Appendix E: Seven-Step Communication Model

Seven-Step Model for Communicating Acceptable Uses and Activities on Transmission Pipeline Rights-of-way to Land Owners and Other Stakeholders

Introduction

Typical communications from transmission pipeline operators to stakeholders regarding rights-of-way (ROW) activities occur for one of three reasons: 1) information exchange; 2) education opportunity; or 3) to cause a change in behavior. However, in reality most communications regarding ROW activities or uses are performed with the intention of causing certain behaviors to happen. Consider the following examples for various stakeholder audiences and the associated behavior expectation.

- **Landowners:** When letters regarding anticipated ROW clearing are sent to the landowner, the purpose of the communication is to inform the landowner ahead of the actual event occurring. This in turn should:
  - Prevent the landowner from being surprised by the presence of individuals on their property;
  - Provide appropriate contact information;
  - Prompt landowners to think about fencing or gates that may have to be accessed;
  - Help the landowner think about children or planned family activities; and
  - Allow the landowner to prepare appropriately for domestic and farm animals that could be impacted by the event.

- **Excavators:** Communications to excavators to educate them about 811 or Call Before You Dig are intended to ensure they will call for facility locates before digging.

- **Real Estate Agents/Brokers:** Communications to real estate agents and brokers about pipeline facilities identified by pipeline markers are intended to promote information about pipeline location early so that potential buyers can receive appropriate information. Potential buyers should then make more informed decisions, including contacting the pipeline company for more information.

- **Local Government Planning and Zoning Organizations (including permitting, public works, emergency officials, elected officials, etc.):** Information or education events for these audiences are meant to allow them to factor the relevant pipeline information into their activities and cause them to change their behavior accordingly or as necessary.

Education can help lay a foundation for heightened awareness and increased knowledge. However, better training, media or advertising efforts will only go so far in many cases. While persuasive communication campaigns can prompt action and should be utilized, these efforts may not sustain desired actions. It is important to understand that information can lead to awareness, but awareness may not lead to a behavior change. According to subject matter experts, if you are communicating for a change in behavior, a concept called social marketing should be used. Social marketing utilizes various research components:

- Formative research
• Pretest research
• Monitoring research
• Evaluation research

Social marketing provides a few more strategies to overcome or reduce barriers to behavior change, and is used to change perceptions and to help build a new social norm. Social marketing is:
    1. Using product-marketing strategies to promote ideas like safety, health and conservation;
    2. Influencing a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, or modify an action; and
    3. For the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole.

Understanding what behavior is expected and what currently exists is important to changing the behavior. In order to maximize the opportunity created with each communication, considerable thought should be given to what behavior needs to change on the transmission pipeline ROW, what behavior is desired, or what behavior on the ROW should be maintained by the specific stakeholder.

The PIPA Communications Task Team efforts included a focus on researching the art and science of effective communication techniques. As various techniques were considered for communicating a particular message, it became apparent that each technique required a basic understanding of why the message is necessary, who will receive it, and what will be communicated, in concert with other considerations.

A model or process was developed for communicating acceptable uses and activities on pipeline rights-of-way to stakeholders. This seven-step model is applicable in any circumstance related to transmission pipelines, including a new or existing transmission pipelines being constructed or operated in either newly developed areas or in rural areas. The model is for use when communicating acceptable ROW uses and activities to land owners and other stakeholders. Generally throughout this discussion, examples are given from the perspective of a transmission pipeline company. However, the same tools and guiding principles of the model can be used by any stakeholder, for example:
    • Fire marshals may use it as they communicate to other fire marshals or emergency responders;
    • Trade associations, such as the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) or the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA), may use it to communicate more effectively within their organization and among their members;
    • Local government planning and zoning organizations may use it to communicate with developers; and
    • Regulatory agencies and others may use it when communicating to public stakeholders.

