

### **Summary of Input from the May 14, 2014 Joint Meeting of the SPU Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs).**

Note: Members of all three CACs were invited to attend the meeting; about 15 members participated, plus several SPU staff. Nancy Ahern led the meeting; Noel Miller participated by phone, Carl Pierce and Karen Reed attended. Nancy presented a PowerPoint overview of the Panel's process and the Plan development and fielded most of the questions. Noel, Carl and Karen all spoke about the Panel process and some of the Panel's deliberations.

#### Overview of Input:

- Attendees appreciated the opportunity to hear more about the strategic plan and asked a number of good questions.
- The same concern about rate affordability heard in the public process was also voiced as part of this discussion. Some CAC members felt that 4.6% average annual rate increases are too high.
- Question about how service equity issues are incorporated into the Plan and desire to see it highlighted.
- Questions about several programmatic reductions.
- Desire for more detail about the listed programmatic cuts.
- Desire to see more detail about the proposed action plans.

#### Write-up of K. Reed Notes:

**Comment:** There is a lot of information here to be able to adequately comment on tonight.

**Question:** How are equity and social justice considerations being addressed in the Plan? Important to call these out. **Answer:** ESJ issues are a theme in the Plan and there is an action plan on equity.

**Question:** Why is the waste prevention promotion program being cut? How big of a cut is this? What does this program do? **A:** This program supports things like carpet recycling, mulch mover subsidies, mattress recycling. This will reduce the budget for consultants but the program will still have a lot of staff; nothing is being zeroed out.

**Question:** SPU recently announced plans at a neighborhood meeting to expand rain gardens and other green infrastructure. Will this still happen? **A:** Yes. The reductions here represent a very small reduction in the budget to manage the program.

**Question:** Has the Mayor' office said anything about the 4.6% path. Seems high. **A:** The Panel shares this concern. We spent a long time looking at why the costs are going up so much. Encourage CAC members to read the "Baseline Story" document.

**Question:** Rates are too high. How does this rate of increase compare to growth in incomes? **A:** The rate increases are higher than increases in household income.

**Question:** What is driving the regulatory costs? **A:** CSO consent decree will cost about \$500M to implement; superfund clean-ups are also big ticket items.

**Question:** How do SPU's rates compare to other utility rates? **A:** We've compared our rates to other utilities, they're generally comparable though our water rates can be somewhat higher. National indices show that water and sewer costs are across the county growing and expected to grow at rates much faster than inflation.

**Comment:** Can we get links showing other city utility rates and the Baseline Story? **A:** Yes.

**Question:** I'm concerned that the forest resiliency study has been cut, and that environmental education has been cut. These seem like really small programs and the cuts should be restored. **A:** The cuts to these programs are linked to declining work in the HCP.

**Question:** Shouldn't you complete the seismic study work before undertaking the emergency planning work? They're related. **A:** they are related in some ways but there are emergency plans and practices that we can do independent of that.

**Comment:** Action plan summary descriptions are really detailed but the programmatic reductions are cryptic. Can you explain these more and give us information of how big the cuts are as compared to the total programs? **A:** We will do that.

**Question/Comment:** Why reduce the wastewater behavioral change campaign by 25%? CWAC may be willing to help out to offset this cut. **A:** The cut will reduce the amount of outreach we can do as part of the "Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)" program. This reduction has to do with education around the use of "disposable" wipes in areas near pump stations.

**Question:** Can you post all the "cuts and adds" proposals so we can see them in some organized way? **A:** Yes.

**Comment:** I hear green buildings aren't performing. We shouldn't spend more money on this. **A:** Panel was also concerned about this investment. There is no additional cost for this action plan. Focus is on how to proactively respond to green building that are being developed.

**Comment:** Please show the rate projections for each line of business-graph these out so we can compare the differences, and tell us the major reasons for the rate changes in each line of business.