rate recommendations for the August 17 regular board meeting.

This information item is for the process of adopting rates effective November 1, 2016. In addition, TVWD is undertaking a water rate study examining alternative rate design options for, in particular, affordability. A separate information item on the water rate study is being brought to the Board.

Budget Impact:

The 2015-17 Adopted Budget anticipated a 12% rate increase in the second year of the biennium. The rate adjustments selected by the Board in August may affect the actual revenue realized during the biennium. However, each of the options presented at the workshop will be feasible for adoption by the Board under the current budget.

Staff Contact Information:

Paul L. Matthews; Chief Financial Officer; 503-848-3017; paul.matthews@tvwd.org or Tod Burton;
Financial Planning Debt Project Manager; 503-848-3040; tod.burton@tvwd.org

Attachments: None.

Management Staff Initials:

Chief Executive Officer		Customer Service Manager	N/A
Chief Engineer	N/A	Field Operations Manager	N/A
Chief Financial Officer		Human Resources Director	N/A
General Counsel	N/A	Water Supply Program Director	N/A

Tualatin Valley Water District



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To: Board of Commissioners

From: Alex Cousins, Communications and Public Affairs Supervisor

Date: July 5, 2016

Subject: Update on the Rate Advisory Committee for the 2016-17 Water Rate Study

Background:

Anticipating concerns about future rate increases, the District included a comprehensive rate study in the 2015-17 biennium budget. TVWD has selected HDR as the consultant to perform this work. In keeping with the guidance from the Board, a key objective of the rate study is to develop policy proposals for the Board on the issue of affordability of water for customers with limited financial means. With a goal of providing a transparent, inclusive and informed decision process on rates, the scope of work for HDR includes the formation of a Rate Advisory Committee (RAC).

The RAC is proposed to consist of up to 12 volunteer members representing a variety of constituencies that will meet approximately monthly during the rate study. The result of their deliberations will be recommendations on policies for affordability of water for customers of limited economic means. A list of prospective RAC members has been prepared, with membership including specific, relevant community interests such as key customers, low-income advocates and multi-family customers, as well as geographic and cultural diversity. A charter for the RAC has been drafted and the meetings will be facilitated by HDR. RAC members will be appointed by the Board. Additionally, the RAC is anticipated to include two Board members participating as observers/advisors during the RAC meetings.

Budget Impact:

The District's adopted 2015-17 biennial budget includes \$150,000 in professional services for the comprehensive rate study.

Staff Contact Information:

Alex Cousins; Communications and Public Affairs Supervisor; 503-848-3012; alex.cousins@tvwd.org

Attachments:

Draft RAC Charter
Draft Proposed Membership Roster (as of June 30, 2016)

Management Staff Initials:

Chief Executive Officer		Customer Service Manager	N/A
Chief Engineer	N/A	Field Operations Manager	N/A
Chief Financial Officer		Human Resources Director	N/A
General Counsel	N/A	Water Supply Program Director	N/A



MEMO

Date: June 27, 2016

To: Mark Knudson

From: Paul Matthews, Joe Healy, Alex Cousins

Re: 2017 Rate Study – Proposed Charter for the Rate Advisory Committee

PURPOSE

This is a proposed charter for the Rate Advisory Committee (RAC) for the District's 2017 Rate/Affordability Study. As currently envisioned, the RAC will be a special committee, appointed by the District's Board of Commissioners, to advise the Board regarding the findings of the rate study process and evaluation of affordability of the District's water rates.

The RAC shall:

- Discuss affordability of water rates in the face of future rate increases.
- Assist the District in defining criteria for affordability.
- Serve as a sounding board for the consulting team selected to conduct the study.
- Explore and seek positive outcomes, drawing on the experience of committee members.
- Report in an advisory capacity to District Board of Commissioners.

The RAC will be a limited duration committee that will focus on the issues raised during the rate study. It will not overlap with the responsibilities of the District's citizens Budget Committee, which remains responsible for reviewing the District's budget and capital improvements plan.

MEMBERSHIP

The RAC is proposed to consist of up to 12 individuals, representing various District stakeholders. RAC members will be appointed by the TVWD Board, with consideration of membership selection criteria (see Appendix). Membership is anticipated to include the following affiliations:

- **Business** – one or more of the District's key customers (e.g., Reser's, Nike, Intel), Westside Economic Alliance, small businesses
- **Residential** – multifamily housing, CPO program, established neighborhood associations, duplex owner/customer
- **Community Advocates** – one or more advocates for low-income customers (e.g., Washington County Disability, Aging and Veterans Services, Vision Action Network, Community Action)
- **Latino/Multicultural** – representatives from minority communities (e.g., Centro Cultural, Adelante Mujeres)
- **Institutional** – schools, parks, healthcare, emergency services

- **Citizens** – geographically dispersed throughout the District’s service area
- **TVWD Budget committee member**

Under the current proposal the RAC will have no chairperson, as the committee will work with the professional facilitator to develop group consensus recommendations during the rate study review process.

TVWD BOARD PARTICIPATION

The TVWD Board of Commissioners shall assign two members to serve as RAC liaisons. These Board members will attend RAC meetings to observe, answer questions and provide input as needed. The Commissioner liaisons to the RAC are not intended to be voting members of the RAC.

MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

- Members shall regularly attend meetings. When members cannot attend, they shall inform the facilitator and TVWD project manager.
- Members shall arrive at the meetings on time and be prepared to engage in the scheduled work of the committee.
- Members shall inform their constituencies of the RAC’s work and will relay any comments back to the committee as needed.
- Members shall choose two representatives from among the RAC membership to provide the committee’s final recommendations to the TVWD Board at a regularly scheduled monthly Board meeting.

SUPPORT TO THE RAC

TVWD staff and the consultant team will provide support to the RAC with its activities, such as:

- Meetings conducted by a professional facilitator
- Technical research and informational reports
- Preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and handouts
- Coordination of facilities
- Regular and timely meeting notifications to RAC members, TVWD staff, Board members and the public
- Consultant and/or staff presentations at meetings as necessary
- Refreshments and food available at each meeting
- Preparation and distribution of meeting notes/summaries

COMMITTEE CHARGE

Committee members will review the consultant’s findings, conclusions, and recommendations on the following topics:

1. **Affordability and Rate Design** – Using information provided by the District’s consultant, the RAC will consider the following questions regarding water rate design and affordability:
 - a. Should the District address affordability within its rate structure?

