

Public Affairs Transformation – Status Update

(CONFIDENTIAL draft – as of 2/22/16)

VISION: The Port of Seattle’s public affairs staff is comprised of **experts** in the fields of: government relations, communications, community engagement and social responsibility. The PA staff works as a closely integrated team, leveraging knowledge, information and relationships, to support the Port Commission and the Port’s CEO and Executive Leadership Team in advancing and achieving the Port’s Century Agenda.

The collective work efforts of the Public Affairs team will better connect the public to the Port’s mission, positively influence the public’s perception of the Port of Seattle and enhance the political reputation and capabilities of the organization.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT:** Resolve historical philosophical alignment challenges that exist among commissioners and the philosophical/operational alignment differences between the CEO and commissioners. Confirm shared vision for alignment of priorities and processes between Public Affairs, Port Commissioners and the CEO.
- **TALENT GAPS:** Ensure PA team members possess the necessary skills in key strategic functions, and with sufficient bandwidth, to meet the needs of the POS CEO, POS Port Commission, POS business divisions and the NWSA.
- **SILOS:** Remove historically deep silos between PA functions at airport and seaport and within government relations. Address emerging silo concerns between POS and NWSA.
- **TOOLS:** Modernize the Port’s communication tools/capabilities. Execute media relations with relentless emphasis on proactive actions and urgency.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:

- Acknowledge the lack of shared “organizational alignment and priorities” as a root cause of dissatisfaction.
- Confirm need to work together and develop an **Alignment Blueprint for Change**.
- Secure a six-month consulting contract with Kate Snider to facilitate planning sessions among commissioners, between commissioners and CEO, and with Public Affairs to develop shared priorities and expectations. Consider external best practices, structural and governance alternatives in this process.
- Complete work by end of Q 3 to ensure potential changes can be incorporated in 2017 budget.

- Continue PA foundational transformation work already underway to address talent gaps, remove silos, modernize communication tools and enhance communications capabilities.

CONFIRM TOP ISSUE PRIORITIES: Opposition to Occidental street vacation, comprehensive SAMP outreach process and advancing aviation capital projects, secure Middle-Class Jobs consultant and build campaign, waterfront vision/T-46 alignment, effective T-5 DEIS process with NWSA, lay groundwork for 2017 state legislative session, revitalized environmental emphasis, City of SeaTac ILA strategy and strong relationships, expand Port’s economic influence beyond Seattle.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

STARTING POINT – May-Aug. 2015:

MAJOR ISSUES:

NWSA: Major PA role in launch of NWSA. Significant follow-up work (still underway) to navigate role clarity and political collaboration.

T-5: Historic low-point in formal relations with the City of Seattle. Disagreement whether Port's T-5 permit allows berthing for Shell Oil Rig. Firestorm of negative publicity and public reaction. Opposing views among commissioners.

AVIATION: High profile opposition by Alaska Airlines to IAF project. Vocal engagement by drivers, companies and lobbyists in ground transportation contracting. CEO request to independently survey rental car transportation models at other airports. Inappropriate ADR employee e-mails. Adverse Prop. 1 court ruling.

STAFF:

PA: Several years of rocky and then interim department leadership resulting in fear and low morale among staff. Local and State Gov. Rel. managers announce plans to take other roles at

CURRENT STATUS:

Needs Assessments & Related Hiring/Department Restructuring:

GOV RELATIONS NEEDS:

- **Legislative Strategy Development & Execution:** Identify desired outcomes and audiences, how decision will be reached, and how to best influence the outcome including the strategic engagement of port commissioners.
- **Legislative Agenda:** define development process with Commission and CEO for use of a legislative agenda, ongoing tracking and advancement of issues.
- **One Pagers:** Develop electronic 1-pagers for every key issue/major capital projects
- **Elected to Elected:** routine briefing practices/relationship-building activities (e.g. joint study sessions, pre-session outreach) for commissioners and elected officials.
- **Remove Silos:** coordinate the ways maritime and airport issues are managed at the highest levels to improve information sharing, ability to anticipate political pitfalls, provide earlier visibility/issue involvement for commissioners and better leverage political relationships.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NEEDS:

- **Expand POS engagement in King Co.:** Broaden direct/ongoing staff engagement beyond maritime and airport fence-line communities and related community groups.
- **Broaden stakeholder partnerships** beyond econ. dev. and maritime industries. -Better leverage: sponsorships, memberships, and relationships between seaport and aviation.
- Continued clarification/coordination with NWSA.

COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS:

- Better utilization of modern social media tools.
- Electronic "print on demand" one-pagers for projects and issues.
- Web site overhaul/update.
- Public opinion research (survey – March, focus groups – April) to set baseline for public perception.
- Consistently employ both responsive and proactive/urgent media relations and nurture reporter relationships
- Library with top-notch presentation slides and graphics options
- Strategically placed and politically nuanced "thought pieces", in a variety of mediums) to

the Port – pending vacancies. Long-time state lobbyist announces retirement. Fed. Gov. Rel. Manager on maternity leave. Strategic Communications Manager position is filled just prior to my arrival after a lengthy vacancy. Admin. support in disarray.

Executive: CEO in early days of job – support several firsts (numerous introductory speeches, Seattle Times Editorial Board, E. WA trip, International Trade Mission). Maritime division leader announces intent to leave the Port. Aviation Director announces retirement. Three executive positions are filled.

influence policy development and build the Port's positive reputation
- Messaging: compelling, memorable, strategic

STAFF HIRINGS & NEW DEPT. STRUCTURE (see org chart):

- Regional Gov. Rel. (Wolpa) started 10/15
- Olympia Consultant (Trent House) started 12/15
- State Gov. Rel. (ffitch) started 1/16
- Airport media back-up (DeRoy) started 2/16
- Social Media Mgr. (offer pending)
- Visual (Graphics) Mgr. (1st round interviews underway)
- Communications Director (HR assessing job description)
- Gov. Rel. Director (HR assessing job description)
- Community Engagement Mgr. (backfill position with new environmental emphasis) (HR assessing job description.)
- Federal Gov. Rel. Mgr. vacancy will be filled following hiring of Gov. Rel. Director.
- Broader King County outreach responsibilities for Community Engagement staff.

PHASE II REORG:

- Finalizing revised OSR Director position description with Luis and HR.
- Assessing how ongoing/strategic PA support is provided to Aviation Director; Assimilating aviation community partnerships staff into public affairs and framing expectations for engagement style with airport cities and beyond.