

Introduction

This proposal identifies what can be done with the existing public outreach budget in order to get the most “bang for the buck” in our efforts to inform the public about the next round of public meetings, currently scheduled for March/April 2011. It also identifies the tasks that would need to be performed by others to ensure robust and effective series of public meetings are promoted, conducted, and reported. In summary we recommend the following:

Existing Budget Tasks

The existing public outreach budget is: \$10,500

Expanded print advertising

We recommend expanding paid media outreach to include more and larger advertisements (print and online); this includes two black and white half page advertisements in The Chronicle, two black and white half page advertisements in the Daily World, and one smaller black and white advertisement in The Olympian. Advertisements will run approximately a week before and two days before the public meetings. The proposed budget includes our time needed to produce and distribute the advertisements.

Proposed budget: \$4,500

Radio Advertising and PSAs

We recommend producing and purchasing 30 second radio spots from the six most listened to stations in the three-county area three times a week for two weeks during drive times. We will also request PSAs at these and an expanded list of stations (PSAs are free but here will be some additional labor involved in placing the PSAs). The proposed budget includes our time producing and coordinating the advertisements and PSA's. FA members should consider recording the advertisements to provide a recognizable “face” to the spots.

Proposed budget: \$3,000

Pre-Public Meetings Logistical and Materials Support

We recommend that we provide logistical and materials support which includes: Scheduling the public meetings; assistance with developing meeting materials such as handouts, presentations, comment forms (we assume FCS Group will develop the presentation and we will review and provide comments); drafting press releases (we assume County staff will distribute press releases).

Proposed budget: \$3,000

TOTAL: \$10,500

Tasks Performed by Others

Public meeting staffing and reporting

With the remaining budget allocated to advertising, the public meetings will need to have one or more staff to assist with meeting set up, sign-in table duties, and recording of public comments. Someone will also need to write the meeting reports. Additional resources will be needed for sound systems, meeting refreshments, and printing all materials for the public meetings.

Increased postcard mailing

While there was not agreement on the effectiveness of this method we heard a number of complaints from the public that they did not get anything in the mail. While it is unreasonable to mail a postcard to everyone in the basin it is reasonable to do a mailing to those most affected by flooding (businesses and residences within the floodplain). Thurston County has provided such as list; Lewis and Grays Harbor (and potentially cities within those counties) will need to furnish similar lists. Our recommendation is to do a larger mailing to ensure that we cover all bases. If the FA decides they want to go this route we will redesign and improve the content of the postcard to make it more eye-catching. The budget assumes a mailing of 15,000 postcards.

Earned Coverage

The FA can earn free coverage by approaching editors/editorial boards and by writing Op-Ed articles to “tell their story”. The FA will need to agree to a spokesperson(s) and develop and agree to talking points. To facilitate this process in an effective and timely manner, we recommend that we develop talking points to submit to the FA or review and approval and that we draft Op-Ed pieces (based on the agreed upon talking points) for review and approval by the FA Chair. The FA spokesperson(s) will meet with editorial boards.

Outreach to interest groups

Most public meetings attract groups and individuals who are opposed to the project, plan, or policy being proposed. The FA can broaden the range of interests represented at the public meetings by targeting individuals and organizations that are likely to see benefits from, and be supportive of, a flood district. We recommend that the FA augment the more cursory outreach to all organizations and take a more personal role in doing this targeted outreach.