- b. If the District addresses affordability, what are the options for doing so?
 - c. What are the other policy considerations (e.g., who will qualify individuals for affordability programs, how will lost revenue be recovered)?
2. **Common Service Consolidation** – The District charges non single-family residential customers for water use using the District’s excess-use rate structure where a higher block rate is charged for water exceeding 140% of the average annual consumption for the account. One of the District’s non-residential customers would like to have its consumption aggregated for some connections that serve it, which would have the effect of lowering the customer’s total water bill. The RAC will consider this proposal.
3. **Duplex Billing** – Currently, the District follows the definition of single-family residential customers within the American Water Works Association (AWWA) M1 Manual that includes duplexes as single-family customers. As such, the District bills duplexes as it does single-family residential customers, using a block rate structure with 2 blocks. A duplex owner proposed that the District instead bill duplexes as the District does its multifamily residential customers. The RAC will consider this proposal.
4. **Hydrant Meter Calculations** – The RAC will review and make recommendations on ways in which the District can meter and recover costs for temporary, non-emergency use of water through a fire hydrant. This review may include recommendations for the associated deposits, fees, and flow charges.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The RAC will meet for approximately two hours at a time, on a weekday evening, once a month from August 2016 to December 2016. The table below presents the anticipated RAC schedule of meetings and topics to be considered.



Date¹	Milestone/Deliverable	Notes/Descriptions
Tues., June 7, 2016	RAC charter to TVWD Board	Board work session
Wed., July 20, 2016	Board to appoint RAC	Regular Board meeting
Wed., Aug. 10, 2016	RAC meeting 1	Initial meeting, RAC charter, affordability/rate design
Wed., Sept. 7, 2016	RAC meeting 2	Affordability/rates & common service consolidation
Wed., Sept. 21, 2016	Draft white paper due	Affordability/rate design
Wed., Sept. 28, 2016	Draft white paper due	Common service consolidation
Wed., Oct. 5, 2016	RAC meeting 3	Review; duplexes & hydrant meters
Wed., Oct. 19, 2016	Draft white paper due	Duplexes
Wed., Oct. 26, 2016	Draft white paper due	Hydrant meters
Wed., Nov. 2, 2016	RAC meeting 4	Review; spillover from prior meetings
Wed., Nov. 16, 2016	TVWD white paper comments due	All white papers
Wed., Dec. 7, 2016	RAC meeting 5	Final RAC meeting, wrap up RAC process
Wed., Dec. 14, 2016	Final white papers due	All white papers
Wed., Jan. 18, 2017	RAC recommendation to the Board	Regular Board meeting

¹ Tentative dates subject to change.

APPENDIX: RATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE SELECTION CRITERIA

- Ability to work cooperatively and productively with a committee of diverse interests.
 - Ability to comprehend and analyze technical information and use that information to make sound recommendations (however, a background in finance is not required).
 - Ability to represent and/or understand a variety of perspectives related to a project or issue.
 - Have strong communication skills.
 - Understand TVWD's role as a service provider within Washington County.
 - Be willing to share accurate information with other RAC members and the community.
 - Geographic diversity within TVWD boundaries is desired.
 - Diversity in cultural background, age and gender is also desired.
-

Prospective Rate Advisory Committee Members (as of June 30, 2016)

Name	Representing	Affiliation	Notes
Gary Burns	Duplexes	Duplex owner/customer Also serves on the Tigard Water District Board.	Has contacted the Board about duplex billing rates. May not be able to make all of our meetings due to his travel schedule (estimates $\frac{3}{4}$ he can make). Spoke with on 6/27 and he confirmed interest.
Jessica Stanton	Cedar Mill customer and communications consultant	Stanton Global Communications, Owner M/W/DBE	Lives in Cedar Mill. Can help us think about ratepayer communications with respect to affordability. Letter of interest received 6/24.
Jessica (Jessi) Adams	Low income	Community Action, Program Mgr.	Referral from Paul. Spoke with on 6/14 and she has agreed to serve on the committee if selected.
María Cabarello-Rubio	Latino Community & Diversity	Centro Cultural, Executive Director	Referral from Mark. Spoke with on 6/24 and emailed her info. She is very interested in helping us and will get back to me this week.
Carly Riter	NW Government Affairs Mgr. Key Customer	Intel	Spoke with on 6/21. She is checking to see about Intel's involvement and also reached out to Pam at WEA. Intel not currently confirmed – 6/30
Jonny Clay	Multifamily Housing	Multifamily NW, Communications Specialist	Emailed on 6/24 asking for help ID'ing multifamily property mgr in District. He said he will check. Nothing since.
Randy Mifflin	Adult Protective Services	WA Co. Disability, Aging and Veterans Services	Confirmed interest in serving on the RAC on 6/29
Craig Hopkins	TVWD Budget Committee	District residents and customers	Tod called on 6/21 and he agrees to serve
Pam Treece	Industrial/commercial customers	Westside Economic Alliance	Spoke with on 6/24. She would like to serve on the RAC.

Jordan Luevano	Reser's Fine Foods	Facilities Specialist Key Customer	He is extremely interested and will apply. Letter received 6/23
Sandy Galaway	Customer in Aloha	Self, but works for SDAO. 30-year TVWD customer.	Received our news release at SDAO. Email received on 6/27. Interested.
Keith Hobson	Institutional	THPRD Asst. Gen. Manager	Paul called on 6/27 and he agrees to serve if selected.
Nathalie Darcy	Customer in Garden Home	Retired, previously served on MTAC	Spoke with on 6/28. Considering the oppty. but hasn't confirmed. I also contacted Barbara Upson, who declined.

Tualatin Valley Water District



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Tualatin Valley Water District



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To: Board of Commissioners

From: Mark Knudson, Chief Executive Officer

Date: July 5, 2016

Subject: Board Officer and Committee Appointments

Background:

This agenda item will consist of a Board discussion of appointments to Board officer positions as well as Commissioner assignments to internal and external committees. This discussion is scheduled in work session to allow the Board to fully discuss this matter and identify recommended appointments. It is anticipated recommended officer and committee appointments will be considered for approval by the Board at the July 20 regular meeting. It should be noted that internal and external committee appointments are made by the Board President with approval by the full Board per Board Policy Article 1.15.40.

Officers: Based on Board Policy Article 1.15.30, the officers of the Board shall consist of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Acting Secretary. Terms of office are for one year, and no member may serve more than three consecutive terms as President.

The duties of the President include presiding at meetings (with the right to make motions, discuss and vote on any issue), signing documents, serving as Board representative in speaking to other governmental bodies (unless another Commissioner is so designated), having authority over committee appointments, calling special meetings and appointing the Acting Secretary. The Vice President performs these duties in the absence of the President.

The Treasurer serves as liaison between Board and staff regarding financial policies.

The Secretary countersigns official documents that the President signs. The Acting Secretary performs these duties in the absence of the Secretary.

A listing of current officers and terms served can be found in the attached document.

