



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: September 17, 2025 | 9:00 – 11:00 AM Approved
Meeting held at Seattle Municipal Tower, Conference Room 3217

MEETING ATTENDANCE					
Review Panel Members:					
Bruce Flory	√	Cristina Gina Sima	√	Louis Ernst	
Di Do	√	Kerry Meade		Oksana Savolyuk	√
Joel Paisner	√	Leo Lam	√	Ryan Monson	√
				Toyin Olowu	√
City Light:					
Dawn Lindell - GM & CEO	√	Craig Smith		Leigh Barreca	√
Angela Bertrand	√	DaVonna Johnson		Maura Brueger	
Andrew Strong		Grecia Elenes	√	Mike Haynes	
Bridget Molina	√	Julie Moore	√	Mujib Lodhi	√
Brittney Garcia Stubbs	√	Julie Ryan - RP Facilitator	√	Siobhan Doherty	√
Chris Ruffini					
Other Attendees:					
Caia Caldwell		Christie Parker	√	Eric McConaghy	
Justin Chan	√				

Welcome and Introductions. The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

- Welcome Cristina Sima as a new Review Panel member.

Public Comment. There was no public comment.

Standing Items:

Chair's Report. Leo Lam welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

Review Agenda. Julie Ryan reviewed the agenda.

Approval of July 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Minutes approved with an edit to add Louis Ernst was in attendance. (6 approve, 1 abstain, 2 absent)

Communications to Panel.

- All three nominees (two reappointments (Leo & Toyin) & one new appointment (Cristina)) are all moving forward in December to the SCLAC Committee for confirmation, scheduled for December 5th. Di Do will not continue another term.

General Manager's Update. GM Dawn Lindell presented.

Discussion around reliability. Seattle City Light is facing reliability issues. This challenge has been on the GM's "Top 14 Focus Areas" list. Much of the utility's infrastructure was built in the



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1970s. While those assets have served well, they are now 60+ years old and are beginning to fail, particularly underground direct-burying cables and their components. Those assets have served us well. The underground direct bury cable is at 60+years and it is failing and the components associated with that are failing.

Following the Western Energy Crisis, the utility focused on keeping rates low for nearly 20 years. The tradeoff was deferred maintenance and a "run to failure" approach, which is no longer sustainable for customers. We had a long 20-year period of doing that and unfortunately running to failure is not a strategy we can continue.

Since becoming GM & CEO last year, Dawn has been closely monitoring outages. Outages occur nearly every day, an issue she has not experienced in previous roles at higher-performing utilities (top 20% and top 10%). Seattle City Light's reliability performance is now below average among Large Public Power Council utilities, with outages increasing and reliability declining further over the last 18 months.

The utility is completing a comprehensive assessment of assets, including age, condition, and operational status. Repairs are prioritized by the condition of assets and frequency of outages in affected areas. Most franchise cities and many Seattle neighborhoods (outside of the Downtown network) are experiencing significant reliability issues. The Downtown network remains at "Grade A" reliability, all the radials that are off the Downtown network often fall between "D-" and "C" grade.

The Seattle Times published an article on the streetlight outages on the West Seattle Bridge link to [Article](#). While, streetlights are not a direct grid outage, but it touches on some of the problems that we are seeing. We got streetlights on the West Seattle Bridge out. The outages are caused due to people stealing copper wire. This is an ongoing problem where stolen copper is sold for profit, leaving streetlights out of service.

When did we learn about the problem?

Most of the trouble tickets were reported for the S Spokane St and the Swing bridge, not the West Seattle Bridge (WSB). We weren't aware of the full extent of the outage on the WSB until recently. The Swing bridge streetlights on the east approach were reported by SDOT bridge maintenance crews. SCL arranged to meet with SDOT at two locations to view the problem: Spokane St Swing bridge and S Lander Street bridge on **August 7, 2025**. Unfortunately, it's not a simple problem when copper is pulled. More research of the underground circuits and maps was needed to develop a plan of action. The timeline for repairs to be completed, in short term, we are working to get the lights back on the bridge to make the area safe for the public. Further work is needed to make additional repairs and ensure the future tamper proofing of the system. We have completely secured lids, vaults, tamper-proof vaults and they have still broken them. This will likely include civil work and permitting to move forward.

What steps are being taken to secure the area to prevent reoccurrence?

