



City of Wichita BNR Wastewater Treatment Project

Public Information Plan

June 24, 2021

Situational Analysis

The City of Wichita and its Department of Public Works & Utilities staff have been future-proofing the City's water utilities by engaging in a master planning process since 2016. Wichita's Integrated Water and Wastewater Master Plan was developed to prepare for projected changes in Wichita's population, problems caused by aging infrastructure, and treatment challenges posed by growth and/or stricter regulatory nutrient removal requirements anticipated through the year 2045.

Developed in collaboration with the City of Wichita Communications Team, the proposed Public Information Plan includes best practices and proven strategies to effectively communicate with impacted communities. By proactively communicating, the City of Wichita can be seen as a leader in addressing the City's long-term infrastructure needs in a manner that best serves Wichita's citizens and ratepayers.

Developing and successfully promoting the City's need for reinvestment in its Wastewater Program is critical to building support throughout the Wichita community.

Communications Goals for City BNR Wastewater Project

- Inform the general public about the improvements and importance for investing in the City of Wichita's wastewater utility.
- Ensure surrounding neighborhoods are aware of the ongoing work and the positive impact it will have in their community.



Audience Communication Matrix

AUDIENCE	PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION	PRIMARY TOPICS OF INTEREST
General Public	Aware and informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utility rate impacts ● Water quality improvements ● Capital investment ● Positive impacts to the environment
District Advisory Boards (DAB)	Informed and heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Odor control improvements ● Water quality improvements ● Utility rate impacts ● Aging infrastructure ● Sustainability ● Construction
District 3 Neighborhoods surrounding Plants 1 and 2	Informed and heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Odor control improvements ● Utility rate impacts ● Water quality improvements ● Aging infrastructure ● Sustainability ● Construction
Local News Media	Informed and equipped to report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Process updates ● Community impact ● Aging infrastructure ● Utility rate impacts ● Odor control improvements ● Water quality improvements ● Positive impacts to the environment
BNR Steering Committee	Informed and consulted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capital investment and financing ● Utility rate impacts ● Water quality improvements ● Odor control improvements ● Regulatory compliance ● Aging infrastructure ● Operations & maintenance ● Supplier diversity



City Council	Informed and consulted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Capital investment and financing● Odor control improvements● Utility rate impacts● Water quality improvements● Regulatory compliance● Aging infrastructure● Operations & maintenance● Supplier diversity● Positive impacts to the environment
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Preliminary Messaging

The below messaging is preliminary and will likely evolve as additional collaboration with project stakeholders is required to ensure relevancy during implementation.

Project Narrative

[It is important to establish that the City has taken a long view of improving and ensuring a safe water supply and reliable water reclamation for the communities it serves. The following messages and background can be utilized pending the situation and level of background needed to inform various audiences.]

Background/Establishing Messages

- **The City of Wichita has been developing an Integrated Water and Wastewater Master Plan** in conjunction with Burns & McDonnell to prepare for projected changes in Wichita’s population, problems caused by aging infrastructure, and treatment challenges posed by growth and/or stricter regulatory nutrient removal requirements anticipated through the year 2045.
- **The City is in early phase design for process improvements and plant investments to remove excess biological nutrients from wastewater discharging to the Arkansas River** to meet future regulatory requirements.
- **Construction of new upgraded treatment facilities for Plant 1 (located in Southeast Wichita) and Plant 2 (located in South Wichita) will begin as early as 2022 to allow enhanced treatment capability** to occur prior to future regulatory requirements going into effect at the end of 2027.

Overall Project Message

- (Longer version) Investing in Wichita’s wastewater treatment system **benefits the community and ratepayers, meets upcoming regulatory requirements, and helps future proof the City’s water infrastructure**, securing a reliable water supply for current and future generations.
- (Shorter version) Investing in Wichita’s wastewater treatment system helps secure a reliable water supply for current and future generations.



- (Additional message) Enhanced wastewater treatment will reduce odors from the facilities and improve water quality downstream of the plant, improving the environment and quality of life for Wichita residents.

Key Messages

With this investment in Wichita's wastewater program, our communities will benefit from:

1. Significant odor control improvements
2. Facility design that is environmentally friendly
3. Compliance with critical regulatory requirements
4. Advanced technology upgrades
5. Smart utilization of financial resources
6. Budget and project management to minimize ratepayer impact
7. Improved water quality in the Arkansas River

Supporting Points (These can be utilized as talking points, media facts, social media content, etc.)

Benefits the community and ratepayers

- Improved odor control for Wichita's Plant 1 and 2 will produce significant benefits for nearby residential and commercial developments.
- New treatment processes provide reliable and cost-effective treatment protecting the environment.
- Securing WIFIA and SRF financing allows the City of Wichita to finance this investment with historically low interest rates, minimizing ratepayer impact.
- The Project will include significant technology advancements that will bring new approaches to wastewater treatment and water quality improvements.
- The selected design and approach balances lifecycle costs with the overall value that will be provided to the City and its customers.
- The facility design will incorporate innovative technologies including cybersecurity measures and advanced treatment processes to reduce greenhouse gases and improve water quality discharging from the plant.

