

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Advisory Committee

**Report of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Communications:
Draft Communications Plan and Further Recommendations**

September 17, 2018

Anne Morkill on Behalf of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Communications¹

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) Advisory Committee (AC) formed an Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Communications (Subcommittee) to address the various needs for communicating with the public and stakeholders about the work of the Authority. The Subcommittee held meetings on February 22nd and June 12th to share perspectives and explore options for developing and implementing a communications strategy to meet the following goals:

- **Educate the Public about the Authority’s Work and the Benefits of Restoration:** Amplify the message that “Restoration is Working” and provides benefits for people and wildlife. Highlight projects that are underway and what they are expected to achieve; demonstrate the benefits that Measure AA is providing to communities.
- **Show Accountability and Good Governance:** Expand awareness and ensure transparency about the Authority’s grant management and oversight structure. Show the voters that funds are being spent effectively and in conformance with legal requirements.
- **Build Awareness among Potential Grantees:** Let potential grantees know this funding source exists and will be available for at least 20 years. This provides time to build capacity among groups that are not yet experienced in grant management.
- **Educate Elected Officials about the Need for Additional Funds.** Keep a high profile among elected officials to foster understanding and support for future funding measures and appropriations.

Based on subcommittee discussions and input, a draft Communications Plan was drafted by Taylor Samuelson, Public Information Officer for the Authority, that outlines an approach to inform and involve the public and stakeholders as Measure AA taxes and funds from any future measures or authorizations are collected and awarded to restoration projects around the Bay. **The draft Communications Plan (Attachment 1) will be presented to the full AC for further input at the October 5, 2018 meeting.**

It is important to note that the successful implementation of the Communications Plan as presented will require additional resources (in both time and budget). The plan outlines available resources (as of FY18-19) and proposed roles and responsibilities for Authority staff and members of the AC, but frankly notes that some ideas for communication exceed current staff capacity. Therefore, **we recommend that the AC deliberate on whether and how members can commit their own time and/or that of their member organizations to assist in**

¹ The Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Communications included AC members Anne Morkill (lead), Erika Powell, Ameer Raval, Erika Castillo, Ana Maria Ruiz, Marina Psaros, Diane Ross-Leech, and Sarah Young; SFBRA staff Taylor Samuelson and Jessica Davenport, as well as Caroline Warner of the SFB Joint Venture, provided valuable support to the ad hoc subcommittee’s work.

implementing elements of the Communications Plan as envisioned under “Section X. Activities, Roles and Responsibilities.”

It also became clear during our discussions as a subcommittee that there is a desire and need for the Authority to more actively engage in community outreach, education, and technical assistance, particularly in underserved communities in the Bay Area that have suffered the disproportionate burden of environmental hazards². This aligns with the AC’s interest in equitably addressing environmental justice issues through targeted outreach and capacity building to empower economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs) to compete for Measure AA’s planning and implementation funding. Our subcommittee and staff believe that this level of engagement requires a thoughtful, sustained, and transformative effort to build relationships and trust, but it involves more strategies and resources than what is included in a Communications Plan. Exhibit A provides more detailed notes from our ad hoc subcommittee on this matter for consideration by the AC. **We support the staff proposal to develop a Community Engagement Program that results in long-term benefits for EDCs that will be presented by staff to the full AC for further input at the October 5th meeting.**

² See Measure AA Guidelines Definition for “Economically Disadvantaged Communities” (May 4, 2017).

Exhibit A. Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy

Background:

In the development of the Communications Plan for the Authority, it became clear outreach to the region's communities, particularly economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs), will be critical to Authority's ability to serve all Bay Area residents in a way that is inclusive and advances environmental justice.

This work requires thoughtful, sustained effort to build relationships and trust. The resources needed to develop and execute a strategy to achieve these aims, however, exceeds the current bandwidth of the Authority's staff. The Authority may wish to consider establishing a separate committee or outreach coordinator to orchestrate community engagement.

Goal:

Create productive, collaborative relationships between the Authority and the Bay Area's communities, particularly Economically Disadvantaged Communities (EDCs), to ensure that restoration projects are done with a comprehensive understanding of communities' needs and priorities, and to broaden the pool of funding applicants.

Tasks for the outreach coordinator role could include:

- Provide guidance on ways for community-based organizations in economically disadvantaged communities to partner with restoration groups and agencies.
- Provide guidance in community engagement to potential grantees who are not experienced in this aspect of restoration project planning and implementation.
- Promote opportunities for youth involvement, including volunteering, service learning, and work force development.
- Attendance at public and community meetings.

Potential Audiences:

- Community leaders and Community Based Organizations
- Education groups/resources, future voters
 - High schools
 - DAC schools
 - Guidance councilors
 - Service learning programs
 - Workforce development officers at schools
 - Restoration leadership academy programs, Green Teams, Redwood Academy, Bay Environmental Stewardship Training
 - Invite to report back to the board on experiential learning
- Tech Workers
 - Philanthropic giving
 - Art/innovative engagement
 - Service days

- Academia
 - Universities
 - Grad level work for restoration research
 - Partner with grantees on monitoring/results
 - Y-Plan, high school programs partnered with university programs, RBD model

Partner and Potential Channels, and Tactics

- Websites of partners, AC parent organizations and grantees
- Social media of partners, AC organizations and grantees
- Ethnic media campaign with African American press and non-English language press
- Short videos created by Authority
- E-Bulletin newsletter (piggyback on existing newsletters such as San Francisco Bay Joint Venture and/or create Authority newsletter)
- Print ads in local papers, e.g., East Bay Express
- Geotargeted online ads, e.g., Google Adwords
- Billboards
- Ads at Muni stations
- King Tides Initiative (website, online photo sharing by community members)
- Board, AC and project tours
- Events at Exploratorium
- Working with schools on Next Generation Science Standards

For further discussion

As the environmental justice work of the Authority takes shape, the Advisory Committee may want to consider:

- What resources members of the Advisory Committee can bring to bear on the community outreach task, in terms of staff time, funding, existing relationships and expertise.
- The resources required to fund a Community Outreach Coordinator or Committee and the tasks of that role.