Internal Committees: Commissioners serve on four special interest committees, including the Finance Committee, Policy and Board Development Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and Water Supply Committee. A description of each committee and a listing of current members can be found in the attached document.

External Committees: Commissioners represent the District on various committees within the community. A list of current committee involvement can be found in the attached document.

Budget Impact:

None.

Staff Contact Information:

Mark Knudson; Chief Executive Officer; 503-848-3027; mark.knudson@tvwd.org

Attachment:

Board Appointments and Assignments Fiscal Year 2015-16

Management Staff Initials:

Chief Executive Officer		Customer Service Manager	N/A
Chief Engineer	N/A	Field Operations Manager	N/A
Chief Financial Officer	N/A	Human Resources Director	N/A
General Counsel	N/A	Water Supply Program Director	N/A

BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS
Effective July 16, 2015 for Fiscal Year 2015-16

Board Officers	Commissioner				
	Burke	McWilliams	Schmidt	Duggan	Doane
President		First Term			
Vice President			First Term		
Treasurer					First Term
Secretary				Third Term	
Acting Secretary	First Term				
Internal Committees					
Budget Committee	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member
Policy and Board Development Committee	Member			Member	
Water Supply Committee			Member		Member
Strategic Planning Committee	Member		Member		
Finance Committee		Member			Member
External Committees					
Willamette River Water Coalition Board	Alternate	Primary			
Willamette Water Supply Council	Alternate	Primary			
Joint Water Commission			Primary		Primary
Barney Joint Ownership Commission			Alternate		Primary
Regional Water Providers Consortium Board/Executive Committee			Alternate	Primary	
Aloha Business Association	Alternate				Primary
Washington County Public Affairs Forum (event attendance)	Alternate	Primary			
Westside Economic Alliance (event attendance)	Alternate	Primary			

Policy and Board Development Committee – This committee will provide input and review of proposed updates to the District’s Board and Administrative Policy Manual, which includes about 30 Board policies that have not been updated in several years. In reviewing and updating the Board policies, this committee will also identify effective board processes, structures and roles. Other roles for this committee may include Board retreat planning, Board performance evaluation planning and orientation of new Commissioners.

Water Supply Committee – This committee will provide input to the CEO on strategic and policy matters related to continued implementation of the Willamette Water Supply Program, including issues such as system capacity, levels of service, expectations for seismic resiliency, public outreach strategies and partnership agreements.

Strategic Planning Committee – Members of this committee will participate in the biennial District strategic planning process to identify and prioritize District Initiatives for the coming biennium. The committee will also conduct periodic progress reviews of District Initiatives and track progress toward completing the initiatives.

Finance Committee – This committee will work with the CEO and CFO to track the District’s financial performance and will participate in development of draft financial policies and strategies such as debt planning and long-term rate planning.

History of Officer Positions

Appointment Year	Commissioner				
	Burke	McWilliams	Schmidt	Duggan	Doane
2015-16	Acting Secretary	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer
2014-15	President	Vice President	Treasurer	Secretary	Acting Secretary
2013-14	President	Treasurer	Vice President	Secretary	Acting Secretary
2012-13	Treasurer	Vice President	President	Acting Secretary	Secretary
2011-12	Treasurer	Vice President	President	Secretary	Acting Secretary
2010-11	Treasurer	Vice President	President	Secretary	Acting Secretary
2009-10	President	Secretary	Treasurer	Vice President	Acting Secretary

Tualatin Valley Water District



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To: Board of Commissioners
From: Alex Cousins, Communications and Public Affairs Supervisor
Date: July 5, 2016
Subject: Draft Strategic Communications Plan for the District

Background:

This is a follow up to the April 20, 2016 Board meeting presentation about the Strategic Communications Plan being prepared to guide District communications, outreach and marketing. The plan provides a framework for how TVWD will provide information to customers, the community and employees.

As described in the District's Strategic Initiatives spreadsheet (#12 – Update Communications and Outreach Program), the plan's objectives are to:

1. Create a greater understanding of customers and their communications needs.
2. Develop a strategy to help maintain high customer satisfaction ratings.
3. Create a greater ratepayer understanding of the services provided by the District.
4. Create confidence in the District's actions.
5. Develop clear and consistent messaging that can be used by staff and the Board.
6. Create transparency regarding what the District plans to accomplish and our actions.

The plan is intended to enhance the District's current outreach and communication programs to communicate concepts such as TVWD's role in the community; the value of TVWD services and the significance of reliable and quality water supplies; the role of rates in providing this value; customer awareness and preparation for special events such as boil water notices and cold weather preparation. The plan will also guide modifications to branding as appropriate to demonstrate the value of TVWD to the community and include a comprehensive review of all communications and communications tools to align with District goals and priorities.

Alex will provide an overview of the contents of the draft plan in advance of the Board's consideration of approval of the plan at the July 20 regular Board meeting.

Budget Impact:

Budget implications are identified in the draft document. Exact costs are currently unknown, but pertain to proposed redevelopment of the TVWD website, organization re-brand, various communications licenses/equipment costs and staffing resource too implement portions of the Strategic Communications Plan

Staff Contact Information:

Alex Cousins; Communications and Public Affairs Supervisor; 503-848-3012; alex.cousins@tvwd.org

Attachments:

Draft Strategic Communications Plan

Management Staff Initials:

Chief Executive Officer	<i>AC</i>	Customer Service Manager	N/A
Chief Engineer	N/A	Field Operations Manager	N/A
Chief Financial Officer	N/A	Human Resources Director	N/A
General Counsel	N/A	Water Supply Program Director	N/A

DRAFT

**TUALATIN VALLEY WATER DISTRICT
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

Prepared by: Alex Cousins
Communications & Public Affairs Supervisor
First draft: July 2016

Tualatin Valley Water District



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INTRODUCTION

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

~ George Bernard Shaw, Playwright

This statement can be especially true for water utilities. The challenge for water providers is that they are often invisible to the public until something goes wrong. People expect clean, safe water to routinely come out of the tap without a moment’s thought, so it is easy for customers to take their water provider for granted. Additionally, water utilities historically have been reluctant to actively market themselves (the “silent service”). This under-promotion has far-reaching consequences today. Many people cannot accurately name their water provider. They may have no idea how their water is treated, how much they use or where their water comes from. This is a tremendous challenge for water utilities, especially when customer rates are increased to fund costly infrastructure improvements. It is a tall order to ask customers to pay more for a service that they may take for granted and know little about. People need additional impressions of their water provider beyond a routine bill statement.