Temporary ecology block(s) are proposed to be placed in front of the electrical cabinet on the north side of S Spokane St to prevent entry and unauthorized tampering. Additional civil



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construction works to replace and modify underground electrical handholes is proposed in several locations. This work will be submitted for Street Use permits. Unfortunately, the wire theft continues to be persistent despite SCL taking measures to install tamper-proof materials.

We have been actively securing our facilities wherever possible. However, certain areas continue to experience higher levels of streetlight wire theft and vandalism, particularly locations with lower public traffic where perpetrators have greater seclusion. As we discover these vulnerabilities, we're adapting and developing prevention solutions.

Do we have a database to track what/how many streetlights have been damaged by wire theft? We have recently established an internal process to help us track the cause of streetlight outages so we can identify the increase in volume of wire theft.

Has SCL established whether it's vandalism, theft, or both?

Both. Other components are being damaged for thieves to better access areas.

Officially, how many were damaged?

It's estimated that approx. 71 streetlights of more than 200 lights on the high-rise sections of the WSB, and approx. 15 streetlights on the Swing bridge east approach as well. When crews investigated, they found that there were additional components including a streetlight cabinet and handholes that required repair City Light Security will continue to coordinate with Seattle Police Department when we encounter these types of issues.

Is this being investigated by law enforcement or other sleuths? City Light Security will continue to coordinate with Seattle Police Department when we encounter these types of issues.

What can the public do to help prevent future theft and vandalism?

Use [Find It, Fix It app](#) to report dark streetlights and occurrences of wire theft. Together, we will be able to deter and reduce this type of criminal activity.

What is the cost to ratepayers?

There is no incremental addition to rates currently.

Additional Notes on Copper Theft.

- Thieves open handholes (underground vault or box used to access electric cabling), cut the wire, and pull it out. They strip the outer rubber casing off and then sell the copper at recycling businesses.
- Some recyclers in our area have a strict protocol in place to prevent purchasing stolen copper; other recyclers are not so discerning.
- Typically, wire theft is discovered after the fact, often during outage response, inspections, or while addressing service disruptions. City Light's primary focus is on restoring service and securing the area.



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- Smaller-scale thefts without actionable evidence may not be formally reported to SPD. For example, we reported to SPD major thefts involving significant infrastructure damage and material loss at the Magnolia Bridge, Lander Street Bridge, and West Seattle Bridge.
- We have evaluated several different fasteners, covers, and handhole lids with varying degrees of success. We have adopted some of these measures to our standards where feasible with the infrastructure.

The Seattle Times – Vandals leave high West Seattle Bridget in the dark Article Link:

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/vandals-leave-high-west-seattle-bridge-in-the-dark/>

Now back to the overall grid. In the areas of Beacon Hill and Yesler Terrace, the Seattle Times also published a story after a series of outages, which residents rightly raised to them. We are aware of several outages affecting Yesler Terrace, First Hill, and North Beacon Hill over the past two months.

- **On September 5 and September 15**, outages were caused by failed wire splices in two separate locations. Same root cause, different locations.
- **On July 26 and September 10**, outages were caused by balloons and birds.
- **On August 27**, no cause was found.

Also, throughout the spring and summer, because this area's equipment is on the far downhill side of its useful life, we have done several planned outages. Planned outages are just as frustrating as unplanned outages, but at least customers are notified and can plan around them. These were routine maintenance.

Since two of the recent outages were caused by failed wire splices, crews will be conducting visual and infrared scans of all the wires in the area to identify similar weaknesses and address them. We are also reviewing historical data to assess potential system design changes. For example, using a different type of spice could help reduce future outages or speed up restoration times.

Q: Direct bury situation – Are there particular areas in the service territory that are worse? What is the long-term plan and how do you stage that?

A: Yes, there are areas that are worse. When we have an area that is severely affected but lacks the funding to replace all direct-bury cables, we replace component parts and hope it helps. We have done this in Tukwila, Burien, Lake Forest Park, Shoreline, and other neighborhoods. Currently, we are replacing about 5 miles of direct-bury cable per year, prioritized by where outages are most frequent.

Q: Is it the age of the cable that is causing the failure or something else?



