



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: NOV 19, 2025 | 9:00 – 11:00 AM - DRAFT
Meeting held in SMT 3204 and via Microsoft Teams

MEETING ATTENDANCE					
Review Panel Members:					
Bruce Flory	x	Kerry Meade	x	Louis Ernst	x
Gina Cristina Sima	x	Leo Lam	x	Oksana Savolyuk	x
Joel Paisner	x	Kerry Meade	x	Ryan Monson	x
				Toyin Olowu	x
City Light:					
Dawn Lindell- <i>GM/CEO</i>	x	Craig Smith	x	Leigh Barreca	x
Angela Bertrand	x	Jeff Wolf	x	Maura Brueger	x
Andrew Strong	x		x	Mike Haynes	x
Bridget Molina	x	Julie Moore	x	Mujib Lodhi	x
Brittney Garcia Stubbs	x	Julie Ryan- <i>RP Facilitator</i>	x	Siobhan Doherty	x
Chris Ruffini	x	Carol Albert	x	Ingner Brinck	x
Kirsty Grainger	x	Rich Johnson	x		
Other Attendees:					
Caia Caldwell	x	Christie Parker	x	Eric McConaghy	x
Michelle Krall - Public	x	Megan Slade – Public	x	Nolan Brickwood	x
Julien Loh – Public/PSE	x				

Welcome and Introductions. The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Public Comment. There were two public comments:

1. Megan Slade, Beacon Hill Resident

Ms. Slade shared concerns about a recent City Light project on a street she resides, stating the work reflected significant gaps in planning, communication, and execution that contradict the Strategic Plan values of Customers First, Safe and Engaged Employees, and Environmental Stewardship. She noted there was no public notification and no information posted on City Light’s project webpage, even though residents are directed there for updates. After rumors of the project surfaced in early 2025, she and other residents sought details regarding the project’s purpose, timeline, and potential impact to the tree canopy, but City Light did not provide the requested information despite repeated outreach between April and August 2025. As a result, residents were left to ask work crews for clarification. Ms. Slade stated that project planning did not adequately consider impacts on the tree canopy and that requests for clear information about tree management have yielded contradictory responses. She noted that five young, healthy street trees are now recommended for removal, despite permit documents indicating no tree impacts. She emphasized the importance of tree canopy in South Seattle communities that already face environmental and health burdens and expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in the After-



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Action Review, particularly whether residents' experiences are being considered. Ms. Slade urged the committee to address systemic issues that led to these outcomes and prevent similar impacts in the future. She plans to submit a written follow-up.

2. Michelle Krall, Beacon Hill Community Member

Ms. Krall voiced concerns about City Light's communication practices and the need for vegetation impacts to be fully considered during project design. She encouraged the Review Panel to assess whether City Light's outreach and communication are applied consistently across neighborhoods and to examine how environmental impacts, especially tree canopy effects, are evaluated. She referenced a capital project on South Dakota Street that began in August 2025, noting that affected residents received no notification prior to the start of work. She stated that throughout the project, the utility was unapproachable and unresponsive, and that information provided was often limited or incorrect. Ms. Krall added that City Light's current design practices consider pole impacts but do not sufficiently account for how electrical lines affect existing and future vegetation, resulting in long-term impacts on both public and private trees. She emphasized that without improvements to customer communication, project planning, and vegetation management, future projects will continue to create negative impacts for customers, communities, and the environment.

Response to Public Comment:

Dawn Lindell, the General Manager and CEO of Seattle City Light, immediately addressed the issues raised. "I can tell you we know we failed. "We failed you," she acknowledged directly to Megan and Michelle. She explained that while the project itself may have been necessary, the utility failed to explain that need and engage the community on potential solutions. Dawn noted that breakdowns between the utility's communications and operations teams have led to poor external communication, calling it a "top focus area for us now." She introduced Inger Blink, who was recently brought on board specifically to help identify and improve these systemic process failures.

Mike Haynes, the current Chief Operating Officer, also responded, acknowledging he had met with Michelle on-site. He described the project as a "rarity" needed to move a line from one side of the street to another due to the size of the conductor. "We failed you on the communication aspect of it," Mike admitted. "We should have been notifying you in the planning stage of this, letting you know what was going to be occurring, when it was going to be occurring, and what those impacts were."

An action item was established for Mike Haynes to schedule a meeting with Megan and other residents. Mike confirmed a get-together was being planned for the 5th of December and that he would bring a small group of City Light employees to "reach a solution." Ingrid suggested that Megan and Michelle connect with Mike directly to coordinate further details.

Review Panel: We appreciate you bringing your concerns forward to us. Thank you for coming to the meeting today.