The seven steps of an effective communications model include:
    1. Identify the problem (or need) the communication will solve (or address).
    2. Determine which stakeholder(s) receives the communication.
    3. Identify draft message to be communicated.
    4. Develop final message and delivery system based on marketing strategy best suited for the desired outcome.
    5. Implement communications.
    6. Measure effectiveness.
    7. Identify and implement changes if necessary.
Seven Step Communication Model

Step 1 – Why?

1.00 Identify the problem (or need) the communication will address.

Step 1 in the PIPA seven-step communication process specifically addresses “why” the communication is needed. Before effective communication can occur, one must identify the problem or need that the communication will address. This “begin with the end in mind” approach lays the foundation for an effective communication effort and defines why stakeholder communication is necessary.

Transmission pipeline companies utilize many types of communication in an effort to protect the public, the environment, and their pipeline assets. Their communication methods include such things as direct mailers, radio and television spots, personal contact, and group meetings. While all of these methods can be effective, without careful design and delivery, they typically will not cause the desired change in behavior. Facilitating behavior change requires a socially-engineered message that targets a specific audience over an extended period of time. For example, it is not unusual for direct mailers to be discarded without being read. Mailers from transmission pipeline operators may satisfy regulatory guidelines or mandates, but they do not necessarily serve the intended purpose of increasing transmission pipeline awareness and safety, which is why they were distributed in the first place.

The PIPA participants sought input regarding the best practices in communication techniques from various authors and consultants.

- Gary Melling (President & CEO; EPIC Software Corporation) and Sarah McCaffrey (USDA Forest Service) addressed the importance of understanding the audience and defining the purpose of the communication program, answering the stakeholders’ frequently asked question, “What’s in it for me?”

- Greg Winter (Cornerstone Strategies, Inc.) defined “social marketing” steps which include describing the background, purpose, and focus of the communication program.

- Martha Monroe (University of Florida – Communications Research) echoed many of the communication points noted by the others and added that in order to communicate more effectively, barriers to behavior change must be identified. Once initially identified, messages and communication strategies can be crafted to promote the ideal behavior, which gives all stakeholders a role in transmission pipeline protection.

- Ms. McCaffrey also suggested a central depository to ensure easy access to information, consistent message and information exchange, and to promote a sharing of effectiveness lessons (i.e., a lessons learned center).

Many other professional and technical publications were found to provide similar insights into best communication practices. For example, the “Damage Prevention Best Practices”, published
by the Common Ground Alliance (www.commongroundalliance.com), identify that an effective
damage prevention program must include a comprehensive strategic marketing and advertising
plan. Without a plan, and the budget to support it, the intended messages will likely be lost in
today’s information overload.

Stephen Covey’s “7 Habits for Highly Effective People” suggests that we begin with the end in
mind. By doing so we satisfy the first communication element of why the communication is
necessary in the first place. Transmission pipeline companies want to effectively communicate
acceptable right-of-way activities and uses, to help ensure pipeline reliability and engage all
stakeholders in that effort. Right-of-way communication promotes safety and reduces risks to
people and the environment.

Step 2 – Who?
2.01 Determine Which Stakeholders Receive the Communications.

The second step of the seven step communication model is defining who should receive each
type of communication. Who is the audience? There’s no such thing as the “general public.”
Each group of stakeholders has different concerns, belief systems, perceptions and
misconceptions. The priorities of each group will affect and help determine the most effective
message.

2.02 Compile Information.

Knowledge about your audience is very important. Begin by compiling all the information
available about your stakeholders. This information can help identify behavioral clues and
barriers to communicating with them. Review your stakeholders’ behaviors to ensure that your
information about them remains accurate. Priorities change, economies rise and fall and new
personalities come into the mix. The right message delivered to the wrong person will not be
effective.

Stakeholders are motivated by different factors and may be motivated by multiple issues. For
example, a landowner may be concerned about the loss of trees on his property. Another may
be concerned about the quality of the restoration activities following ROW maintenance.
Others may be concerned about financial impacts on property values, lost crops and the security
of their livestock. Emergency responders are concerned about adequate training and
appropriate emergency response information.

