




## MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD  
GENERAL MANAGER'S DIVISION

*Rely on us.*

TO: Commissioners Menegat, Simpson, Lanning, Farmer, Brown  
FROM: Ken Beeson   
DATE: December 12, 2007  
SUBJECT: Roosevelt Building Project Update

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### ***Issue Statement.***

This memo provides about update on meetings and key dates related to Board and City Council consideration of the Roosevelt Project financing.

### ***Discussion.***

There have been two meetings added in the near term to the Roosevelt project schedule related to the financing authorization scheduled for Board action on February 5 and City Council action on February 25.

*Public Briefing.* Staff will conduct a public briefing on the project on Thursday, January 17. Staff will host the session from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the North Building Training Center. The session will be informal and will give the interested public a chance to review the project information, including plans for the site and buildings, development schedule, estimated construction costs, and estimated rate impacts. Staff will provide a brief presentation at 6 p.m. The project architects will be in attendance.

Although we conducted a similar session on November 20, staff believes it is important to conduct one more public briefing in advance of the project financing decisions in February. We are also planning to conduct another neighborhood meeting on the project in the spring, after the financing decisions have been made and once we are ready to start construction.

An updated "Communications Plan for the Roosevelt Operations Center" is attached.

*City Council Work Session.* In working with City staff on the Council's February 25 consideration of the project financing request, they asked that we attend the February 13 Council work session at noon to review the Roosevelt project. We are currently the second of two items on that meeting agenda and will have 45 minutes allotted for our review. The current plan is for me to provide a 15 minute review of the project and the financing request, and then leave 30 minutes for questions from Council members.

The following list of significant meetings, decision points and milestones is provided for your information:

December 20 – Building Advisory Team Meeting  
January 8 – Project status update to Board, Council

January 17 – Public Briefing on Roosevelt Project  
January 28 – Roosevelt Project financing resolution and recommendation sent to Board  
February 5 – Board action on project financing  
February 6 – Roosevelt Project financing resolution and recommendation sent to Council  
February 13 – Council work session to review project (no action)  
February 25 – Council action on project financing

*Project cost estimate.* Work to prepare the project estimate for use in the financing is under way. I expect to have an initial draft of that estimate by end of December and a refined set of numbers ready to share with staff and the Board by the middle of January. As I advised the Board on November 20, that estimate is expected to be within the \$83.5 million project budget approved by the Board last July.

I am also developing an overview of the various costs associated with the Roosevelt project and downtown planning work since 2005 (preliminary design, site acquisition, final project budget). This information will describe use of the \$8 million 2006 bond issue (what it has been spent on and how much is left for use on the final project development) and also will provide detailed support for the financing request we will bring the Board and Council in February. This will be included with the background material provided to the Board in advance of the February 5 Board meeting.

***Requested Action.***

There is no requested action. Please call me if you have any questions or if you need additional information.

Attachment

# **Communications Plan for the Roosevelt Operations Center**



Prepared by: Lance Robertson,  
External Communications Coordinator  
Public Affairs  
Date updated: Dec. 11, 2007

## Purpose of the plan

This communications plan serves as a guide for informing the public about plans to finance and construct a new electric and water operations facility in west Eugene.

## Objectives

The plan has several objectives, which may vary according to the audience being addressed. The following objectives apply to the general public and to all customers:

- Explain the need for EWEB to build new field operations facilities, making the existing riverfront site available for a more appropriate use by the community.
- Keep audiences informed about timely decision points in the financing and construction of the Roosevelt Operations Center, as well as any opportunities for public input and comment.
- Gain public acceptance of the need to build new facilities.
- Inform the public of efforts to incorporate "green" building design concepts and standards in the new facility.
- Gain public acceptance of the need to increase electric and/or water rates to finance construction of a new operations center.
- Explain the advantages of using the URBA (Uniform Revenue Bond Act) process to finance the project.

## Audiences

The primary audience is the general public (customers). Most of the tools and strategies developed for this plan are intended for use with the public and customers at large. However, there will be a need to occasionally engage these specific audiences:

**Eugene City Council:** The city will need to approve a funding path for the project. City interest also pertains to vacating the relevant portions of the existing headquarters site. EWEB will ask the Council to approve funding in February 2008.

**Residents living near the Roosevelt site:** This audience will be directly impacted by development of the Roosevelt site and should be engaged and informed early in the process.

**Formal neighborhood groups:** The Active Bethel Neighbors leadership and other groups should be engaged at appropriate times. However, the neighborhood group has not met regularly due to a lack of leadership and interest.