Communicating the need to raise rates to cover the increasing costs of providing water is further challenged in a crowded and evolving media market. The public is constantly bombarded with news from their phones, TVs, computers and tablets. Traditional print media is declining as digital media is exploding. Where people get their news is changing also. A majority of Millennials (the generation born in the 1980s until about 2000) use Facebook as their primary news source. Millennials are America’s largest generational group – this will be the population that bears the brunt of paying for today’s capital infrastructure investments. Water utilities must overcome the challenge of being “relatable” to their customers and this is accomplished by communicating more often and more effectively using a wider array of communications channels. Utilities cannot afford to stay mostly silent, offering the illusion of communications with their customers. The stakes are quite simply too high.

Historically, and typical for the industry, Tualatin Valley Water District (TVWD) has maintained a modest public profile. However, TVWD’s position is growing as a regional water provider in the Portland metropolitan area. The District’s stake in the Willamette Water Supply Program is a game changer for the regional water supply. Customer rates will increase significantly to fund this legacy investment. To sustain positive customer relations over time in the face of increasing rates, TVWD must elevate its brand awareness through targeted and strategic communications. This Strategic Communications Plan serves as a blueprint to accomplish this important goal.

COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES, PURPOSE, GOAL & OBJECTIVES

“The two words ‘Information’ and ‘Communication’ are often used interchangeably but they signify quite different things. ‘Information’ is getting out; ‘Communication’ is getting through.”

~ Sydney J. Harris, Journalist

The mission of the TVWD Communications Office is to elevate public support and confidence in TVWD by raising awareness and understanding of the District’s activities and priorities. We facilitate and deliver clear, transparent and engaging communication among the District Board of Commissioners, staff, customers and community.

TVWD’s communications philosophy is to provide audiences with easy-to-understand information using a writing tone that is friendly, approachable and at times conversational. It is important to communicate clearly without jargon or overly technical terminology. The Communications Office should be the final arbiter and “gatekeeper” for the written word and visual look of all District communications.

This plan is based on the following well-regarded Seven Communications Principles (the “Seven Cs”):

1. **Completeness** – Messages contain all of the facts necessary to convey the intent of the communication.
2. **Conciseness** – Messages are complete, yet brief enough that they save time for the sender and receiver.
3. **Consideration** – Messages put the recipient in mind and answer questions from their point of view.
4. **Concreteness** – Messages are specific, definite and vivid, not vague and general.
5. **Clarity** – Messages convey the same intent and meaning that the sender intended.
6. **Correctness** – Messages are accurate, use appropriate tone for the situation, are grammatically correct and choose nondiscriminatory expressions.
7. **Courtesy** – Messages are sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative.

This Strategic Communications Plan serves as the guiding framework for all TVWD communications efforts. It establishes a baseline understanding for how TVWD will provide information to customers, partners and employees; enhance the District’s image; and market our services to customers in a manner that supports TVWD’s vision, mission and values:

Vision – “Deliver the Best – Water, Service, Value”

Mission – “Provide Our Community Quality Water and Customer Service”

Values – “Reliability, Integrity, Stewardship, Excellence and Safety”

For the purposes of this plan, the word “communications” is defined broadly to include information, advocacy, marketing, engagement, government affairs and marketing research.

The overarching goal of this Strategic Communications Plan is to communicate the value of TVWD’s services, and the value of water more broadly, to all District audiences.

The plan's main objectives are to:

- Inform consistent, credible and coordinated messages.
- Support the development of key messages that are grounded in TVWD's vision, mission, values, operational goals and strategic direction.
- Enhance the image of TVWD.
- Effectively promote our services that provide value to the customer experience.
- Identify the key themes, initiatives or projects that are likely to be the focus of most communications and marketing efforts through the current and next biennium (2016 – 2019).

Additionally, this plan provides a framework for consistency and synergy between TVWD communications and the Willamette Water Supply Program (WWSP) communications. As the WWSP transitions from system design into a series of large construction projects, TVWD will become more proactive in communicating these efforts through our ongoing and new communications channels.

TVWD'S AUDIENCES

"Never treat your audience as customers, always as partners."

~ Jimmy Stewart, Actor

For the purposes of targeting messaging and communications, District audiences can be divided into four distinct segments. This is in addition to the general public. Communications may be directed to one or several audiences according to the purpose and desired outcomes of the messaging.

Our Customers – As a special district providing drinking water to a growing population, TVWD's customers are at the heart of most of our communications efforts. However, it is important to keep in mind that "Customers" isn't a singular block, but a diverse array of interests, including:

- Ratepayers (homeowners and businesses)
- Multifamily property owners, renters and managers
- Industrial users (Key Customers)
- Development community
- Institutional users (schools, parks, health care)
- Facilities and operations managers

Key Influencers – Key influencers refers to TVWD audiences who maintain a measure of influence over District perceptions, reputation, operations and policy. This includes:

- Media
- Informed businesses
- Informed community leaders
- Elected officials in member jurisdictions (Washington County, cities of Beaverton, Hillsboro, Tigard)
- Legislators
- Special interest groups
- Industry and agency leaders

Partners – Partners can also be key influencers. This category refers to interests with whom TVWD regularly coordinates joint activities and/or operations requiring oversight, permitting or regulation. This includes:

- Local, regional, state and federal regulatory agencies
- Technical staff in member jurisdictions
- Local and regional water providers

Ourselves – In addition to outreach, it is important to consider "in-reach" with regard to District communications. An informed and engaging staff and Board of Commissioners serve as extensions of District communications activities. By providing everyone with access to District messaging and outreach activities, we can all be ambassadors for TVWD in the community.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

~ Thomas A. Edison, Inventor

Through traditional communications vehicles such as newsletters, bill inserts, consumer confidence reports and media releases, TVWD has been “getting the word out” about its operations and programs for many years. But has the organization been “getting through” to its customers? To a degree, yes, based on the District’s most recent Customer Survey (DHM Research, 2014). The following key themes are apparent from the survey results:

- TVWD is starting from a strong foundation – customers know TVWD, have a positive impression and are generally satisfied with their water service.
- Reliability continues to be the primary issue for customers. TVWD can leverage this through the following reliability messages:
 - Adequate supply to maintain good tasting water
 - Maintain good quality of life
 - Protect community health
- Messaging around water for job creation has weakened. Instead, TVWD should focus on reliability, seismic resiliency and quality of life.
- Customers are less concerned about owning the source of water. Messages around this are confusing and require more in-depth explanation and understanding.

This survey was conducted two years ago, well before the lead in drinking water concerns were raised locally and nationally. It is a safe bet that a current survey would reflect higher concerns about health and safety of drinking water. This assumption can be tested in the 2016 customer survey to be conducted later this year.

Challenges

Little understanding of TVWD’s water sources

Few TVWD customers fully understand where their water comes from – Bull Run and/or the Joint Water Commission, supplemented by aquifer storage in summer months. The implications of being a wholesale customer to the City of Portland are not well understood either. This makes messaging around turning to the Willamette River more complicated, especially when some people mistakenly believe that the Willamette is a poor water source.

