Digital and Traditional Community/Stakeholder Relations

Areas of Expertise

TRADITIONAL

- Communications Strategy Plan
- Printed Information Materials
- Preparation of News Releases, Media Briefs, and Presentation Materials
- Q&As/Behind the Scenes Briefings
- Risk Communications
- Public Information Forums

DIGITAL

- Environmental Engagement Platform
- Virtual Public Exhibitions
- Advanced Visualizations
- Sound Demonstrations

Overview

Regulatory agencies, stakeholders and the public are often concerned about the potential threats and impact of environmental projects—actual and perceived—to public health and the environment. When a project is complicated by political, environmental, or site conditions, these complications are difficult to understand. No matter how sound the proposal or technical solution is, the project can be delayed if the community distrusts the source of the technical analyses. This will impact the schedule and cost of an otherwise successful project.

AECOM's experience and literature confirm that the best approach to community relations is to keep stakeholders and the public informed throughout the project planning process, so that no one feels the need to take dramatic action to be heard or considered. Research has shown that regular communications lead to familiarity; familiarity can lead to understanding, which can increase one's comfort and decrease one's perception of risk.

AECOM's community relations experts have implemented successful, cost-effective public involvement programs to support complex environmental projects for many private and public sector clients. Recent AECOM advancements in digital tools have allowed projects to engage with stakeholders online to keep projects moving along and engage audiences.

Our Approach

AECOM works as a team with our clients' environmental and communications professionals to develop effective strategies and implement successful programs. Our Community Relations Specialists work side-by-side with our project and site managers, technical staff, and scientific risk assessors to help identify key community issues, and articulate a realistic and understandable view of the work being done and the potential risks or exposures involved. Aware of important issues potentially affecting a site, we communicate the facts in a non-threatening manner to enhance understanding and trust.

Our experience has shown that focused planning facilitates effective community relations—and successful projects. AECOM focuses on:

- Minimizing project costs and delays
- Identifying, anticipating, and addressing public concerns
- Establishing and improving our clients' credibility
- Improving the quality of decisions through consensus- building

More Information: AskEnvironment@aecom.com

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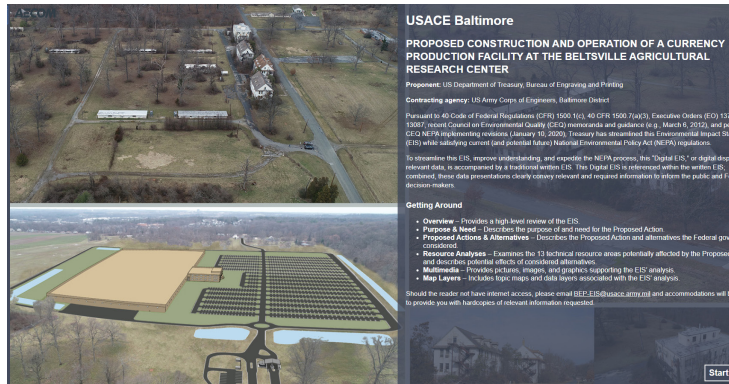
Areas of Expertise

AECOM has extensive experience in developing strategies, and sharing information through community communications, public education, and outreach programs.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY PLAN. An effective Plan should outline the essential components of a Community Relations Program, including rationale; events that will require communications; messaging; potential audience; vehicles to convey message(s); participants in communications process and roles; and timing of events/schedule.

PRINTED INFORMATION MATERIALS. Fact Sheets, Newsletters, Brochures, and Issue Papers are useful tools for providing project information to the community and dispelling public fears of misunderstood projects.

NEWS RELEASES, MEDIA BRIEFS, PRESENTATION MATERIALS. We assist our client in distributing accurate, scientifically-sound information to media outlets and other information providers.

Q&As/INTERNAL TEAM BRIEFINGS. Internal Q&As "brainstorm" questions or concerns the public may have, and develop answers so project team members can provide consistent responses to public or media inquiries. We work "behind the scenes" to ensure clients' public relations professionals/media contacts are adequately briefed on the site, the issues, and the action plan.

RISK COMMUNICATIONS. AECOM specializes in preparing and implementing effective risk communications programs by working with the scientific risk assessors to articulate a realistic view of the risk for the public.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND INFORMATION FORUMS. These forums, which include stakeholder/community advisory groups, restoration advisory boards, and open houses, are managed, developed and coordinated by AECOM to ensure maximum participation, and rational, science-based communication among all parties.

Digital

ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM. Replacing enormous paper reports, this digital alternative provides an interactive and intuitive website that can include spatial data, visualizations and other media to serve as a central repository for project data including GIS, technical data, reporting, 3D models, sound files, images and video.

VIRTUAL PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS. Originally created to help stakeholders connect with project information 24/7, it's now become a tool for moving projects forward when in-person events are prohibited. If desired by our client, AECOM can provide a virtual consultation room that offers a 360-degree immersive experience w/live chat functionality.

ADVANCED VISUALIZATIONS. Virtual reality/augmented reality provide a highly interactive and engaging alternative that gives accurate and engaging appreciation of the finished project, dispelling misconceptions about landscape/visual impacts.

SOUND DEMONSTRATIONS. Our immersive sound studio demonstrations combine before and after acoustics with video montages to both hear and see proposed changes in noise levels.

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