



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** MCWD Operations and Planning Committee  
**From:** Kim LaBo  
**Date:** November 4, 2019  
**Re:** Strategic Communications-Insights Phase Reports

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### **Purpose:**

Operations and Program Committee (OPC) members will be briefed on stakeholder and outreach program insights developed from research conducted by District consultants and staff.

### **Background:**

As outlined in the District's Strategic Plan and external program audits, MCWD's outreach programming (traditionally referred to as education and communications programming) has historically had issues with a lack of clearly-defined priorities, diffuse work, and misalignment with other programs.

In the years since the outreach program was formed, and subsequently expanded, the Board of Managers has taken significant steps to focus the organization as a whole, memorializing a clear vision and prioritizing goals, and developing a two pronged organizational strategy. As articulated in the 2017 Strategic Alignment Plan, MCWD now carries out its mission by building high-impact capital projects and influencing policy to integrate land use and water planning.

### **Strategic Communications Overview:**

With clear organizational priorities in place, the District is now engaged in the process of re-building its Outreach program from the ground up to support these priorities. To develop a new, clear strategic framework for MCWD's outreach, the District is working through a process involving the following phases of work:

1. Discovery – review and synthesis of all relevant past information related to MCWD outreach (Complete)

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2. Research – completing qualitative information gathering for MCWD’s Tier 1 and 2 audiences, and the effectiveness of past programming (Complete)
3. Insights – developing a deeper understanding of what the research means in relation to MCWD’s future outreach needs (Underway)
4. Strategy – cultivating outreach options and direction that help the District accomplish its organizational project and policy objectives (Upcoming)
5. Implementation – confronting tradeoffs, setting priorities, and developing the operational plans needed to execute the selected strategy (Upcoming)

### **Strategic Communications – Insights Phase:**

For the insight phase work, information was gathered from:

- 35 interviews with key Tier 1 stakeholders (agency staff, policymakers, and developers)
- A survey of more than 350 interested members of the public
- In-depth focus groups with 19 interested members of the public
- Feedback from MCWD staff on the District’s existing programming and audience perceptions
- A detailed review of the effectiveness data available on the program’s current activities
- A review of the program’s history

Insights gathered from this work will form the basis of a comprehensive strategy to position MCWD’s outreach priorities, activities, and staffing to maximally support the District’s goals. Combined with the clear organizational direction memorialized in the 2017 Strategic Alignment Report, this information is intended to help the Board of Managers and MCWD staff understand the trade-offs and make the necessary decisions regarding where, and how, to focus the program’s work going forward.

### **November 7, 2019 Operations and Programs Committee:**

At the November 7, 2019 OPC meeting staff and consultants will brief the committee on the insights developed to date, and outline next steps in the process. The insights will help inform the District's future outreach needs and provide the foundation for the strategic planning process.

Additional questions can be directed to Kim LaBo [Klabo@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:Klabo@minnehahacreek.org) or 952-641-4507.

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