Customer understanding about the need to raise rates

Few people want to pay more for an existing service when there is no perceived change. As noted earlier, it is a hard sell asking customers to contribute toward solving a problem that they don’t even know they have. Many District customers are unaware of TVWD’s role in the WWSP or what it means for customer rates over the next several years. Communicating rate messages is further complicated by issues outside of TVWD’s control (e.g., increases in companion sewer, storm and surface water charges or the rights-of-way fees being charged by cities).

Linking customer rates with benefits

Water and wastewater are the “invisible” utilities. Much of the infrastructure to support the delivery of clean, safe water is out of sight or underground. While a transportation improvement is typically immediately apparent and experienced by the public, upgraded water infrastructure is usually not so obvious to the consumer. The District must continually communicate the importance of investments in system improvements and how they benefit the community.

Getting the word out

Traditional communications (media releases, bill inserts, newsletters) are necessary but typically have low impact. For example, industry focus groups and customer surveys have shown repeatedly that bill inserts frequently are not read by customers. Advertising is expensive and in-person outreach is time consuming. Additionally, TVWD has refrained from using social media in District communications in the past. To reach our audiences, the District must deliver messages frequently and broadly in a manner that is compelling and easily-digestible. More in-person customer outreach is also needed.

Opportunities

Water is vital

Water is among the few physical requirements for human survival. It is no surprise that drinking water quality is the number one environmental concern for Oregonians (DHM Research, 2014 Values and Beliefs Survey). Unlike other services that could be deemed optional, TVWD is a purveyor of an essential requirement for life and this should continue to be part of our messaging.

TVWD is starting from a good place

The District’s customer satisfaction surveys routinely reveal very high level of service satisfaction from our customers (95% in 2014). This provides an easier starting point for framing communications and having the messages heard by customers. However, it may be difficult to sustain such strong satisfaction levels in the face of repeated rate increases and other issues (payment card industry compliance, etc.). The best defense is a good offense when it comes to maintaining customer satisfaction.

Social media + visual communications = raised awareness

Utilizing new media channels can greatly enhance TVWD’s community profile. Social media and visual communications will be explored at greater length in this document. Actively working social media channels will support District messaging while reaching new audiences. Visual communications such as online videos and infographics will bring to life District activities that may be otherwise invisible to our audiences.

Leveraging regional partnerships

“Go it alone” is rarely the best strategy. Eighty-six percent of the District’s customers want TVWD to develop partnerships with local communities to share costs and expenses (DHM Research, 2014). Partnership is the reason behind the District’s participation in the WWSP, which is one of several collaborative efforts being undertaken by TVWD. The District maintains a longstanding partnership with Clean Water Services that could be further leveraged for other strategic initiatives. New partnerships

include the emerging Washington County lead hazard reduction program and the recently established Water Communicators Subcommittee through the Regional Water Providers Consortium.

Willamette Water Supply Program cross promotion

The WWSP is TVWD’s largest single initiative and will be for the foreseeable future. Program communications include branding, a sophisticated website, visual communications and targeted outreach. As the WWSP moves from design and into construction, there will be ample opportunities for TVWD to cross-promote program outreach activities and project updates in coordination with WWSP staff, especially in the areas of online information and social media outreach. Cross-promoting will help “connect the dots” for District customers between water rates and their new regional water supply system.

TVWD BRAND

“A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is, it is what consumers tell each other it is.”

~ Scott Cook, Intuit CEO

TVWD was formed in 1991 with the merger of the Wolf Creek Highway Water District and the Metzger Water District. Neither district maintained a strong visual identity or what could be considered a logo prior to the merger. The first visual identity, a variation of the current TVWD logo, was developed in 1991 with the “wave” on top of the organizational name in Garamond font. This was slightly altered in 2004 with the same “wave” positioned below the name and the font changed to Times New Roman. The District’s mission statement “Delivering the Best Water, Service, Value” was incorporated into the logo in 2013.

TVWD has maintained essentially the same corporate brand for 25 years. Except for quintessential, universally-recognized brands such as Ford and Coca-Cola, organizations and brands typically change their corporate identities every seven to 10 years. This often involves restyling logos, color palettes, visual language and the photographic style. Recognizing when it is time to re-brand may seem difficult, but several situations can necessitate an identity makeover including:

1. Mergers/acquisitions (as noted above)
2. Name changes (as noted above)
3. Repositioning within the industry
4. Overcoming a difficult reputation
5. Desire to reach a new audience
6. Modernization
7. Internationalization
8. Changing markets
9. New leadership



It can be argued that items 3, 5 and 6 above are applicable to TVWD concerning our brand today. The WWSP is certainly *repositioning* TVWD within the regional water supply system, elevating the District’s role and reputation. In order to successfully complete the Willamette Water Supply System, the District must raise rates, which requires *reaching new audiences* to develop and maintain customer understanding and acceptance. Finally, the District’s brand requires *modernization*. The current brand was developed during the first Bush administration when the Dow Jones industrial average topped 3,000 for the first time. A lot has changed. Times New Roman with its serif lettering is rarely seen in contemporary corporate branding; the font is usually limited to long blocks of body copy. And what does the “wave” really say about the District and its values?

This Strategic Communications Plan proposes a re-brand of TVWD, however doing so is not necessarily required for any of the recommendations herein. Quite simply, a refreshed image is overdue and will be more compatible with the implementation of a new visual communications strategy. Re-branding is a specialized process that requires broad organizational commitment, time, funding and the support of professional brand consultants. The Communications Office recommends discussing this subject with the Board of Commissioners and, if approved, budgeting for this activity in the next biennium.

CORE STRATEGIES

“Of all our inventions of mass communication, pictures still speak the most universally understood language.”

~ Walt Disney, Animator

Whether for a District-wide communications campaign or a targeted outreach initiative, TVWD shall take an *integrated* approach with the recognition that no single way of communicating effectively reaches all segments of the intended audience. Some people read bill inserts; many do not. It is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of bill statements. Electronic and printed newsletters are dependent on having comprehensive and up-to-date mailing lists to be useful. Most customers go directly to the TVWD website for information, which is a good thing, yet presents its own set of challenges. Very little of what the District communicates to customers is presented in a visual format. These are among the communications issues that must be addressed by TVWD moving forward.

TVWD’s research shows that customers support the District and have a positive overall impression of their water provider. However, nearly half of customers do not know TVWD’s water sources and about one third believe their water rates (as of 2014) are unreasonable. There is also a lack of overall awareness of the move to the Willamette River as a new regional water source. Therefore, materials and messaging should be informative, visually compelling and frequent enough to raise the overall level of awareness of the District’s programs and services. Greater customer understanding will benefit the District when ratepayer acceptance is needed, as it will be easier to gain informed consent when people understand the issues and tradeoffs between their rates and maintaining reliable, safe drinking water.

