

**CCC Sustainability Exchange  
April 19, 2017, 10:00-11:30 am  
30 Muir Road, Martinez, CA**

**MINUTES**

**Desired results from this meeting:**

- Learn more about effectively communicating about sustainability (and other!) topics
- Build out ideas for what the Sustainability Exchange should focus on
- Learn from colleagues across the County
- Identify host for July meeting

**Notes:**

Introductions.

As participants introduced themselves, they also shared their most pressing communication challenge, which are listed in Attachment A.

Presentation: Communicating Effectively on Sustainability. Betsy Burkhart, Director, Office of Communications and Media, Contra Costa County.

Ms. Burkhart presented information on how to develop effective messages and reach diverse audiences. She emphasized the importance of owning the narrative. She suggested the Sustainability Exchange develop a communications plan for Countywide communication on sustainability, continue sharing information, and create opportunities for messaging. Ms. Burkhart's presentation is attached.

Small Group Networking and Collaboration

Meeting participants broke into small groups focused on the following issues:

- Climate Action Plan Implementation
- Legislation
- Communication
- Grants and Collaboration Opportunities

Summaries of the small group discussions are in Attachment B.

Open Forum

Meeting participants shared ideas, current initiatives, upcoming opportunities. These are listed in Attachment C.

Next steps, completing our "exit ticket" comments, host for next meeting (July).

The City of Concord will host the July meeting. We are still looking for a standing date/time that will accommodate all who are interested.

The exit ticket comments are provided in Attachment D.

Adjourn

## Attachment A: Communication Challenges

- Engaging Colleagues
- Outreach to businesses and consumers
- Getting anyone! involved in sustainability conversations
- Getting small cities to the table
- Getting people to attend a meeting
- Sending out TOO much information
- Creating value for customers
- Informing business and residents of SERVICES
- Helping residents understand pesticide issues
- Communicating to people who disagree
- Unifying sustainability efforts
- Emphasizing water conservation without DROUGHT
- Convincing close contacts to conserve resources
- Educating department on conservation and right-sizing fleet
- Finding relevant information for newsletter – getting people to read it!
- Being “silo-ed” in department.
- Communicating the difference between storm water and waste water
- Convincing departments to consider sustainability in purchasing
- Integrating sustainability in everyday actions
- Conveying sustainability to budget-driven audience
- Communicating accurately sustainability initiatives in General Plan to public
- Buy-in from ALL diverse communities in Contra Costa County
- Explaining sustainability changes in building code to construction community
- Work across silos – multi-goal initiatives
- Communicating financial value of projects
- Finding \$\$ for communication efforts

## Attachment B: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### Communications

Note: There really wasn't enough time to discuss all 4 topics or to discuss the ones we did in any depth.

1. Current communication priorities
  - a. Reaching businesses and residents—how do you get to non-believers? How do we engage those that need a little more push to do the right thing?
  - b. Collaboration with other County Departments—how to make sure what you're doing is not negatively affecting other departments/other programs; it takes time and effort to coordinate with other people; where do we start?
  - c. How do we encourage civic engagement? How do we get people to care with all the other cares in their lives?
  - d. We need to align messages with the overarching goals of the Exchange.
  - e. We need a business case for sustainability (Chris Dundon, Contra Costa Water District, is working on a business case for water conservation).
  - f. We need to listen to our audience and understand what is important to them so we can tailor our messages.
  - g. We need to find allies who really know what they're talking about.
  - h. Behavior change is what we really need to be looking at if we want to make a difference. This is a much larger topic and much more difficult to achieve.
2. Identifying where we have a common focus (note: in the short time we had, we only talked about pesticide issues and water-wise gardening)
  - a. Contra Costa Water is doing water-wise gardening workshops.
  - b. County Department of Conservation and Development is doing composting workshops and talks about less toxic alternatives to pesticides.
  - c. The CalTrans "Protect Every Drop" campaign to protect stormwater was mentioned. (Interesting that most hadn't heard of the campaign)
  - d. Julie Wajdowicz (Antioch) has focus group info from before the beginning of the "Pesticides Linger" campaign.
3. Resources
  - a. Tanya Drlik offered some notes on behavior change. See attachment E.
  - b. We didn't have time to talk much about that or anything else on this topic.
4. Follow up
  - a. Using Google docs was suggested to keep track of the campaigns that are happening or scheduled.
  - b. Having a Google calendar of events so people can publicize events/workshops that other people are doing
  - c. Research case studies of behavior change that has worked from other organizations and present to the group. Look for people who have already successfully done what we want to do.

## **Grants and Collaboration**

Electric vehicle charging stations – think beyond the city/county level; bring in the private sector.

Financing green infrastructure and integrating it into complete streets. Think about projects that achieve multiple objectives. There is a backlog of projects for which jurisdictions would like to integrate sustainability features, however they have limited capacity.