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A: The failures are due to both age of cable and the old component parts. We are currently replacing about 5 miles of direct-bury cable per year, but we have more than 300 miles that are over 60 years old. This is an urgent issue, and we need to solve it now. We estimate the cost at \$2 billion for underground cable and an additional \$1 billion for component parts. Altogether, this is a \$3 billion project we hope to complete in the next 7-12 years. In the future, we will bury cables in conduit. When the cable ages, a new conductor can be hooked to the old one and pulled through the conduit at a far lower cost, putting new cable in the ground. This project will be expensive, painful, and a lot of work, but we are preparing. It will be included in our next budget, and we will plan for the 12-year scope while also looking at options to accelerate the timeline. The Review Panel will have insight into this, and we will continue to talk it through.

Q: City Light has copper all over the place, but are streetlights the primary target for theft?

A: For copper theft, yes. But thieves have also taken it from our yard (entire rolls of copper). They target streetlights because they are low voltage. EV chargers are also experiencing consistent theft.

Q: Is the continual replacement and repair of streetlights due to copper theft a major cost, or more of an annoyance?

A: It's much cheaper than replacing direct-buried cable, but the costs have exceeded more than a million dollars. The General Fund covers streetlight costs, which means less money for Seattle Fire Department, less money for Seattle Police Department, and fewer resources overall. It also takes Seattle City Light crews and engineers away from other critical work. So, the cost goes far beyond repairs alone.

- **City Light in the community**

- We hosted Senator Patty Murray at our Denny Substation. She led a roundtable panel with leaders from clean energy and climate action to discuss the federal cuts to clean energy tax credits in the recently passed Reconciliation 2 Bill and the far-reaching impacts it will have on the region's environment, economy, and energy security. In addition to myself, participants included Senator Murray, Washington State Commerce Director Joe Nguyen, Political Director for IBEW Local 77 Christine Reid, Climate Solutions Executive Director Gregg Small, and General Manager of Western Solar in Bellingham, Brandon Provalenko. Sen. Murray's team was deeply appreciative of the support provided by City Light staff in facilitating the event.
- On August 14th, we hosted Eastern Washington Representative, Michael Baumgartner, and his staff at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the grand opening of Metaline Falls Portage Park, a project that highlights the strong connection between City Light's energy policies, cultural heritage and economic vitality in Pend Oreille (PAWN-DER-RAY) County, home of our Boundary hydro facility. In the words of Rep. Baumgartner, "This beautiful new park, made possible by Seattle City Light's commitment to protecting the Boundary Dam, offers accessible trails, picnic areas, and stunning viewpoints while honoring the Kalispel people's historic portage routes. Beyond recreation, Seattle City Light is a major employer and



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economic cornerstone in Pend Oreille County. Their investment in this project reflects a dedication to supporting the local economy, enhancing our lands, and preserving our cultural heritage.”

- **City Light Award**

- City Light was named a 2025 Trusted Business Partner by Escalent, a leading data analytics and advisory firm specializing in human behavior research. This recognition places City Light among the top-performing utilities in the nation. The award highlights our commitment to providing exceptional customer service and reflects City Light’s ongoing efforts to serve as more than just an energy provider. We strive to serve as a strategic partner, helping businesses explore options for cost savings, sustainability initiatives, and environmental goals.

Link: Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the grand opening of Metaline Falls Portage Park with Michael Baumgartner, Eastern Washington Representative

<https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2025/08/19/celebrating-the-opening-of-the-metaline-falls-portage-park/>



Link: City Light was named a 2025 Trusted Business Partner by Escalent

<https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2025/07/31/seattle-city-light-earns-2025-trusted-business-partner-award/>



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Q: When you were talking about “run to failure” I assume there might still be some aspects where this approach works with low-consequence assets that can just be replaced at the time. Is that correct?

A: It is only streetlights. I would not run anything else to failure because it causes problems for our customers when they are without power.

When possible, we build loops into the system to reroute power in another direction if there is an outage. For example, the downtown network is built on loops upon loops, which lets us restore power within minutes. Outside the downtown network, our system has radials that, are not looped. If a radial goes out, we may have no backup path or only one alternate path, which makes restoration slower.

We want to be trusted, but multiple outages in short timeframes are eroding that trust. It will take years to correct, and it is extremely frustrating and, in some cases, frightening for our customers.

Comment: Outages are particularly frustrating when it’s not storm season.

Response: We live in an area with a lot of trees, so outages can still occur in spring, summer, and early fall. During the bomb cyclone last November, we had 114,000 customers out of service. This lasted 6 days; we received outside assistance, and without that help, the outages would have lasted much longer.

Clean Energy Implementation Plan – Presented by Grecia Elenes, Environmental Equity Advisor

Q: Load being met for energy; the total for 2026 is 92%. Where is SCL today?

