

North Transfer Station Support Services

Public Engagement and Communication Plan for Design
December 2012

Prepared for:

Seattle
 Public
Utilities

Prepared by:

 **EnviroIssues**

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Public Engagement and Communication Plan offers recommended community engagement, outreach, and communication strategies to keep key stakeholders, decision-makers, members of the media and the general public informed during the design phase of the North Transfer Station (NTS) project. The approaches outlined in this plan will be implemented by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and the consultant team. This plan will be used to disseminate community outreach project requirements to the project staff and sub consultants.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, HDR Engineering, Inc. was selected as the NTS Support Services consultant, with EnviroIssues as a subconsultant, to assist with stakeholder and community engagement, conceptual design, pre-design technical and analytical support for a Design/Build procurement process.

In late 2011, SPU announced a change to the procurement process and elected to use the General Contractor/Construction Manager (GC/CM) process with separate contracts for the facility designer and contractor.

In 2012, SPU hired CDM Smith as the design firm for the NTS. CDM Smith will be involved in the project community outreach by providing technical support and documentation.

Project Purpose and Need

Currently, about 300,000 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) are generated in the City of Seattle each year. The NTS primarily serves the northern portion of the city and is one of only two recycling and disposal transfer stations owned and operated by SPU. The NTS was built in the mid 1960s, is past the end of its useful life, and does not provide adequate square footage or circulation for current or future recycling, and MSW transfer operations.

SPU plans to demolish the current facility and build a new NTS at the existing location, 1350 North 34th Street, Seattle, Washington. SPU's interest is in developing a functional and cost-effective transfer station that addresses community concerns about present and future operations. The schedule of the project is currently phased with the design and build of a new South Transfer Station (STS) to ensure continuous solid waste services to the City of Seattle.

Public Engagement Background

In 2008, SPU formed a stakeholder group of station users and community members to provide input on the design of the NTS site and to ensure that the process was open and responsive to public needs and concerns. SPU committed to receiving and using the group's advice as a resource for making decisions and to report back how the group's advice was used in decision-making. Briefings to community councils and project fact sheets have also been utilized to gather input and share project information.

In July 2010, the Stakeholder Group (SHG) began the conceptual design process led by SPU, HDR and EnviroIssues. Over the course of eight conceptual design workshops, the SHG unanimously recommended a concept, titled [Concept C](#), to guide the replacement of the NTS.

Following their recommendation, the stakeholders had an in-depth discussion regarding amenities that would be associated with the vacation of Carr Place N between N 34th and N 35th Streets as part of the new station design. The group prioritized a list of possible amenities and requested an additional

community involvement process to further develop the conceptual design for the amenities. The SHG's process and recommendations are explained in the Stakeholder Group Recommendation Report.

In September 2011, SPU formed a "Green Group" stakeholder process to further develop the amenities around the transfer station. The group created a list of recommendations and design parameters for the amenities around the transfer station. Recommendations are summarized in a conceptual site layout titled [Twine with a Twist](#).

Moving into the design and construction stages of the project, it is vital to continue to keep the community involved in each step of the process. Based on community engagement to date, the following opportunities should be considered during the design of the project:

Opportunities

- Continue to work with station neighbors, NTS customers and operations, and community groups, and members of the public to ensure their recommendations are included in the design of the station.
- Continue to develop community awareness of the project and increase understanding about the need to improve the NTS.
- Continue to develop strong communication partnerships with external stakeholders, such as community blogs and organizations.
- Design and build a station that is accepted by the community and meets operational requirements.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to maximize the identified opportunities, this plan is designed around the following guiding principles:

- Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the project, opportunities, and challenges.
- Obtain key stakeholder, station user and public feedback on development of the design.
- Work with key stakeholders, station users and the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and ideas are consistently understood and considered.
- Develop outreach strategies to identify and engage traditionally under-represented communities as necessary.