Standing Items:



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

Review Agenda. Julie Ryan reviewed the agenda.

Approval of October 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Minutes were approved.

Communications to Panel.

- Communications on the Review Panel Website - Angela reported that the Panel had not received any formal communications through its official mailbox. However, she communicated an update from Seattle IT, regarding the consolidation of materials on the panel's website, and encouraged Panel members to visit the site to familiarize themselves with past meeting content.

General Manager's Update. GM Dawn Lindell presented.

1. **Election Update.** We have been working hard at work preparing transition materials for Mayor-Elect Katie Wilson. These materials include a department overview and issue papers on several key topics, such as Skagit relicensing, asset improvements, generation and transmission needs, and necessary technology investments. This transition presents an important opportunity to clearly communicate our narrative around future rate increases.

In addition to the new administration, we will also welcome two new Council members: Eddie Lin, who is currently a deputy city attorney, who will succeed Councilmember Mark Solomon (and be sworn in later this month), and Dionne Foster, most recently the Executive Director at the WA Progressive Alliance and a former City of Seattle Senior Policy Advisor, who will succeed Council President Sara Nelson.

2. **COO Announcement.** We are pleased to share that our own Rob Santoff will be our new Chief Operating Officer. Rob was selected after a nationwide competitive process that included two panels who interviewed strong candidates from around the country. As many of you know, COO Mike Haynes will be retiring at the end of 2025 after 25 years of service long and illustrious career with City Light. Rob begins his new role effective immediately, allowing for a smooth transition between leaders and overlap in resolving issues. To ensure we do not have lost process improvements in that transition.

Rob began his career in 1995 as member of a tree trimming and removal crew with Asplundh Tree Expert Company, where he later moved up to crew foreman and eventually served as general foreman for 10 years. He became the Supervisor of T&D Operations at National Grid in 2015, then spent a year with Avangrid before joining Seattle City Light in March 2020 as the Manager of T&D Field Operations. He was named Director of T&D Field Operations in December 2020 and has served as Director of Network, Stations and Shops since June 2023. Rob holds an MBA from the University of Tennessee Chattanooga and recently completed the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) COO Certificate Program.



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The Review Panel thanked Mike for his many years of service at City Light.

3. On October 26 we held our Annual Light, Power, and Pride Employee Recognition event.

The celebration brought more than 400 employees together from across the utility to honor colleagues whose work exemplifies dedication, innovation, and collaboration. It was an afternoon filled with gratitude, pride, and stories that reminded us of why we do what we do, and how much we can accomplish together.

More than 200 employees were nominated for a Light, Power & Pride Award either as individuals, or as part of a team. Peers took time to lift one another up and share the many ways their colleagues make a difference. The committee reviewed all nomination packets and made their recommendations for 8 of the 9 possible awards. This year 58 nominees were recognized with an individual or team award.

Each award recipient reflected one or more of City Light's values that you learned about last month, from "Accountability in every action, pride in our craft" to "Collaborate intentionally, listen deeply, achieve more together." These values came to life through acts of leadership, innovation, service, and teamwork that strengthen not just our operations, but our community.

4. An update on Large Load. During our last meeting, you requested an update on our proposed Large Load Policy. We are continuing outreach and discussion with customers about the proposed new large load policy. Based on feedback received, the definition of a new large load has been simplified from what we shared with you in June: it now applies to any new or increased service entrance of 10 MVA or more. Also, we will not serve these new large loads until a PPA is secured and all necessary infrastructure is in place —effectively creating a queue for new large loads.

The initial draft had a secondary definition based on peak demand, which could have applied to existing customers, along with a transitional rate. While demand-based definitions are common in other utilities' policies, it doesn't make sense for Seattle. Almost all customers would need to upgrade their service to reach this threshold, making the additional definition unnecessary.

The policy is complete and ready to move forward, but we are holding it until the new year. We will be assigned a new Council committee in 2026, and there is only one more committee meeting in 2025 for City Light, in December. One meeting isn't enough to get a policy like this passed through Council, so we will wait until 2026.

5. 10/26 Storm Review. October 26 brought our first major storm of the season, knocking out power to more than 250,000 customers across Western Washington. High winds and heavy rain, combined with saturated ground and late-season foliage, increased damage from falling branches and trees that haven't yet shed their leaves. Branches were the leading cause of outages.



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Despite the challenging conditions, teams across the utility mobilized quickly to provide a safe and effective response.

Peak wind gusts were recorded at 43 mph at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Saturday, at the height of the storm, more than 34,000 customers across our service area were without power.

Crews worked through the night to assess damage and clear fallen trees, downed lines, and failed poles. We restored power to nearly 99% of impacted customers within 24 hours of the storm's onset.