A: It varies year by year. Our only non-emitting purchases are from the market. It’s in single digits. Approximately 5%. Our load is increasing, and we need to acquire new resources to meet our loads.



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Q: Have we seen huge data center demands?

A: We have received requests from data centers to connect to SCL, but none have moved toward implementation at this time.

Q: Is SCL worried about load growth and acquiring more resources?

A: Yes, we are concerned about load growth for our system and the region as a whole. . We are focused on acquiring new resources to meet that growth, whether it comes from data centers, electrification, or overall economic development. Building new clean resources has slowed due to federal policy changes and has become more costly with the loss of tax credits for new clean resources.

Q: Is that part of the New Large Load Program?

A: Yes. We will bring the new large load tariff to the Review Panel once it is completed. We are looking into how to work with large-load customers, as we have had ten inquiries for new large loads in the past year. Internally, we are also considering how to manage the financial perspective. We are doing both policy and customer work, and when it is ready, we will present it to the Review Panel.

Q: It's daunting to face a \$2–3 billion price to address the distribution system and also reach the state's 2045 clean energy goals. Given that we no longer have the federal government as a partner; and that is unlikely to change; is there any indication that the State of Washington will assist local utilities in meeting these goals? There is huge potential demand growth on top of these goals, which makes it difficult to see how we will meet them. There must be some recognition of the difficulty in securing already scarce resources, which increases costs, while also ensuring we can help residents transition to heat pumps and improve efficiency with windows and doors. How does SCL proceed under these constraints? Have tested what you have in the pipeline for resources versus your goals?

A: We are talking to developers to see how to accelerate development. Our hydro flexibility is important for integrating renewable resources, Dawn has been very clear since joining City Light that this will require significant investment. In the past, our focus was always on being the lowest-cost utility, but that has not served us well in the long term. She is being direct with elected officials, City Council, the Mayor's Office, and with customers that it is time to re-invest and that is the approach moving forward.

Link: <https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2025/06/10/seattle-university-students-propose-earthquake-cybersecurity-solutions-for-city-light/>

Strategic Roadmap Presentation – Angela Bertrand, Manager - Strategic Planning & Org. Performance

Q: Do you take the Strategic Roadmap 10-year Plan to Council?

A: We take the 6-year Strategic Plan to Council.

Q: To confirm, you identified focus areas, will break them down further, and this will help you develop programs with a timeline. I assume the budget is tied to these initiatives?



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A: Yes, that is correct. And we are trying to allow some flexibility in implementation as new ideas surface.

Q: Sustainability is a broad topic. Where would you ensure the utility can sustain its operations to sustainably meet the needs of community?

A: I would say it shows up strongly in section "Strategic Partnerships," such as partnering with high schools and creating jobs pipeline, so we have youth that is ready to join our workforce in the future.

Q: What about the utility itself, not just partnerships? How will you ensure there are enough linemen and crews? How will you train them, and how will you operate in different situations?

A: The section "Workforce" is where we address having a safe and secure work environment where people want to work. We need a skilled workforce with the abilities required both now and, in the future, supported by systems and processes that give employees what they need to do their jobs.

Additionally, the development of the 10-year plan is how we are ensuring sustainability. Each focus area contributes to making sure we are well positioned for the future.

Q: SCL does such a great job of keeping the Review Panel informed of broader transmission issues. Is this in the 10-year plan?

A: Yes. In the Power Supply section, there are three main parts:

- Maintaining existing generation assets - including both transmission and hydroelectric projects.
- Acquiring new resources - both transmission and generation. A key part of this strategy is understanding the ecosystem of businesses, policies, and rules we operate under in order to secure those resources.
- Managing demand and optimization - managing load growth and peaks on the demand side, while optimizing our carbon resources to ensure we are using them effectively in the market.

Dashboard Presentation – Angela Bertrand, Manager - Strategic Planning & Org. Performance

Q: Are you doing a monthly engagement survey

A: Yes. We conduct employee engagement surveys monthly, based on the month an employee was hired, and compare results to our broader survey.

Q: I am curious about the "Near misses" metric?

A: There has been a strong push on reporting and addressing near misses.



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Q: How do the executive staff use the dashboard?

A: Once a month, we review the metrics. If there are unfavorable results, we discuss the reasoning or action plans in the meeting and solve problems together.

October Agenda. Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), Strategic Planning updates.

Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.

Next meeting: October 15, 2025, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. (hybrid option)