Be sure to look at all the factors before categorizing stakeholders by a single issue. If your
stakeholder audience is too broad, it can impact your effectiveness. Narrowing your
stakeholder audience may be required to improve your chance of success. This may be why
transmission pipeline operators such as El Paso, Northern, Marathon, and Williams report initial
success with specifically designed publications for specific audiences, such as handbooks for
developers. Knowing the concerns of your audience and specifically identifying the barriers that
may prevent your audience from understanding your message can be time well spent.
If individual stakeholder contact is possible, using information resources readily available can enhance your success. For example, you might research the following:

- Has the specific stakeholder attended meetings before?
- Has the stakeholder raised specific issues in other meetings? If so, what are those issues?
- Are there financial or other topical issues specific to this individual?
- Is the stakeholder a community leader, law enforcement officer or emergency responder? If the stakeholder is a community leader, could they be impacted socially by their response to the communication?
- Has the stakeholder received media attention regarding ROW issues in the past?
- What methods of communication delivery have been used for this stakeholder before?

**Step 3 – What?**

3.00 Identify the draft message to be communicated.

Start to formulate your draft message. Think about the end result. Do you want a behavior change or do you simply want to provide information? Ask yourself, what is the purpose of the message? What is the goal? What do you want to accomplish?

Create several messages, then review and refine them. Pick the one that works best for you. Try the selected message on several associates. Value their opinion and feedback. Keep in mind that this is only a draft, a place to start. There will be more refinement through the process.

Remember, the objective of the message needs to be identified and then related to the audience. Philip Kotler calls this the “Positioning Statement”. He defines it as “the act of designing the organization’s actual and perceived offering in such a way that it lands on and occupies a distinctive place in the mind of the target market – where you want to be.”

**Step 4 – Strategy**

4.01 Develop the final message and delivery system based on a marketing strategy best suited for the desired outcome.

Once the need (the why), the audience (the who), and the basic message (the what) have been identified, then it is time to get into the details of designing a strategy to refine the message and deliver it in a way that the audience will understand and pay attention to it. This is the critical step that can either make or break any communication effort. For relatively simple efforts, such as notifying a property owner that work will be done on the transmission pipeline right-of-way on their property on a certain date, developing a communication strategy may be easy and straightforward. For more complex efforts it may be necessary to hire outside consultants to help design the strategy. For example, outside consultants may be needed to ensure that

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9 Greg Winter, SME, Social Marketing, Cornerstone Strategies, Handout entitled “Quick Reference Guide” by Nancy Lee and Philip Kotler
municipalities know the location of the transmission pipelines that run through their jurisdictions and how this could impact future planning decisions.

Below are some of the basic parts of a strategy that should be considered. As with the design of any good strategy, each piece can potentially affect all the other pieces, so a process to revisit each decision should be in place.

4.02 Identify budget needed compared to budget allocated.

In a perfect world a communication strategy would be designed to ensure the best possible outcome, then the money necessary to implement that strategy would be allocated. In the real world, however, budget constraints often require decisions to be made about how to implement the best possible strategy with the money that is available. The difference between the basic budget needed to communicate successfully and the budget available needs to be kept in mind so more money can be sought if necessary, or so that the communication can be cancelled if a basic successful strategy cannot be afforded.

4.03 Identify audience barriers and benefits.

It is very important to understand the targeted audience. Knowing barriers and misconceptions that can affect your specific stakeholder audience is essential. Understanding how the stakeholder may perceive risk can also provide insight to assist with more effective communication messages. Significant questions, such as whether or not there are barriers that make it difficult for the audience to receive the message, impact the understanding of the message, prevent trust in the person delivering the message, or affect whether or not the stakeholder will do what the message asks, should be answered. Identifying whether or not there are benefits that the audience may receive through this communication that they may not realize or understand could be helpful. Knowing whether or not incentives should be built into the effort to help overcome the barriers or increase the benefits could add value to the communication effort.

These types of questions or barrier determination efforts need to be considered and addressed. For more complex projects it may be necessary to undertake surveys or focus groups to make sure that the communicator’s assumptions about the audience are correct. It is important to try to bring forward any hidden issues.