KEY PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

To ensure that project communications are consistent and efficient, coordination between SPU, HDR, CDM Smith and EnviroIssues will be of critical importance.

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KEY MESSAGES

Clear and simple messages are important for all communications with the public. Overarching messages that summarize important aspects of an effort are often called key messages and help to provide a context and emphasize the need for and benefits of a project. Current key messages include:

The NTS is past the end of its useful life. The station was built in the mid 1960s, and does not provide adequate space or circulation for current or future solid waste disposal, recycling, and MSW transfer operations.

SPU is striving for a “zero waste” future. In order to achieve this goal, SPU must build a new station that better supports associated recycling and diversion activities.

SPU is committed to following through on its commitments to the community. SPU will use the GC/CM process for the NTS, and has worked closely with neighbors, community members and station users to develop design parameters that reflect community values in the GC/CM contract documents. SPU will continue to work with the community to ensure that the parameters are met throughout the design.

SPU is committed to a fair and open process. SPU will work with neighbors, station users, and the public to ensure that concerns and ideas are considered in the design of the station and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions.

KEY AUDIENCES

Initial key audiences have been identified. This list will be updated as the project continues. Audiences will receive project updates and engagement opportunities through the various outreach tools outlined in this plan. Tools will vary for each audience. Key audience groups (listed in alphabetical order) include, but are not limited to:

- General public
- Immediate NTS neighbors and local residential community
- Internal SPU and other City stakeholders
- Local agency stakeholders
- Local business community
 - Fremont and Wallingford chambers of commerce
 - Businesses not affiliated with a chamber
- Local elected officials and staff
- Media, including neighborhood blogs
- Neighborhood and community groups
 - Community councils (including Wallingford Community Council [WCC] and Fremont Neighborhood Council [FNC]), schools, places of worship, etc.
- NTS customers - residential and commercial
- NTS Stakeholder Group and Green Group members
- SPU customers
- Traditionally under-represented and limited-English proficiency populations

A list of specific project stakeholders and contact information will continue to be updated throughout the project.

METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

Wallingford Community Council

During the design of the project, SPU and WCC will engage in meetings to report on key milestones and the general progress of the project. SPU has made specific commitments to the WCC, and will be keeping the WCC informed on the achievement of these commitments throughout the design and construction of the NTS. Methods and activities to engage the WCC include:

Meetings

SPU has agreed to meet with the WCC, face to face, twice per year to review the status of the project and of the agreement and to discuss any concerns. These meetings may be either at regularly scheduled WCC monthly board meetings, or at other occasions or venues, as chosen by the WCC.

The tentative meeting schedule and objectives are listed below.

Objective: Maintain communication with WCC on the progress of the project.

Likely audiences: Participants in these meetings will be the choice of the WCC, though the WCC will give reasonable notice to SPU of the meeting time and place and will give reasonable consideration to the availability of SPU's preferred representatives.

Timing: Tentative meeting schedule – 2nd quarter (2Q) and 4Q 2013; 2Q and 4Q 2014

Key Interested Stakeholders

While the NTS SHG has completed its formal work, members of the group continue to remain highly interested and engaged with the project. SPU will engage interested members of the SHG along with other key stakeholders, informing them of progress, and consulting them at key milestones of the project. Key objectives will be to demonstrate that SHG recommendations are being met in the design of the station and that the process is open and considerate of public needs and concerns. Methods and activities to engage key stakeholders include:

Sounding Board Meetings

During the design of the project, three project update meetings (with an additional two scoped to be held as needed) will be held to brief the SHG and other interested community members on the design progress at key milestones (30%, 60%, and 90% design). At each meeting design progress will be shared, and opportunities for additional community influence (e.g. exterior colors, landscaping palettes, etc.) will be identified and discussed. While SHG members will be specifically invited to the meetings, the larger community is also welcome to participate in these sounding board meetings and will have equal opportunity to provide feedback during planned or upcoming public engagement activities.