Communications tactics will:

- Keep it simple, explaining the basics
- Connect the dots between rates and programs, demonstrating value
- Expand community and customer education, with a focus on developing relationships
- Collect feedback, providing two-way communication opportunities
- Show, not just tell, making things visual

The last point is important and a major change to TVWD’s past communications practices. We are *all* visual learners; pictures remain in our minds for a lot longer than abstract concepts and words. Memory retention after a week goes from 10% to 65% when pictures are used (John Medina, *Brain Rules* 2009). TVWD must seek to balance written material with engaging visuals that show District programs and activities in addition to our people and facilities. Highlighting our customers’ experiences with their water provider will further demonstrate TVWD’s vital role in our community.

As the public moves to more visual communications, successful mediums include:

- New and updated images that reflect the District’s work, values and personality.
- Infographics and other visuals that showcase water treatment and distribution for use in ratepayer and stakeholder communications.
- Videos and animation on the website and District YouTube channel, electronic newsletters, in social media and partner communications.

TOOLS & TACTICS

Ongoing: External

“There are no traffic jams along the extra mile.”

~ Roger Staubach, Football Player

The District has a variety of ongoing communications tools and outreach efforts which have served the organization well throughout the years. This Strategic Communications Plan does not propose to eliminate any of them, but it does take a critical look at their perceived effectiveness with an eye toward improvement.

WWW.TVWD.ORG: TVWD’s website is the primary communications outlet for the District. Almost all District messages, information and public documents are stored on the site. Seventy-eight percent of District customers indicated it is their go-to location for receiving TVWD information (DHM Research, 2014). Most businesses, organizations, agencies and groups use their websites as the ultimate destination for all of their communications mediums, and TVWD is no exception.

TVWD’s website was originally created in the late 1990s and was maintained by the Engineering Department. When dedicated communications staff were hired in 2002, the former Office of Communications and Intergovernmental Relations took over the site. It was last re-designed in 2008, and it shows. The District’s homepage is based on the open source Umbraco content management system (CMS). While the platform is free to use, it can be cumbersome to update. More importantly, TVWD does not have a web designer on staff, which limits the full functionality of a freeware program like Umbraco.

A visit to the TVWD website is a journey through excessive text and hyperlinks with a distinct lack of logical organization or visuals. It can be difficult to know where to look to find needed information. For example, not counting the menu bar, there are 35 hyperlinks on the current homepage alone. WWW.TVWD.ORG has the distinct look and feel of a 1990s-era website that has been updated in an ad hoc manner over the years without an overall master plan guiding functionality and content management.

This Strategic Communications Plan proposes development of an entirely new TVWD website built on a new, cloud-based content management system that is more user-friendly and capable of supporting modern visual and social media communications tools. It also should be smart phone- and tablet-friendly. **The success of the new visual communications strategy is dependent upon a new website capable of supporting it.** The District’s utility billing system is obviously an important component of any CMS upgrade.

As with re-branding, this is a specialized process that requires broad organizational commitment, time (particularly from District IT staff), funding, staff training and the support of professional consultants. The Communications Office recommends discussing this subject with the Board of Commissioners and, if approved, budgeting for this activity in the next biennium.

B.I.G Newsletter: “B.I.G.” stands for Business, Industry, Government. The first BIG Newsletter was distributed in February 2008. The goal was to disseminate specialized messages through an occasional

newsletter to the District's non-residential customers. Production is intended to be quarterly but a couple times a year has been more typical. Much of the messaging to BIG customers is equally applicable to residential customers also. Past issues have tended to focus on WWSP updates and conservation messages. The format of the newsletter has not changed and the publication is due for a re-design.

This Strategic Communications Plan proposes re-naming the B.I.G. Newsletter to something more appropriate to all TVWD audiences. To solicit Board and staff input, a "Name the Newsletter" contest could be held. The new format newsletter will be produced quarterly and delivered in print to an updated BIG customer mailing list as well as made available electronically by e-subscription through the TVWD website. The publication needs an updated format and fresh design with a companion editorial calendar to schedule out stories in advance that are relevant to District initiatives, industry news and WWSP updates. The revised newsletter will be our primary District newsletter outside of bill inserts.

Water Words: TVWD distributes Water Words and a Beaverton version of Water Words in the bi-monthly bill statements. Since 1995, Water Words has been shared with Clean Water Services, and each agency rotates front page news placement every other billing cycle. Beaverton Water Words goes to customers who aren't billed directly from Clean Water Services, so TVWD information is on both sides. Water Words was recently re-formatted by the Clean Water Services graphic designer. No changes are proposed beyond editorial calendaring and closer content coordination with Clean Water Services communications staff.

Annual Report: TVWD's Annual Report contains information about the District and its accomplishments over the previous fiscal year. The annual report has had many different looks and has ranged from 2-12 pages. It usually contains information concerning water provided, major capital projects, water quality and unique events or situations that staff want to share. It is available electronically, and a limited number of hard copies are printed. Apart from an updated format with refreshed design for the next and future issues, no significant changes are recommended.

Consumer Confidence Report (CCR, Water Quality Report): Every water system is required to publish a water quality report that includes a list of contaminants found in the water. The Oregon Health Authority requires TVWD to notify customers about the availability of the report by July 1 every year. The CCR used to be mailed to every customer with water bills or as a standalone document for those who don't receive a water bill directly from TVWD. However, beginning in 2013 TVWD began mailing postcards and directing those interested in the report to the website. TVWD staff will internally print and mail copies to customers who request a hard copy. Apart from an updated format with refreshed design for the next and future issues, no changes are recommended.

Brochures: TVWD produces a variety of subject-specific brochures to distribute depending on the situation (for example, yard irrigation or fixing leaks). Brochures include both those produced by TVWD and the Regional Water Providers Consortium. Re-formatting any of our routine informational brochures is probably best to leave following a re-brand of the organization.

Direct Outreach: The District occasionally conducts in-person outreach to customers and stakeholders at District-sponsored meetings and community events. This activity builds stronger relationships than those afforded by passive communications and should be prioritized. Among the direct outreach approaches that TVWD can conduct include:

- Inviting stakeholders and community leaders to meet at the TVWD boardroom for more District sponsored meetings.
- Continue to pursue staff and Board member speaking opportunities at conferences, community events and at other leadership opportunities, when appropriate.
- Seek out opportunities for direct outreach in partnership with WWSP community activities.
- Leverage these appearances by promoting them (in video, photos or event website links) on the TVWD website and in social media channels, where appropriate.