**Interest groups:** The project includes wetlands mitigation and protection, sustainability and "green" construction standards, and other features that would be of interest to special groups or nearby property owners.

**Employees:** All employees will have an interest in the project. Two specific sub-groups are employees who will be relocated and those who will remain in the existing headquarters building.

## **Background, current situation and timeline**

For more than two decades, the Eugene Water & Electric Board has been studying the possibility of constructing new electric and water operations facilities to replace the warehouse, vehicle shops, storage yard and operations building currently located along the Willamette River in downtown Eugene. A riverfront master planning process is a parallel and ongoing effort, but is not a part of this communications plan.

The administrative staff and customer service functions will remain in the existing headquarters building. However, other buildings on the site need to be replaced because they have deteriorated to a point where they have outlived their useful life and are no longer efficient. Increased congestion on the current site also makes it difficult for larger vehicles to leave and enter the current site. There also is a desire by the city of Eugene and other interests to have EWEB vacate part of its existing site so it can be redeveloped for the highest and best use as part of an overall downtown redevelopment effort.

In addition, increased awareness and knowledge about the vulnerability of the existing site and buildings to an earthquake or major flood event prompted EWEB's decision to build new facilities away from the riverfront.

EWEB has purchased 52 acres at the southeast corner of Beltline Road and Roosevelt Boulevard as the location for the new facilities. PIVOT Architecture, a Eugene firm, has been hired to design the new facilities. Lease Crutcher Lewis was hired as the Construction Manager/General Contractor for the project.

The Board of Commissioners has set a budget of \$83.5 million for the project, which includes a new operations building, warehouse, vehicle shop, covered parking for EWEB vehicles, a storage yard, and restoration of wetlands. The facility is being designed to achieve the "LEED Gold" standard of sustainability awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The current timeline calls for final Board approval of the project design and funding on Feb. 5, 2008; City Council approval of project funding on Feb. 25, 2008; start of construction in the late summer of 2008; and completion by early 2010.

EWEB will be asking the Eugene City Council for bonding authority to finance construction under the Uniform Revenue Bond Act. Financing is assured after a 60-day period in which citizens do not successfully petition to place the bonds on the ballot.

This communications plan outlines efforts leading up to the end of the 60-day period following council adoption of a resolution authorizing EWEB to issue bonds under URBA. At that time, this plan will be revised to focus on the construction phase of the project. This plan also assumes that URBA financing will be successful. A different funding path, such as a citywide vote, would require development of a different communications strategy.

## **Key messages**

To successfully inform the public of the need for new facilities, EWEB Public Affairs has adopted the following primary messages:

- EWEB needs to build new facilities because the existing ones are worn out and are in need of replacement.
- Building new facilities will allow a portion of EWEB's riverfront property to be utilized for a better and more appropriate use by the community.
- The new facilities will help EWEB maintain a high level of electric and water service reliability for its customers for at least the next 50 years.
- Uniform Revenue Bond Act authority is an appropriate rate-based financing method used by EWEB since the early 1990s to pay for certain operational and capital needs.
- The impact on the typical residential customer's combined electric and water bill will be minimal, or about \$64 a year, with the increase phased in over the next three years.

## **Tools and strategies**

A number of tools will be used to help inform the public and other audiences through the second quarter of 2008, the expected completion of bonding authority. As mentioned above, this plan assumes that URBA financing will be successful, and that Public Affairs will update this plan to focus on the construction phase of the project.

When appropriate, tools that apply to specific audiences are identified. All other strategies and messages apply to the general public or to all audiences.

## **Ongoing strategies**

**Media:** Public Affairs will be pro-active in keeping the media informed about key decision points in the process, or informed about significant reports and other developments. Public Affairs will look for specific opportunities to illustrate the need to relocate and the benefit of relocating.

**Council engagement:** The City Council will be provided with periodic written updates of the relocation project, and Board members are expected to engage council members as appropriate prior to the Council's Feb. 25 decision on a bonding resolution. EWEB sent the Council a memorandum in November, updating it on the project. Another update will be sent in January.

Prior to a Feb. 13 Council Work Session on the project, EWEB will forward materials relevant to the project, for city staff's inclusion of these materials in council packets. EWEB staff will make a 15-minute presentation during that Work Session, then answer questions. Follow-up materials will be provided to the Council prior to its Feb. 25 meeting, at which it will be asked to approve an URBA bonding-authority resolution.