Meetings are open to the public and will be publicized using SPU's project website, the City of Seattle events calendar, and community blogs, banners on site, and postcards.

The tentative meeting schedule and objectives are listed below.

Objective: Provide a consistent, fair, and collaborative forum between SPU, key interested stakeholders, the community, and the consultant team.

Likely audiences: NTS SHG, Green Group, WCC and FNC, additional key stakeholders, internal SPU and City stakeholders, local business and residential community.

Timing: Meetings are tentatively scheduled as follows:

Summer 2013 – Design Meeting #1: anticipated to occur at the 30-percent design level. The meeting will focus on buildings, roads, site grading and preliminary architectural elements.

Fall 2013 – Design Meeting #2: anticipated to occur at the 60-percent design level. The meeting will focus on further development of architectural design.

Spring 2014 – Design Meeting #3: anticipated to occur at the 90-percent design level. The meeting will focus on architectural elements. It will also focus on upcoming construction – impacts, community concerns, etc.

Additional design meetings: will be held as needed if SPU determined to be beneficial to the project.

Communication between workshops

Between meetings, well-timed communications with key stakeholders will be vital to build trust and maintain momentum of the group's work. In general, stakeholders should receive meeting summaries within two weeks of the previous meeting, and advance notification of schedule, agenda, and materials for the next meeting.

Objective: Build and maintain momentum of the collaboration between SPU and the stakeholders; strengthen stakeholder trust in SPU and the implementation process.

Likely audiences: NTS SHG, Green Group, WCC and FNC, additional key stakeholders, internal SPU and City stakeholders, local business and residential community.

Timing: Tentative meeting schedule is above.

General Public

A variety of outreach tools and activities, both traditional and technology-based, will be used to reach the audiences outlined earlier in this plan. Using qualitative input and quantitative analytics over time, communication tools can be tailored to maximize effectiveness. A detailed list (in alphabetical order) is provided below.

Community briefings

Particular community groups will benefit from coordination and project updates through in-person briefings. Briefings will also identify the best ways to communicate with those stakeholders and will be led by SPU and supported by HDR/EnviroIssues and the design team. Briefings will be offered to the WCC and the FNC.

Objective: Engage interested and concerned community members to address concerns, share project information, and establish continued relationships.

Likely audiences: Neighborhood, business, community groups.

Timing: Briefings will be conducted at key project milestones, tentatively planned following meeting #s 1, 2, and 3

Website updates

The existing NTS website will be updated regularly to ensure easy access to current project information. The website will include clear engagement opportunities, project updates, and contact information. The web address and other project contact information will be listed on all NTS project information materials. The City of Seattle's events calendar will also be used to provide notice of upcoming design meeting and community briefings.

Objective: Provide convenient access to overall project information, resources and ways to stay informed and engaged.

Likely audiences: All audiences.

Timing: Website updates will occur between each design meeting to share summaries, provide notice of and materials for upcoming meetings, and inform the public of other engagement opportunities. Other website updates could be posted as needed depending on project activities.

North Transfer Station Users

Station users will be impacted by the transfer station rebuild both during the period of closure and by signage, usage instructions and site layout once the project is completed. Station users will be informed and offered the same opportunities to engage in the design process as the General Public. The NTS has a multi-ethnic customer base. Tools to inform and consult with station users will include the following:

Temporary signage and banners at the transfer station

Signage will inform station users of milestones and key meetings. Signage will be designed to use graphics to assist limited English-proficiency users with receiving the information.

Flyers to be handed out at the scale house

Flyers will inform station users of opportunities to participate in design meetings, direct station users to the project website, and encourage input at key milestones. Flyers will be translated into Tier 1 languages (Spanish, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Somali).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

A general timeline of public engagement activities is provided below. The methods and activities outlined in this plan will be utilized to best communicate with key audiences throughout the duration of the project. The schedule will be updated as the project progresses and will act as a record of activities.

