

SPU Strategic Framework

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Strategic Business Plan Framework

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The broad areas on which SPU will focus

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The Importance of the SPU Promise

The SPU promise was designed to be actionable and measureable. It creates accountability to customers and clarity for what employees, departments and branches need to deliver.

It's designed to focus SPU on providing essential services effectively, efficiently and transparently; protecting quality of life; and proactively addressing anticipated and unanticipated demands that the future will hold.

The SPU Promise

The promise describes our approach and what we deliver to our customers and stakeholders:

Mission (What SPU delivers):

Providing efficient and forward looking utility services that keep Seattle the best place to live.

Vision (The big goal by 2020):

Our customers will see how their utility dollars sustain and improve their quality of life.

Strategic Role (SPU's primary strategic approach):

Solving problems at the source.

The SPU Promise

The promise describes our approach and what we deliver to our customers and stakeholders:

Values (Guides employees use to make decisions):

Customer-focus

We are accountable to our customers.

Safety

We provide a safe environment for our employees and customers.

Innovation

We encourage employees to explore new ideas and challenge traditional viewpoints.

Inclusion

We listen and collaborate to ensure our actions are equitable and improve quality of life.

Value for Money

We make effective decisions based on financial, social and environmental costs and benefits to achieve the best value for our customers.

Strategic Focus Area Process

Strategic focus areas are categories that we've prioritized as most important:

The E-team used this process to develop them:

- Help SPU meet its mission or vision?
- Does it solve problems at the source?
- What is the goal related to each focus area?
- How will you broadly measure progress or success?

Strategic Focus Areas and Goals

Achieve Operational Excellence

We will increase value delivered to the customer

Transform the Workforce

We will have a high performing, engaged workforce focused on business outcomes

Achieve Environmental Compliance & Stewardship

We will provide utility services in a way that makes Seattle cleaner, greener and more healthful

Create an Easy & Engaged Customer Experience

We will meet internal and external expectations

See Handout for “What We Face” Description for each Focus Area

Strategic Objectives and Measures

Each of the Four Focus Areas have 4-6 Associated Strategic Objectives

Each Strategic Objective has one or more measures

These measures are the “topline” success measures, and will be included in the Plan delivered to the public

There will also be secondary measures to guide the work of SPU staff

See Handout for complete listing of Strategic Objectives and Measures

Strategic Objectives by Focus Area:

Achieve Environmental Compliance & Stewardship

Meet or exceed environmental and public health mandates.

Conduct all SPU operations in a sustainable way.

Partner with stakeholders, public and private entities to achieve environmental objectives.

Anticipate and adapt to changing circumstances.

Promote conservation and sustainable use of utility services.

Draft Top Priority SWOC: Environment

Strengths:

- Commitment to environmental compliance & stewardship
- Good relationships with our regulators
- Conservation and recycling programs that lead the nation

Opportunities:

- Improving response to evolving external circumstances
- Maintaining strong relationships with regulators

Weaknesses:

- Lack of clear direction for environment/public health programs not required by regulators

Challenges:

- Keeping up with evolving regulatory mandates
- Integrating climate change science into future actions

Strategic Objectives by Focus Area:

Create an Easy & Engaged Customer Experience

Minimize the amount of customer effort required to interact with SPU.

Ensure equitable service accessibility.

Create an opportunity to participate.

Make SPU transparent to customers and constituents.

Draft Top Priority SWOC: Customer

Strengths:

- Customer trust and pride in SPU's water quality and SPU/customer environmental efforts
- Customer perception that SPU services linked to quality of life
- Generally high customer satisfaction with SPU services

Opportunities:

- Proactively identifying and solving the major problem areas for customers
- Expanding communication options: web services, email, texts, ESL services
- Increasing rate/service predictability and transparency

Weaknesses:

- Negative perceptions of rate levels and rate increases
- Equity issues with service delivery – perceived value for money spent depends upon neighborhood in which customer lives or works
- Inefficient customer-facing processes

Challenges:

- General invisibility of our work
- High percentage of fixed costs coupled with decreasing customer demand, leading to increasing rates

Strategic Objectives By Focus Area: Transform the Workforce

People. Attract, develop and retain capable and motivated people.

Place/Safety. Improve workplace safety.

Culture. Grow a culture that forges teamwork and collaboration.

Systems. Develop and deploy effective systems and tools to support workforce planning and performance management.

Draft Top Priority SWOC: Workforce

Strengths:

- Employee loyalty to SPU, and pride in SPU services
- Passionate and professional people
- Analytical and strategic thinking abilities of employees

Opportunities:

- Developing a culture that forges teamwork and collaboration
- Improving systems and processes to attract, develop, and retain capable and motivated people
- Improving workplace safety

Weaknesses:

- Workforce challenges: lack of clear expectations, accountability, and empowerment
- Inadequate succession planning
- Inadequate soft and other skills and training

Challenges:

- Cultural norm of avoiding difficult issues
- Working with unions to expand workforce flexibility
- Aging workforce, leading to increased on-the-job injuries and knowledge drain (with retirements)

Strategic Objectives By Focus Area: Achieve Operational Excellence

Service Quality. Provide reliable, high quality utility services to all customers.

Effectiveness & Efficiency. Spend our customers' money on the right things and in the best way, accounting for equity, risk, and external drivers.

Fiscal Strength. Maintain fiscal strength.

Fiscal Integrity. Ensure development and implementation of sound financial practices.

Technology & Tools. Leverage technology and innovation to get the job done.

Adaptability. Anticipate and adapt to changing circumstances.

Draft Top Priority SWOC: Operations

Strengths:

- Sound infrastructure: tight system; few service outages; redundant water supply sources
- High level of fiscal strength
- Commitment to asset management principles

Opportunities:

- Discovering and implementing efficiency opportunities
- Improving collaboration and integration with other departments and agencies
- Ensuring sound financial practices

Weaknesses:

- Inefficient and excessive processes
- Lack of effective prioritization of work

Challenges:

- Insufficient drainage infrastructure in pockets of the City
- Limited influence/control on major cost centers (wastewater treatment; charges from other City departments)
- Other agency projects affecting SPU infrastructure in rights-of-way
- Underperforming infrastructure