**Public meetings:** A second public briefing will be held at EWEB on Jan. 17. An initial informational meeting was held in November, in which the public could look at preliminary designs and ask questions of the Project Manager and PIVOT architects. A second open hours or briefing will be held in January. Public Affairs will publicize the meeting through paid advertisements, news releases and e-mail notices to the Council and interested parties.

**Neighborhood meeting:** The first neighborhood meeting was held April 18 at Petersen Barn and was well attended. EWEB intends to hold at least one more public meeting in the project area, sometime in early summer after project financing is secured. At that meeting, EWEB should have more details about building design, traffic control measures, wetlands restoration, and public access issues raised at the first meeting in April.

**Editorial boards:** At least one board member, the General Manager, the project manager and Public Affairs will update The Register-Guard's editorial board prior to the Board's Feb. 5 decision on project financing. A visit with the editor of the Eugene Weekly will be considered.

**Web site:** The existing web site section related to the project has been redesigned, and content is being updated as needed.

**Speakers Bureau:** The relocation project is one of three primary subjects of all general presentations to neighborhood groups, civic clubs and service organizations. Between December 31 and Feb. 25, it should be the lead item for all general presentations to civic groups, service clubs and other groups.

**Employee meetings:** Within EWEB, there remains some anecdotal evidence that many employees remain uninformed about the need to relocate and the benefits of relocation. In November, employees were invited to an “open house” in which they could view preliminary designs and ask questions of the Project Manager and PIVOT architects. A special “brown bag” lunch event also may be held.

**Intercom:** Employees will be kept informed of the project with frequent articles.

**Pipeline:** The spring issue of Pipeline will update customers on the progress of the project. The fall 2008 edition will include an article focusing on the start of construction.

**Key message development:** Public Affairs will update the key messages listed earlier in this plan to reflect any changes in the project or changes in circumstance. These messages can be used in media interviews, by employees and during presentations to neighborhood or other interested groups.

**Fact sheet:** Public Affairs has developed a fact sheet that should be made available during all media interviews, presentations and public meetings. It will be updated periodically to reflect any changes in the project.

**Outside consulting:** Prior to initial completion of this plan in the fall of 2006, Public Affairs consulted with an outside third party (Ulum Group) to review its communications strategy. This third-party review supported the basic objectives, messages and strategies outlined in the plan. Public Affairs will continue to consult on an as-needed basis.

## **Desired outcome**

Construction of new electric and water operations facilities, at a new location in west Eugene, is a high priority for the utility. The overarching desired outcomes of this plan are: To increase customers’ knowledge of the project, to gain customers’ acceptance of EWEB’s need to build new facilities, and to gain acceptance of the need to finance the project through higher electric and water rates.

## Roosevelt communications work plan, 2008\*

Task	Description	Who?	Completed by...
Media outreach	News release, interviews, background materials (media kit)	Lance Robertson	Jan. 17 (next public informational meeting)
Public briefing	Staff presentation: Q&A; news release, display ad in R-G; creation of signage	Ken Beeson Deb Brewer Lance Robertson	Jan. 17 (Training Room, 5:30-7:30 p.m.)
Engage city council	January update; materials for Feb. 13 work session; 15-minute work session presentation; individual commissioner contacts with councilors; Feb. 25 council meeting	Ken Beeson Deb Brewer Jason Heuser Lance Robertson	Work Session, Feb. 13; Council bonding approval, Feb. 25
Editorial boards	Focus on need to build new facilities: The current buildings are worn out and need to be replaced.	Marty Douglass Ken Beeson	Prior to Feb. 5 Board decision on project and financing
Key messages	Development and updating of primary messages, focusing on the condition of existing facilities	Lance Robertson	Completed
Neighborhood meeting	Focus on potential impacts to surrounding neighborhood	Lance Robertson	May or June 2008
Neighborhood newsletters	Prepare short articles for submission to newsletters, other publications	Lance Robertson	Ongoing
Speakers Bureau materials and presentation	Fact sheet, photos, contact information, Power Point presentation	Lance Robertson Deb Brewer	Update as needed
Web site	Redesigned in June 2007; update as necessary	Katie Sproles	Update by Jan. 9 with public meeting information; update again by Jan. 31, Feb. 6, Feb. 14 and Feb. 26
Pipeline	Focus on design of new facilities, "green" building design, a "building for the future"	Lance Robertson Cindee Lee	Spring 2008 edition
Employee engagement	Work group meetings, brown-bag lunch, Intercom	Ken Beeson Katie Sproles Lance Robertson	Ongoing

\* Work plan will be updated following completion of financing authority.