



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: MAR 18, 2026 | 9:00 – 11:00 AM – Approved
Meeting held in SMT 3204 and via Microsoft Teams

MEETING ATTENDANCE					
Review Panel Members:					
Bruce Flory	x	Kerry Meade	x	Oksana Savolyuk	x
Cristina Gina Sima	-	Leo Lam	x	Ryan Monson	x
Joel Paisner	x	Louis Ernst	x	Toyin Olowu	x
City Light:					
Craig Smith Int. GM	x	Julie Ryan RP Facilitator	x	Leigh Barreca	x
Rob Santoff Int. GM, Eff. 4/9	x	Raman Vishwanathan	x	Maura Brueger	x
Dennis McLerran Dep. GM	x	Carsten Croff	x	Carol Albert	x
Angela Bertrand	x	Kirsty Grainger	x	Mujib Lodhi	x
Bridget Molina	x	Tarney Sheldon	x	Siobhan Doherty	x
Chris Ruffini	x	Jenny Levesque	x		
Other Attendees:					
Paul Menefee	x	Christie Parker	x	Eric McConaghy	x
Julien Loh - PSE	x	Ellen Pepin-Cato (LundFaucett)	x	Vanessa Lund (LundFaucett)	x
Adam Day - CenTrio	x				

Welcome and Introductions. The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

Public Comment. There was no public comment.

Standing Items:

Chair’s Report. Leo Lam welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. He explained to the Review Panel that there are only a few meetings left before City Light finalizes its strategic plan and the Review Panel has been requested to provide its letter by April 24. He emphasized that it will be very important for Panel Members to ask their questions today.

Review Agenda. Julie Ryan reviewed the agenda.

Approval of February 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Minutes were approved.

Communications to Panel.

- Angela Bertrand commented that today’s meeting will focus on the strategic plan content and rate path. Members were encouraged to ask questions, request additional



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

information, and seek clarification to allow time for City Light to respond. The goal is to address all items before finalizing and submitting the letter to Council.

General Manager's Update. Interim GM Craig Smith presented.

1. Utility restructure and introductions of Dennis and Rob (in his new future role)

Rob Santoff has been appointed Interim General Manager effective April 1, and Dennis McLerren will serve as Deputy General Manager. The search for a permanent General Manager will commence in September.

2. Skagit

We're excited to share that Seattle City Light has reached a landmark Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Relicensing Settlement with Tribes, state, and federal agencies, and other partners. This comprehensive settlement agreement sets a shared path forward for managing the Skagit watershed, including restoring salmon habitat, protecting tribal cultural resources, managing flood risk in downstream communities, enhancing public recreation, and continuing to deliver reliable, carbon-free energy for decades to come.

We are taking the settlement to Council Committee later today! After it is reviewed and approved by the City Council and signed by the City, will become part of the City's formal license application to FERC for a new 50-year license to operate the Skagit Project, which provides about 20% of City Light's electricity.

Q: Do you know the rate impact from the settlement and the likelihood of FERC approval.

A: The licensing process is lengthy, with license approval anticipated around 2030. Near-term rate impact is estimated at ~0.5% annually, with long-term impacts uncertain and dependent on implementation costs. We are estimating approximately \$4 billion capital costs over the 50-years of the license. The settlement agreement enhances the likelihood of FERC approval.

3. American Public Power Association: Diamond Level Designation

City Light is proud to share that we have earned a **Diamond Level** Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation from the American Public Power Association. This is the highest possible designation, earning over 98% of the points based on industry-recognized leading practices in four important disciplines:

- Reliability
- Safety
- Workforce Development
- System Improvement

An RP3 designation is a sign of a utility's dedication to operating an efficient, safe, and reliable distribution system. Being recognized by the RP3 program demonstrates to community leaders, governing board members, suppliers, and service providers a utility's commitment to its employees,



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

customers, and community. Currently, 251 of the nation's more than 2,000 public power utilities hold an RP3 designation.