Youth Education: TVWD maintains a longstanding and robust youth education and outreach program that directly reaches and engages thousands of area grade school students annually (K – 6). Classroom instruction modules include:

- **Source to the Home** - Focusing on the nuts and bolts of getting water to taps, this presentation talks about why water districts are important, where TVWD's water comes from and how water is treated. At the end, students put together a miniature water system.
- **Peat Pot Planting** - After talking about what's needed for gardening and the components of a plant, students learn about water efficient gardening techniques while planting sunflowers they get to take home.
- **Incredible Journey** - Using beads representing different types of water drops, students roll dice representing Mother Nature to travel through the water cycle.
- **Tasting, Tasting, 1, 2, 3** - Students do a blind tasting of tap, distilled and bottled water and discuss what makes water taste different. They also discuss the costs of the different types of water.
- **What's the Matter in the Water Industry** - An interactive presentation that discusses how solids, liquids and gasses are used in the water industry.
- **Where's the Water, Watson (Assembly)** - The mad scientist and Watson the flea take students on a journey to see different uses of water.
- **What Do You Know about H2O?** - A highly interactive show focusing on the science of indoor water conservation.

TVWD staff members also conduct youth outreach and education through an annual Kid's Calendar contest, science fair demonstrations/judging and tours of TVWD's demonstration garden. All of this activity directly reaches the District's youngest customers (tomorrow's ratepayers). Recommendations for changes/additions to the youth education program include the following:

- Stronger connections between the students being served and their parents at home who may be unaware of TVWD's school outreach. This could include inexpensive giveaway items that can be taken home or incentives/activities requiring parental signature to be returned to TVWD.
- New, updated classroom modules could include Water Jeopardy, Force/Motion, Filters, Build a Better Water Main or a Home Water Audit.
- Clean Water Services also conducts youth education throughout the area. TVWD could partner with CWS for joint classroom education that describes the complete water journey – into and out of the home.

- More sponsored field trips/buses could include the Joint Water Commission (JWC) treatment plant, capital projects – such as Ridgewood Pump station, or job shadowing such as group water quality sampling.

Customer Emergency Assistance Program: TVWD maintains a customer emergency assistance program to provide temporary financial assistance for customers unable to pay their water bills. The program is administered through Care to Share, a Beaverton-based non-profit organization. The program has been included in the District’s outreach efforts, but more could be done to highlight the program and its results in the community.

The upcoming Rate Advisory Committee (RAC) will be evaluating the District’s rate affordability and making policy recommendations to the Board. This may affect how Care to Share is organized and administered. This Strategic Communications Plan recommends waiting until after the RAC process is complete in early 2017 to make any substantive changes to how this important program is marketed.

TOOLS & TACTICS

Ongoing: Internal

*“Everyone talks about building a relationship with your customer.
I think you build one with your employees first.”*

~ Angela Ahrendts, Apple Vice President

TVWD’s closest, most informed stakeholders are the internal ones – District Board members and staff who conduct the business of the organization every day. TVWD employees and Board members can be utilized as ambassadors of the District’s brand. Many employees serve on the front lines and are the first point of contact with the community. They should be armed with key messages and be provided with communications tools, where appropriate, to further the District’s communications and relationships. Their feedback also can be important in shaping District messages and tactics. Additionally, TVWD employees and Board members can provide a foundation upon which to build the social media strategy since many personally utilize social media applications.

Ideas for expanded internal strategic communications include:

- A staff brown bag or all-employee meeting presentation of this document.
- Soliciting employee contributions (incentives?) to publications such as Paycheck News and the Thursday Memo. Converting the documents themselves from PDFs to e-newsletters.
- More employee communications training such as the recent media training.
- Actively include employee and Board involvement in the social media applications rollout.
- Communications Office staff presentations to each department staff meeting at least annually.
- Job shadowing with field operations and water quality staff to capture video/photo imagery and for social media content.
- Closer Communications Office coordination with Engineering on community outreach associated with capital improvement projects.
- Annual/ongoing Communications Office update at Board work sessions.

NEW TOOLS

“Social media replaces nothing but complements everything.”

~ Neal Schaffer, Social Media Consultant

This is an important point. Entering the world of social media and digital communications won't eliminate anything previously mentioned in this Strategic Communications Plan. Rather, online engagement will complement the messaging and customer outreach associated with all of the District's traditional communications approaches. Repurposing key messages and public information in new ways online is a cost-effective way to reach TVWD's customers more strategically and more frequently. The District's audience is changing with the times, so it's a smart move that we change along with them.

Social media offers enormous potential for TVWD. In essence, it's a new way of reaching and communicating with the District's customers and stakeholders.

- **Reaches audiences where they already are.** Seventy-eight percent of the American public have at least one social media account, with Facebook and Twitter the most popular (Statista, 2016). Leveraging social media within the District's communications strategy is simply accessing channels of information already favored by a large segment of the population.
- **TVWD can communicate every day.** This is a huge benefit over other media, as print advertising, newsletters, mailers, bill statements, etc. go out much less frequently, making it more difficult to get our messages out at the right time.
- **People who respond extend TVWD's reach.** The added benefit is that the people who react to TVWD's messages share this with their friends and in essence start communicating and advertising for the District. This can be powerful because it increases the reach of our message, and TVWD's followers become advocates of our message. Added to that, their friends may start reacting and thus increasing the power of TVWD's message exponentially.
- **Content sharing becomes much easier.** Sharing District news, photos, videos, etc. becomes much easier and, in turn, offers TVWD more reasons to develop such content in the first place.
- **Enhances constituent services.** Publicizing seasonal conservation messages or lesser-known District programs such as toilet rebates or Care to Share becomes much easier with more frequent, short messaging afforded by social media.

As TVWD embarks on a social media/digital engagement strategy, we must develop policies to mitigate against potential risks. Some things to consider:

- Issues associated with protection of privacy, quality of information and public perception.
- Make sure social media programs are directed toward producing tangible benefits.
- Consider how social media integrates with the District's core mission.
- Develop social media guidelines for staff, including for personal use.
- Consider how social media will factor into official record keeping, open meetings and public records requests.
- Use available Facebook tools such as news feed, algorithms, instant articles, security settings, comment policy and profanity filter.

- Maintain involvement in the SocialGov community and #GSMCON (annual social media communications conference specific to public agencies) to remain up-to-date on the latest social media applications, best practices, lessons learned and policy implications for the public sector.

