



DATE: September 17, 2012
TO: Water Utility Board
FROM: Tom Heikkinen, Water Utility General Manager
SUBJECT: East Side Water Supply Project Public Participation Advisory

Following the completion of the East Side Water Supply (ESWS) planning study, the project's public participation process (P3) facilitators Bert Stitt and Mark Stevens authored a Public Participation Advisory and presented it to the board on March 27, 2012. The utility is indebted to Messrs. Stitt and Stevens for their skillful facilitation of the P3 aspects of ESWS, and for their thoughtful reflections and recommendations offered in the advisory.

The utility staff response for the board's consideration follows. The four priority recommendations are:

1. Establish a Standing CAP for consultation and advice on the initial development and funding of water utility projects.

Response: Representing the interests of the residents of Madison in matters concerning the Water Utility is the primary purpose of the Water Board. The board policy "Treatment of Consumers" (EL-2A), paragraph 3, states that staff shall "inform and educate consumers and customers about water and water utility services, events, research, or developments (like construction)." The methods by which the board chooses to link with Madison residents concerning their desires for meaningful participation in utility projects is entirely up to the board. A Standing Citizens Advisory Panel is one such method. The costs in terms of staff time to educate and support Standing CAP meetings should be weighed against the benefits to the board in aiding its decision making process.

2. Work with that CAP to revise the SOP for Public Participation using the revisions suggested in "Attachment 1_Standard SOP w-edits" as a starting point.

Response: Staff agrees that the SOP needs to be revised and improved. Staff will prepare a draft revision using the suggested edits as a starting point. The scope of the revised SOP should be expanded to cover certain types of projects beyond traditional engineering projects which are likely to generate significant public interest. Examples would include smart metering and conservation programs. The SOP should also contain guidelines for setting and managing reasonable project-specific P3 budgets. A public hearing before the board to receive input on the draft revision will ensure that the end product is the result of informed deliberation.

3. Update the Madison Water Utility Web site to make it more graceful, engaging, and reliable in its capacity to inform and interact with the public.

Response: Staff agrees that this is an important element in an improved public participation program. The Public Information Officer has been assigned lead responsibility for this effort.

4. Provide Madison Water Utility staff, CAP members, consultants and members of the public with an understanding of basic community and institutional intersections and tools that will help them navigate those intersections for smoother flow of project processes.

Response: MWU staff received this training at the outset of the ESWS project. The P3 Advisory authors did an excellent job and the session was well received. A decision to train each project-specific CAP on these principles should be made on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the project's P3 budget, group dynamics, and the project-specific context.