4.04 Determine how the message is to be delivered.

How the message is delivered is an important consideration for the success of the communication program. Research indicates that one of the most effective methods for behavior change is one-on-one interpersonal communications with a person the stakeholder trusts. The use of interactive demonstrations is a delivery method that will appeal to most adults and heighten their learning experience. The use of expert information coupled with stories and examples that relate to the audience member is also effective. Communicating the message to the stakeholder multiple times in different formats (direct mail, radio ad, news story, presentation at professional association, etc.) can help get the message noticed and understood, and reinforce its importance. This may have been one of the reasons that a
Marathon Pipeline Company radio talk show addressing ROW clearing efforts, in which multiple callers could ask questions of multiple people, appears to have been successful. However it is important to employ media methods that the specific stakeholder audience actually uses.  

There are several methods of implementation that can be considered in communicating to inform stakeholders regarding right-of-way (ROW) activities and uses. Some of those listed below can be used in combination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Graphic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Face-to-Face meetings</td>
<td>Billboards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Telephone Calls</td>
<td>Bus Signs/Bus Stand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brochures</td>
<td>TV Spots</td>
<td>Banners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Door Hangers</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Pipeline ROW Markers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emails</td>
<td>Trade Show Booths</td>
<td>Signs at excavation sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill stuffers/Mailers</td>
<td>Professional presentations</td>
<td>Mascots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pipeline ROW Markers</td>
<td>Town Hall meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper Notices</td>
<td>Specific stakeholder meetings</td>
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<td>Give-A-Ways</td>
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Information about methods of delivery that increases the likelihood that the information will reach a reader should be used. For example, subject matter experts indicate that graphics used in documents and presentations should be vivid, visually interesting, and relevant to the subject. Recognition and incentives can enhance the effectiveness of the communication. An actual example of recognition being successful was demonstrated when the CEO of Explorer Pipeline met on the ROW with stakeholders. Williams Pipeline Company indicates initial success with website information through the use of incentives. Another approach shows that some members of the public may open mail that comes in a handwritten envelope more readily than other methods of addressing.

4.05 Determine where and when the message is delivered.

The timing and setting in which a message is delivered also should be accounted for. Once the audience is well understood, these decisions should be easier to make. For example, if audience research shows that a local community has a general lack of trust for local government, but universally supports their state champion basketball team, the decision on whether to hold a public meeting in the city council meeting room or the high school gymnasium may be easier and more important. Similarly, if your message is targeted at an agricultural audience you would know that a message delivered during the height of the harvest season (whether at the

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10 Sarah McCaffrey, SME, USDA, Forest Service Researcher  
11 Martha Monroe, SME, University of Florida and Sarah McCaffrey, USDA
gymnasium or the city council room) has little chance of success. Historical pipeline performance in the area can also affect communication needs.

4.06 Determine who should deliver the message.

One factor that is essential for stakeholder communications is trust. Research shows that people trust and feel most comfortable when talking to other people most like themselves. This is especially so if those delivering the messages are also recognized as community leaders with “expert” knowledge related to the subject. A message from a trusted source, such as a community leader, resonates with most stakeholders. Enlisting these individuals can mean the difference between communications that succeed and those that fail. That is why, when possible, it makes most sense to have contractors talk to other contractors, emergency responders talk to emergency responders, planners talk to other planners, etc.

Audience research can also help decide who would be the best person to deliver the message. For example, the graph below shows the results of an actual survey question asked of people concerned with a proposed pipeline in Arizona. If you were a pipeline company trying to deliver the message, these results would help you understand that having your own employees deliver the message may be a problem or a waste of valuable resources. But, holding the town meeting with a mix of communicators, including your employees, may help increase the acceptance and understanding of the message. Research indicates that few surveys that focus on determining landowner perceptions regarding ROW activities or preferred methods of contact have been performed by transmission pipeline operators through industry trade groups.

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12 Terri Larson, Subject Matter Expert, Fleishman-Hillard
4.07 Select a measurement strategy and measure success.