Challenge of getting others to proceed with sustainability.

Important to show the benefits of a grant.

Sometimes may need top-down direction to pursue a grant. Grants can create incentives to partner with non-profit groups, and take stress off the project lead.

Long-range plans, for example for electric vehicle charging stations or bicycle/pedestrian access, can be implemented with grant funds.

Group members see opportunities to work together and share costs. The group discussed potentially holding a scoping session for a given topic, bringing the community together to take inventory of the status of the topic.

Can we develop or access a toolkit of different funding sources. And, how do we share information. Perhaps we should let people self-identify their roles and interests.

Cities do not have grant writers. A “scarcity mentality” in local government maintains the status quo. We may want to think about how to link project eligibility to the person writing the grant.

Perhaps we should consider as a group hiring a consultant?

We would benefit from tools to help us identify projects and build a framework for partnerships. One person would like to see joint online, interactive watershed maps.

## **Legislation**

Recommend changes, legislation that will move us out of silos. Folks are tracking different legislation. We might consider asking lead staff for various legislative committees to come talk with us.

## **Climate Action Plan**

The group focused mainly on electric vehicle and fleet issues.

## Attachment C: OPEN FORUM

- Used oil campaign
- Collaborative success!
- SunShares upcoming open season. Discounted solar and electric vehicles. Webinar on April 24.
- San Pablo Grid Alternatives program – a state-funded program that provides free solar panels for low-income homes. Also welcomes volunteers.
- The County is interested in developing a Master Plan for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, with the goal of a network of charging sites across the County. Please let Jody London know if you're interested in participating.
- May 7 – Bring Back the Natives garden tour.
- Idea of forming a City-County-Nongovernmental organization consortium.
- CivicSpark fellowship program provides smart, capable fellows at low cost. This can be facilitated through the East Bay Energy Watch.
- County fleet is looking to purchase more electric vehicles. Also investigating a car share model akin to ZipCar or Local Motion.
- Suggestion for an electric vehicle fleet showcase for municipal procurement staff in Contra Costa County. Need purchasing information.
- Solar savings – idea to interview city/county/special district employees on their experiences with rooftop solar, native plant landscaping, other sustainability initiatives
- Central website for the Sustainability Exchange. Consider model of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network. The County's sustainability website is a blank slate. *Note: After the meeting, the Contra Costa Public Managers' Association offered the use of Basecamp for the Sustainability Exchange. We are hopeful this will be a good solution for communication between Sustainability Exchange members.*

# Exit Ticket: Sustainability Exchange

April 19, 2017

Name (optional):

What was most significant about our work today....	What I personally enjoyed about today...	I have some concerns about or feel we did not fully address ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging we need a unified message</li> <li>• Learning how to communicate effectively</li> <li>• Making connections</li> <li>• Exciting to get to know the folks working on enviro/sustainability issues</li> <li>• Sharing ideas, bringing issues forward, networking, sharing resources and having a forum</li> <li>• Learning about different sustainability initiatives of the cities and County</li> <li>• Getting others' ideas and hearing about their experiences in their city/community</li> <li>• Networking, hearing common struggle is "communication"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting everyone that wants to further sustainability efforts</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Making connections</li> <li>• Communication small groups</li> <li>• Meet new contacts and folks working on these issues</li> <li>• Learning about the issues that concern and are current</li> <li>• Listening to other government programs</li> <li>• Meeting with staff from other cities and learning about their challenges</li> <li>• I enjoyed the discussion group and exchanging ideas. Open forum was also great for information on programs throughout communities</li> <li>• Hearing from diverse group of people who each focus on different areas and how to integrate and work together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actionable things that I could/should do today</li> <li>• Overwhelming audience with information</li> <li>• Time is an issue and getting people to come</li> <li>• We need to work toward the objective of the group</li> <li>• As we move through joint projects, we have to ensure we are clearly delivering \$ value to cities and the County</li> <li>• Tools for sharing resources and capacity weren't adequately explored</li> </ul>
The way that I most want to contribute to the Sustainability Exchange moving forward...	Anything else...	Best meeting days/times... (circle all that can work; still looking for that perfect day/time!)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further explore and connect college heads with area partners</li> <li>• Sharing information, collaborate with other departments</li> <li>• Keep attending</li> <li>• Develop avenues to share marketing. Make others aware of our department services</li> <li>• I'm open minded. I have professional experience in comms, report writing and data analysis</li> <li>• Hosting a meeting in July</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exciting to see CCC get involved in more sustainability activity</li> </ul>	<p>Monday            am/pm</p> <p>Tuesday            am/pm</p> <p>Wednesday            am/pm</p> <p>Thursday            am/pm</p> <p>Friday            am/pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anytime</li> <li>• Tue, Wed Thurs-Anytime-4</li> <li>• Wednesday-AM</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central place for info and grants</li> <li>• Helping to develop tools for partnerships between agencies and NGO's to accomplish sustainability goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate, listen</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tues and Thurs-Anytime</li> <li>• Mon, Tue, Wed, Thurs- AM</li> <li>• Mon-1-4, Tue, Wed, Thurs.-10-4:30, Fri-Anytime</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback on facilitation and organization of the session: appreciations, suggestions going forward</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wonderful location, meeting on time</li> <li>• Would like to see metrics on sustainability goals Note: CAP includes metrics</li> <li>• Thank you Jody and Deidre for organizing meeting. Jody, thank you for baking.</li> <li>• My small group leader didn't know much about Climate Action Plan because his topic shifted as last minute, so didn't spend much time on it other than compare</li> <li>• Thank you!</li> </ul>		