- 6. 11/18 Key Customer Meeting.** Yesterday, we held our annual Key Customer Forum, attended by about 40 of our major customers. The discussion focused on the key challenges and opportunities facing City Light — including rising demand, the need to identify and procure new resources, our aging assets and infrastructure, and the importance of investing in technology.

This year's event was built on the feedback we received during our June virtual meeting with key customers, where we heard concerns about growing energy needs, strong support for renewable energy and efficiency, a desire for improved access to data, and an interest in deeper partnerships. All these priorities are central to our strategic plan.

We featured a panel of experts — Andy Strong, Siobhan Doherty, David Logsdon, and Joe Fernandi — who shared how City Light is addressing these focus areas. The event concluded with discussions on how we can strengthen our partnerships to meet these challenges together.

7. City Light in the Community

Our Seattle City Light staff participated in a Federal Worker Resources Fair hosted by the Port of Seattle at SeaTac Airport on Wednesday, Oct. 22. The target audience was TSA, FAA and CBP workers who show up every day without pay to keep the airport running smoothly. City Light's Melissa Bookwalter and Kyla Locke promoted awareness of our bill assistance programs. They were joined by DON staff and Community Liaisons who provided language support. More than 200 people came by the City Light table, including Rep. Pramila Jayapal.

Eric Schinfeld, the Port's Sr. Manager, Federal & International Government Relations, shared the following thank you: Please accept the deepest gratitude from the Port of Seattle, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and me for a fantastic event today. It exceeded my wildest expectations in every way, and I know it made a major impact on the TSA workers and other federal employees who showed up. Thank you so much for taking the time to be there, for supporting this important effort, and for all that you do.

Q: Existing Seattle businesses that are required to transition from gas to electric infrastructure are not data centers, but they are existing Seattle businesses that will also



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face additional charges. Are there are ways to mitigate these impacts or consider these entities differently from other large loads?

A: Thank you for that question. This is one of those “caught between a rock and a hard place” situations. City Light currently offers approximately forty conservation and electrification programs, including financial assistance. However, as a public utility, City Light is bound by state law and cannot shift costs from one rate class to another. The entity that benefits from electric service must pay the associated costs. Because City Light is not a for-profit utility, it has no reserves to absorb expenses, and 100 percent of costs must be covered by ratepayers. Staff noted that the utility is exploring legally allowable incentive pathways to help support electrification, in order to help businesses identify the most efficient conservation measures that may help reduce overall load or costs.

Some existing commercial customers may exceed the 10 MVA threshold as they undergo fuel-switching projects. The utility has met with several of those customers who initially expected to exceed that threshold, and some ultimately determined their planned expansions would remain below it. The customers most likely to experience challenges are the largest users with substantial decarbonization plans, such as University of Washington, Port of Seattle and CenTrio

Q: Can you clarify whether existing large-load customers would be charged differently under the new policy?

A: Existing customers have already paid for the infrastructure that currently serves them, and they will not be charged again for that existing load. The policy applies only when an existing customer adds new load at a scale that requires the utility to either build or procure additional energy or capacity. In those cases, City Light must recover the upfront and ongoing costs associated with delivering that new service. City Light stated Seattle has historically benefited from low-cost hydropower, but new power resources are expected to cost significantly more, which must be reflected in rates.

Q: Is there a comprehensive external communications plan for customers likely to be affected by the new policy, including clear information about potential impacts and guidance on how to connect with the appropriate City Light staff for support and available load-offset resources?

A: City Light has identified 13 customers who may be directly impacted. Each of these customers has received at least one one-on-one meeting, and additional meetings are planned in the coming days to ensure ongoing direct outreach. City Light emphasized that engagement with these customers occurs regularly and noted that, like the CenTrio example discussed earlier, the utility expects to continue close collaboration as both parties work through project needs and implications. City Light is initiating a study to evaluate system tradeoffs and potential value streams. Any system benefits identified through that analysis would be credited to the affected customer.

Continuous Improvement Program Inger Brinck presented. Materials in the packet.



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Q: Plan, Do, Act, Check – What does that mean? Isn't do and act the same thing?

A: We first plan to understand problem and confirm if we have a problem? Then we check to to make sure we are getting it done well. "Act: is the opportunity to adapt and improve. .

Q: How will City Light plan to scale its continuous improvement efforts across teams?

A: We are taking a two-pronged approach. One component focuses on working directly with Directors, and the other is partnering with line staff and their managers to build consistent practices at the operational level. The current continuous improvement team is small, and achieving meaningful scale will require significantly expanding internal capacity. The goal is to develop a broad group of Lean Six Sigma-trained employees who can help establish and sustain these improvement structures across the organization.