Meets upcoming regulatory requirements

- Investment in improving the City's wastewater facilities meets upcoming EPA/KDHE regulatory requirements expected in the City's 2027 discharge permit.
- This project will reinvest in aging infrastructure, providing enhanced treatment of the City's effluent flows to meet more stringent regulations.

Helps future proof the City's utility infrastructure



- The City of Wichita is responsible for providing drinking water and clean water services for approximately 500,000 people (nearly 17 percent of the Kansas population).
- The investment helps extend the functional life of Plants 1 and 2 and provides flexibility for future expansion, gray water and reuse possibilities.
- Upgrading Wichita's wastewater treatment facilities is part of the Integrated Water and Wastewater Master Plan, developed by the City of Wichita and its Department of Public Works & Utilities.

Primary Tactics for Public Information

Key City staff will partner with the project team to implement several specific tactics to ensure the public and stakeholders are informed about the project, to include the following:

- District Advisory Board Presentations
- Social Media Updates on the Project
- Media Tours of the BNR Sites
- Neighborhood Open House
- Steering Committee Meetings
- City Council Presentations and Updates

District Advisory Board Presentations

- **Key Audience(s):** District Advisory Board members
- **Stakeholders:** City Council members, community resource staff, project team members
- **Scale of Engagement:** Staff will present to District Advisory boards during the summer and fall of 2021, working with community resource staff members to schedule presentations and disseminate information to all six City district advisory boards
- **Support Materials Required:** Project presentation, talking points, fact sheet, Q&A
- **Tactic Reach:** Approximately 40 people per District Advisory Board meeting
- **Timeline:** Summer/Fall 2021

Social Media Updates

- **Key Audience(s):** General public
- **Stakeholders:** City Communications staff members, project team members
- **Scale of Engagement:** Project team will create content to provide to City communication staff for regular distribution across City's social media and digital platforms
- **Support Materials Required:** links, language, visuals (including infographics, photos, etc., to complement written content)
- **Tactic Reach:** Approximately 1500 people per organic social post
- **Timeline:** Ongoing throughout the project until construction is complete



Media Tours of BNR Sites

- **Key Audience(s):** Media, General public
- **Stakeholders:** City Communications staff members, project team members, media
- **Scale of Engagement:** Project team will work with City staff to create a media press conference opportunity wherein media is given a brief presentation regarding the project and then receives guided tours of the sites
- **Support Materials Required:** talking points for tour guide/facilitator, fact sheet, Q&A
- **Tactic Reach:** Approximately 20,000 residents
- **Timeline:** Fall 2021, with a second opportunity when construction is underway

Neighborhood Open House

- **Key Audience(s):** District 3 Neighborhood Groups
- **Additional Stakeholders:** City Communications staff members, project team members, community resource staff, District 3 Councilperson, District 3 District Advisory Board
- **Scale of Engagement:** Project team will work with City staff to create an open house at which key staff will present information to the impacted district, answer questions and receive feedback on the project
- **Support Materials Required:** presentation, talking points, fact sheet, Q&A
- **Tactic Reach:** Approximately 50 - 100 residents
- **Timeline:** Fall 2021

Steering Committee Meetings

- **Key Audience(s):** Steering Committee Members
- **Additional Stakeholders:** Project team members, City Communications staff members
- **Scale of Engagement:** Project team will present to Steering Committee to provide regular updates on project, answer questions and receive feedback on the project
- **Support Materials Required:** Project presentation, talking points, fact sheet, Q&A
- **Tactic Reach:** 7 committee members
- **Timeline:** Ongoing throughout project's duration

City Council Presentations and Meetings

- **Key Audience(s):** City Council Members
- **Additional Stakeholders:** General public, media, Project team, City Communications staff
- **Scale of Engagement:** Present project updates around key milestones during established City Council meetings
- **Support Materials Required:** Project presentation, talking points, fact sheet, Topical Q&A
- **Tactic Reach:** Mayor and City Council (halo reach includes general public reached through live streaming viewers, local news media)
- **Timeline:** Ongoing during project



Final materials to support each tactic are based on the specific needs and relevant topics at time of implementation.

Contextual Planning Notes

Project Goal

Develop and promote a communications strategy that clearly demonstrates the need for this important investment, maintains positive momentum, and positions the City of Wichita as a leader in the region and a world-class utility. Given that all the improvements are regulatory requirements for existing facilities, we are positioned to show proactive effort to comply and meet federal (EPA) and state (KDHE) standards.

Plan Considerations

As it stands, this plan contains the essential tactical approach. Due to the project's dynamic nature and scale, additional tactics may be considered for implementation, including the below:

- Project website containing information and updates related to the project
- Updates posted to City of Wichita website, including Wastewater landing page
- Virtual information events
- Stakeholder engagement
- Public education

Defining BNR for the general public

The current descriptor for the project - BNR or Biological Nutrient Removal - may not clearly communicate the purpose of the project to the general public due to the technical terminology. Clearly defining BNR so that the general public understands that it refers to the wastewater treatment facility improvements will be critical so as not to confuse or alienate audiences.