This Strategic Communications Plan recommends the following social media additions to TVWD communications:

Facebook

Facebook is currently the most popular social media application. At a glance (Facebook, 2016):

- 198 million monthly active users in the U.S.
- 179 million monthly active on mobile
- 1 out of every 5 mobile minutes are spent on Facebook
- 100 million hours of video watched every day on Facebook
- TVWD partner organizations already using Facebook include Portland Water Bureau, Clean Water Services, Eugene Water and Electric Board, Washington County, and the cities of Beaverton, Hillsboro and Tigard.

TVWD currently has a Facebook account under the name “TVWD” that has no followers and is inactive. Upon approval of the use of social media, a Facebook use policy will be prepared, the account will be activated and an online following initiated with District customers, partners, media and employees.

Twitter

Twitter is currently the second most popular social media application. At a glance (Twitter, 2016):

- 65 million monthly active users in the U.S. (330 million worldwide)
- 80% of users are mobile
- 1 billion tweets every day
- Video growth on Twitter has increased 220% in the past year

TVWD currently has a Twitter account with “@twwaterdistrict” as the Twitter handle. The account has only 49 followers, has never issued a tweet and is essentially inactive. This plan recommends closing that account and establishing a new District Twitter account using the more easily identifiable handle “@TVWDNews”. Upon approval of this Strategic Communications Plan, a Twitter use policy will be prepared, the account will be activated and an online following initiated with the prior followers as well as District customers, partners, media and employees.

Nextdoor

Nextdoor is a social media application designed for neighborhood communications. It is a private social network but the developers maintain a platform specifically for free government agency use. At a glance (Nextdoor, 2016):

- 56% of all U.S. neighborhoods have launched Nextdoor
- All members are verified members of your community; nothing is anonymous
- Messages can be sent to one or many neighborhoods, service areas or the entire District
- Many public agencies are using Nextdoor for community engagement, emergency preparedness, public health and crime prevention

Nextdoor creates a trusted online environment where neighbors feel safe openly discussing issues of concern or interest in their community. Because joining, whether as a resident or public agency, requires verification, nothing can be anonymous. The application is designed to connect neighbors, not friends, therefore it offers perhaps the most grassroots outreach approach to available TVWD beyond door-to-door canvassing. Nextdoor can create a free online account for TVWD using the exact District boundaries simply from shape files provided to them. In fact, Nextdoor can create targeted, defined notification areas and as many as an agency wants. For example, TVWD could create a separate notification area for each pressure zone in addition to one for the entire District.

TVWD presently does not have an account with Nextdoor. This plan recommends contacting Nextdoor in coordination with District IT staff to determine the information needs to develop a customized TVWD account. If appropriate, and upon approval of this Strategic Communications Plan, a Nextdoor use policy will be prepared, an account will be activated and Nextdoor will be incorporated in the District social media outreach implementation.

Online Video and YouTube

Online video content is exploding. It is estimated that two-thirds of world mobile data traffic will be video by 2017. The District already has a YouTube channel, which is primarily used to post Tualatin Valley Community Television videos of Board meetings. It is easy to promote YouTube through the website, Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor.

As mentioned previously, video brings to life the hidden assets and untold stories of TVWD. Some videos may need to be professionally produced (the District recently secured the services of three professional videography firms under on-call master service agreements). However much can be done with a point and shoot camera and simple online editing applications. An iPhone 6 with an up-to-date operating system contains all the tools needed to shoot, edit, caption and upload simple yet compelling short videos to the District website and YouTube channel. The Communications Office recently purchased a digital camera that is capable of producing the next generation of digital 4K resolution. All that is needed is to invest a modest amount in some additional equipment and software and the District will have all the necessary tools to launch a credible visual communications program.

Suggestions for incorporating video into TVWD outreach and communications include:

- Creating videos about complicated subjects, capital projects and service upgrades
- Telling the stories of District staff using testimonials and “day in the life of” employee profiles; also to aid HR recruiting
- Cross-promoting WWSP outreach activities
- Demonstrating useful tips, conservation/water-saving activities and how to flush for lead in water
- Shedding additional light on hard to learn topics such as the District’s budget process or visually demonstrating how to use the new online payment system
- Promoting the District’s youth education program
- Preparing video news releases in addition to printed media releases
- Providing general b-roll for use by the television media
- Showcasing unique, interesting or fun stories associated with TVWD

MAKING IT HAPPEN

“Don’t mistake activity with achievement.”

~ John Wooden, Legendary UCLA Basketball Coach

There are many new ideas and approaches suggested in this draft Strategic Communications Plan. Some will come at additional cost to District operations in the form of one-time expenses for services rendered as well as ongoing staff resourcing. Once the Board and staff have had the opportunity to review and provide input to this plan, a work plan will be prepared that identifies communications priorities (for instance, the re-brand, if approved, may be one item to accelerate implementation), schedule, resource requirements and associated budget implications.

This work plan will be developed in July 2016 based on Board and staff feedback. The following schedule is assumed:

- July 5th Work Session: Introduction to the Draft Strategic Communications Plan
- Month of July: Staff feedback on Draft Strategic Communications Plan
- August 2nd Work Session: Draft Strategic Communications Plan Board Discussion and Comments
- August 17th Board Meeting: Revised Draft Strategic Communications Plan Adoption

Upon approval of this document, the Draft Strategic Communications Plan will be made Final and this section of the plan will be replaced with the work plan for implementation.

MEASURING THE EFFORTS

“We all need people who will give us feedback. It’s how we improve.”

~ Bill Gates, Microsoft Founder

Customer and stakeholder feedback is invaluable in informing the District’s messaging and shaping the overall approach to outreach and communications. TVWD’s primary formal feedback mechanism is a bi-annual, statistically-valid customer survey performed by DHM Research. The survey includes benchmarking questions on topics such as overall impressions of TVWD, satisfaction with rates, support for fluoridation and billing preferences. The next customer survey will be conducted in fall 2016.

Informal customer feedback is routinely collected from customer comments submitted through the website, phone calls, public comments at Board meetings and general impressions of customer concerns and issues provided by the District’s customer service team and field operations and maintenance crews.

Strategies for enhancing TVWD’s research and customer feedback include:

- Using algorithms such as Google analytics to collect data on the District’s website use and social media applications.
- Incorporating more focus group activity into District initiatives such as the upcoming rate study or 2017-2019 biennial budget process.
- Consider joining the Westside Voices online panel maintained by CWS and Washington County.
- Consider adopting the EWEB “Customer Research Panel” model which is a focus-group-like quarterly meeting of influential customers that provides feedback and advice on a variety of issues and initiatives, including their annual financials.
- Better promote and expand participation in TVWD’s annual Key Customer Breakfast.
- Institute more frequent and comprehensive internal employee surveys.
- Promote survey findings to internal and external audiences; explain how the research is being incorporated into District programs.
- Remain involved in shaping and understanding the research activities conducted by the WWSP, RWPC and other industry partner organizations.