It is imperative for the success and continued funding of any communication strategy to measure whether the effort is being successful. An evaluation process should be incorporated and planned in advance. The definition of success (i.e., metrics) should be clear and understood. If the measure of success is real behavior change (for example – using the one-call system), then the method designed as part of the strategy should measure that behavior change and not measure items that are not indicators of success (for example – the level of stakeholder attendance at a damage prevention workshop). Awareness of what one should do may not necessarily translate into doing it. Often, people will say they support something but then turn around and behave in a totally different manner. However, research does indicate that asking for a commitment from the stakeholder audience member can elevate action to the desired behavior.\(^{13}\)

Measurement strategies can be employed in a variety of ways. Some examples are:

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Feedback Cards

\(^{13}\) Martha Monroe, SME, University of Florida
• Telephone Calls
• Personal Contact
• Interviewing
• Case Studies
• Conversations before/after presentations
• Exercises
• Observations

Several measurement strategies, including focus groups, provide the opportunity to test the message and explore how the message is understood by the target audience. Measured results on the quality or effectiveness of the message can then be obtained. From the measured results, message and delivery methods can be tailored, edited and adjusted to better reach and impact the intended audience.

For major efforts it is also important to make sure that the measurement can take place in a timeframe that allows the communication efforts to be changed if not successful. This will help avoid wasting time, good will and money. Whenever possible, the strategy should be tested marketed on a small subset of the intended stakeholder audience to verify desired results.

4.07 Modify the draft message to final form based on marketing analysis, recommended practices, specific areas of concern, or other resources.

Once all of the above considerations have been thoroughly researched and decided upon the initial draft message can be reshaped and packaged to ensure that it best fits the strategy of who, where, when, and how.

Step 5 – Communications

5.00 Implement Communications

Up to this point the focus of the communication effort was to determine “why”, “who”, “what” and the strategy (“the how”, when, where, and who delivers) of the message. Keep in mind, the audience or stakeholder has already been identified as you drill down through the steps in the communication model.

It is important to determine the most effective way to communicate the message. You should consider what barriers have been identified, how the stakeholder will perceive risk, and how these elements will affect your implementation strategy. The decision to select one or several communication methods has been based upon the audience, the change in behavior desired, cost of the communication and what barriers will impact the manner in which the message is received. Obviously, the implementation must be effective. The message must be heard and understood for the desired action to be taken and implemented by the intended recipient. The change in behavior (whatever behavior you have identified) needs to be achieved for an effective use of resources.

The method used to communicate will depend primarily on the message to be sent. For instance, if a transmission pipeline company has a routine excavation activity planned on your
property or in your community, they will most likely send a letter or give the landowner a quick call on the telephone. If, however, the pipeline company has a large transmission pipeline project planned, they may hold town hall meetings, meet with local officials, allocate special websites, create special brochures and prepare news bulletins or press releases.

Remember, good communicators are trustworthy, engaging, caring of their audience and accessible. There are many different ways to communicate. The differences depend on many things, including the audience receiving the message the strategy and the purpose and goal of the message.

*Step 6 – Metrics*

6.00 Measure Effectiveness.

Peter Drucker was a writer, management consultant and social ecologist who explored how humans are organized across all sectors of society. He stated, “Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things.” The practice of measuring effectiveness is all about making sure that you are doing the right things, in the right way, and that you continue to do so. Mr. Drucker also noted, “There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all”. If you are doing communications in a manner that should not be done at all, you waste both the stakeholder’s and your own resources.

Measurement is needed for several reasons, including to:
1) Identify what is working well or poorly with the communication
2) Verify that the purpose of the objective is or can be met
3) Ensure effective use of resources

Identifying what is working well or poorly with the communication will help you know the culprits (or barriers) getting in the way of the communication or the learning experience. It also determines whether or not the learning process is effective.