Q: City Light has been working on SCL Values- and talking about values. Will there be more formalized incentives or demonstrate this continuous improvement. Such as coaching. Have you thought about formalizing it?

A: City Light is taking a holistic approach by integrating both hard goals and soft skills competencies into evaluations, with an emphasis on how employees demonstrate those competencies in their work. As process improvement structures mature, there is an opportunity to incorporate City Light's values into these frameworks. While no formal program has been rolled out yet, this work is actively evolving.

Additionally, that the utility is moving forward with several engagement efforts, including visual materials such as posters in facilities, internal communications, and a peer-recognition program designed to highlight colleagues who exemplify City Light's values. Please share with us any ideas you have for recognition and building skills internally.

Q3 Financials Update Finance Director Chris Ruffini presented; materials are in the packet.

Q: Which of the financial requirements is binding, and which are the most challenging to exceed? If we have choices, we want to understand which targets we should strive to improve.

A: The binding requirement is the Debt Service Coverage (DSC) ratio. The degree of difficulty in meeting or exceeding it varies by year, largely depending on the size of the capital program. In some years, the utility must set a higher DSC target to maintain sufficient borrowing capacity and avoid becoming overly leveraged. City Light emphasized its goal of managing finances prudently to ensure long-term stability and readiness for future needs.

Q: Is the current reserve amount sufficient to manage market volatility?

A: City Light explained that while the reserve helps, no reserve amount can fully protect the utility from large swings in the energy market. The current level is adequate for normal conditions, but it will not be enough as City Light brings on new, more expensive power resources. Market prices are expected to nearly double, which will put added pressure on rates and the Reserve. We will be looking at what changes could be made going forward.



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Panel member: I'd like to reiterate my request to SCL to partner with customers behind the meter on consumption. Allow customers to produce their own energy, store it, sell it back to the utility. We need to modernize our approach to energy procurement; we can't use the old model.

A: We are researching in-home and business batteries, where we could call on customers' energy when we face a shortage. Customers would have backup at home should their power go out. We are happy to encourage customers to use solar power, although solar intensity is much lower in this region. And we need to connect the customer generation safely.

Q How does the RSA surcharge affect vulnerable customers, who may feel the impact disproportionately?

A: The utility's goal is to maintain fairness and transparency. The RSA is a rate like other rates. Where vulnerable customers get assistance is in the UDP program with discounts applied to the total bill. City Light has a top-tier discount bill program, which is among the most generous in the region, as well as safety-net resources that help customers keep their power on and avoid disconnection. Additional assistance funds are available during Energy Bills Assistance events and through the Climate Commitment Act. City Light emphasized that if changes to these programs are considered, they will bring those proposals back to the Review Panel.

Q: The RSA collects money in advance to stabilize rates; is there more City Light can do to smooth out the impact on customers?

A: The utility has already adjusted how the RSA turns on and off to make it more predictable. City Light noted that any future changes must balance equity, fairness, affordability, and stability.

Q: The RSA includes an automatic 4% surcharge that can increase to 5% -7.5%. Once the reserve level is restored, the surcharge is removed. Is that correct?

A: Yes. If off-system power sales generate more revenue than needed, City Light must return to the City Council to discuss how those additional funds should be used. The utility also noted that the reserve will likely need to increase over time.

Q: Can you speak to drivers on rate increases? What is the magnitude and what is causing this?

A: This information will be provided as part of the Strategic Plan process. The utility will break down the drivers of the increases, and Chris will share the rate ordinance for additional detail.

Q: When reviewing charts like this, can you show how much the increase is due to rising costs versus general inflation?

A: City Light agreed this is a helpful request and committed to providing that breakdown in future materials.



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Panel member suggestion: Please also provide a list of - or discussion of- demand-side initiatives intended to help mitigate projected rate increases, quantified where possible. The member noted that City Light clearly communicates the scale of anticipated rate increases. Pairing that information with new demand-side mitigation strategies in the same place could be helpful. I recognize it is challenging to quantify.

Strategic Plan Update Angela Bertrand presented; materials are in the packet.

Q: When will we see the draft strategic plan?

A: March is the timeframe for the draft strategic plan, in addition to the rate path.

Q: What is the status of the Time-of-Use program? It was expected to roll out earlier but has not yet launched.

A: The rollout was delayed due to issues with the vendor. A key member of their team became seriously ill, and later system testing uncovered additional problems on the vendor side. Because a smooth launch is important for an opt-in program, the decision was made to pause rather than move forward with unresolved issues. The team is working to ensure everything is fully ready before implementation. Thank you for asking and we appreciate the accountability.

January Agenda. IRP, Rate Path Foundations, Load Forecast

Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Next meeting: January 21, 2025, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.