## ATTACHMENT E: Principles of Behavior Change

from “Beyond Brochures: Strategies for Increasing Program Effectiveness”  
EPA sponsored workshop in Oakland, CA, November 10, 1999

1. Behavior change can take a long time—much more than just 1 or 2 years.
2. Information alone is unlikely to change people’s behavior.
3. Small commitments can lead to bigger ones.
  - a. Individuals who agree to small requests (wear a button, sign a pledge, put up a sign) are more likely to agree to subsequent larger requests.
  - b. It won’t work if people feel pressured to commit.
4. Changing attitudes may not change behavior.
  - a. There is no simple or direct relationship between attitudes and behavior.
5. Feedback helps maintain behavior change.
  - a. If there is a good result, find a way to let participants know.
  - b. Comparative or social feedback appears to be especially helpful. For example, telling people how well they are doing on energy savings compared to their neighbors.
6. People listen to those they trust.
  - a. Neighborhood leaders have successfully helped change behavior around sanitation and pest management in low income housing.
  - b. A Colorado Pollution Prevention Partnership found that small businesses preferred to receive pollution prevention info from suppliers and other companies rather than government.
7. Early adopters can influence other people and serve as role models. These people typically have large social networks and can influence friends, colleagues, and co-workers, not necessarily in their own geographical region.
  - a. It is useful to look at how well the behavior change is accepted by the population. If it is brand new, look to concentrate on early adopters. If the proposed change has been around for awhile and adopted by some individuals, use them to move it forward into less receptive portions of the audience.
8. How information is presented is important. <http://www.cccleanwater.org/library/>
  - a. Use vivid, emotional language relating to something the audience cares about. (You need to understand what they care about and what motivates them.)
  - b. Make specific recommendations about how to change behavior. Prioritize those recommendations into a list of most to least impact.
  - c. A story can be more effective than a set of abstract instructions or information. For example, energy auditors got better results when, in addition to describing average cost-benefit ratios, they also told the success story of a “superconserver” who saved more energy and money than the average. This provided tangible and dramatic evidence.

A thought on evaluating your program: the more narrowly you define your project and the changes sought, the better you’ll be able to document the results.

Resources:

Doug McKenzie-More and community-based social marketing

<http://www.cbsm.com/public/world.lasso>

<http://www.toolsofchange.com/en/programs/community-based-social-marketing/>

Contra Costa Clean Water Program PowerPoints on behavior change

<http://www.cccleanwater.org/library/page/3/>

# Communicating Effectively on Sustainability

*Betsy Burkhart  
Communication and Media Director  
Contra Costa County  
April 19, 2017*

# Messaging 101

- What's our message?
- Who are our audiences?
- How are we going to tell them?

# What's our message?



# Who are our audiences?

- Broad buckets:
  - The believers
  - The non-believers
- Internal Audiences
- External Audiences

# Believers and Non-Believers

- How much time to devote to preaching to the choir?
  - Important to keep them ( and us!) involved
  - Ambassadors for our talking points and key messages
  - BS Detectors and Rumor Control
- Focusing on those who aren't on the team:
  - Requires a strategic communication plan
  - Realistic goals and deliverables
  - Measure, measure, measure

# Internal Audiences

- County workforce, or your own agency/city/organization workforce
- Elected officials and their staff members
- Look around you – your team

# External Audiences

- Media
- Stakeholder groups
- Contractors and consultants
- Constituents/the Public

# How will we tell them?

- Website (with subscription services/interactive features)
- Public Meetings and Public Events
- Media Outreach
  - Traditional media
  - Social media
- News Releases
- Media Events

# Be ready to jump in

- Always looking for an opportunity
  - Local angle to a news story elsewhere?
  - Partner with each other for events?
  - Requires us to be prepared
- What can we have ready in advance?
- Always be ready to tell our story

# What happens when we don't tell our own story?



Someone else will; we just lose the chance to shape it. Once rumors are repeated enough, they're presumed to be facts. Alternative facts seem to be growing on trees....

# Next Steps

- Communication plan
- Continued information sharing
- Create opportunities

# Parting Shots and Questions?



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