Too often in developing a purpose for a communication, the objectives or measurement methods are not made “SMART”. SMART program effectiveness measurements and metrics are those that are\(^\text{1}\):

S – Specific (to your target)
M – Measurable
A – Attainable or Actionable
R – Relevant
T - Timely

When you can measure and review what may or may not need to be changed through the use of metrics, you can improve how you use your resources. For example, if feedback determines the

\(^{1}\) Dave Trimble, ProSci Senior Partner, “How to Measure Success: Uncovering The Secrets of Effective Metrics” and Georgia Bozeda, Rush Neurobehavioral Center, “Executive Function Skills”, University of California TV learning series by Tribune Media Service.
specific message to be unclear, changes to the message can be shared with multiple users, such as transmission pipeline trade associations, trade agencies, or others using the message, thus assuring a more effective use of resources. In the same way, you may be able to: improve the type of consultant resources utilized for specific items; eliminate waste by sending out more effective documents, including letters or calendars; share lessons learned; and cause a change in behavior that lasts.

Several specialized techniques or recommended practice consensus documents have indicated the importance of measuring effectiveness. Some of these include:

- Common Ground Alliance (CGA) Best Practice 8-9 emphasizes the need to measure public education success; Section 9.0 of the CGA Best Practices addresses Reporting and Evaluation.

- Steps 10 and 11 in the American Petroleum Institute’s Recommended Practice (RP) 1162, “Public Awareness Programs for Pipeline Operators”, address tracking progress and program evaluation. Information included with the API document appendices also provides guidance on obtaining meaningful measurement data.

- Social marketing to facilitate a change in behavior includes effectiveness metrics, testing of these metrics, and monitoring.

- Practical program evaluation includes measuring effectiveness.

Step 7 – Continuous Improvement

7.00 Identify and Implement Changes If Necessary.

As Hunter Thompson, author, journalist, and creator of “Gonzo Journalism” put it: “Anything worth doing is worth doing well!” So it is with communicating.

Communicating well in a formal setting requires a well thought out plan that essentially follows the first six steps of this seven-step model. The seventh step is designed to implement identified changes, if necessary, based on the result of those first six steps.

If the monitored results indicate that the communication effort was effective, then there would be no need for further changes. Or in other words, if the recipients clearly heard and understood the message, then the communications model efforts are complete and no further communication may be required. But given the nature of both communicators and recipients, and the fact that all human communication activities are impacted by the weaknesses of the human condition (communication barriers), changes to the communication may be and are likely to be required. A complete implementation of Step 7 will need to be undertaken in all but a few cases.

The recommended practices for carrying out Step 7 of sound communications efforts are as follows: 15

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15 cf. M. Monroe; S. McCaffrey; G. Winter
Monitor all measured results. If the communication was successful, great! No need to proceed further. If it was not successful, then proceed to the following additional recommended practices:

- Develop a feedback loop to compare measured results with assumptions on which initial decisions were based. (E.g.: Was the problem correctly identified? Were the correct recipients identified? Was the correct message chosen? Was the delivery system appropriate?)
- Identify changes needed to correct initial assumptions
- Implement the necessary revisions
- Re-communicate the message and continue to re-measure

Conclusion

To communicate effectively, you should make each of these 7 steps part of your routine habits. Aristotle said “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” Practicing these steps repeatedly, over and over again, until they become second nature, will help improve your effectiveness. Your stakeholders will be more likely to receive and understand your information and educational messages that are designed to change their behavior.

While reviewing effective communications, it was also noted that several elements need to be implemented in the PIPA effort in order to make the most of the PIPA resources. To implement these items would help ensure that all of the PIPA resources were well spent. Thus, it is suggested that:

1) A centralized repository for PIPA information that can found through the internet easily and by any individual or stakeholder be developed and maintained.
2) A graphics specialist be employed to assist with the final PIPA document.
3) A marketing and communications agency be employed to serve as a consultant for writing the final PIPA report and test messages and findings.
4) Professional services be engaged to develop a formalized plan dedicated to educating each of the stakeholder audiences on the outcome of this PIPA initiative and to sustain future PIPA efforts. This is especially needed for the larger property developers, contract ROW agents, and local government stakeholder audiences.