4. Cost Savings at Fremont Brewing

Employees in the Customer Energy Solutions Division recently helped Fremont Brewing save more than \$36,000 in annual energy costs! Staff across the utility worked with Cascade Energy, a consultant from Bonneville Power Administration's Industrial Strategic Energy Management Program, to find potential savings for the local brewery.

The team identified that a simple adjustment to the brewery's chiller settings could improve efficiency. This small change will also reduce the wear and tear on their refrigeration equipment, extending its lifespan. Additionally, they recommended installing a fast-acting door to further enhance efficiency. By combining the low-cost chiller adjustment with a higher-cost energy-saving solution, Fremont Brewing "qualified for more incentive funding than either would have on its own," Ted explained.

"Working with City Light has been great," said Matt Lincoln, Director of Brewing Operations. "It was very easy, didn't take up a ton of time, and [the team] did most of the work." Fremont Brewing's story is just one example of how we help businesses lower their operating costs and improve their energy performance through solutions like instant LED discounts, energy-efficient HVAC upgrades, and personalized project support.

5. Engineers Week

In late February 22-28 we celebrated Engineers' Week. This year's theme was "Invent the Future," and celebrated the innovative minds shaping our communities and inspiring the next generation of problem solvers. At Seattle City Light, we're proud to have over 200 engineers working across a variety of disciplines, from civil and distribution planning to standards and streetlight engineering. They tackle complex challenges with creativity and innovative problem solving including:

- **Powering the future of public transit.** In November 2025, Seattle City Light engineers helped energize King County Metro's Tukwila Bus Base. The 544,000-square-foot, all-electric bus base can power 120 electric buses at once, making it one of the largest electric public transit bus bases in the U.S. This milestone required innovative problem-solving as engineers explored ways to meet demand without overloading existing infrastructure. Our engineers are the heroes behind the project, working closely with King County Metro to determine available capacity, design an efficient and cost-effective distribution layout, and clear hurdles before they became an issue.
- **Upgrading the grid for FIFA.** Engineers play a vital role in ensuring our energy grid meets future demands. Near Pioneer Square, we recently completed civil construction and electrical upgrades to improve reliability. These improvements will also benefit Lumen Field ahead of the FIFA World Cup 26™ this summer. A key part of this project was reconductoring: replacing old electrical wires (conductors) with new, higher-capacity ones. These new cables can carry more electricity along existing routes, helping us meet growing energy needs without building new power lines. This process strengthens our electrical grid's backbone, making the system more resilient and less prone to outages, especially during periods of high demand.
- **Boosting reliability in Burien.** Engineering is essential to modernizing our electrical infrastructure, including replacing aging direct-buried cables with new ones housed in electrical



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

conduit, —a protective pipe or tube. In Burien’s Hurstwood neighborhood, we’re upgrading the system with more than 20,000 linear feet of new cable— the length of about 60 football fields. Once complete, this project will replace the deteriorating system, significantly reducing the risk of power outages. During construction, crews encountered an unexpected challenge: unmarked underground utilities. Adapting the project design required quick thinking and collaboration

Q: City Light has been in the news, with developers noting service connections as a constraint to constructing additional housing, adding to housing density. Can you comment on that?

A: Improving service connections and timelines is a priority and reflected in the strategic plan. The current system was designed for lower density, and upgrades are needed to support increased demand safely. Efforts are underway to move forward while addressing system limitations, safety, and cost. Tradeoffs remain between accelerating processes and avoiding additional costs.

Q: There are benefits to increasing housing density in the city. Have you thought about who should pay for it?

A: Cost responsibility is still under discussion, including impacts to the rate path and investment needs such as direct bury cable and large new loads. The focus is on balancing costs while maintaining an equitable rate path for customers. The mayor has a plan for increasing shelter for people in need, such as adding small house villages. Near-term housing efforts are moving forward with innovative solutions, while prioritizing safety and reliability. Different options for cost allocation are being considered.

Q: Will there will be a reordering of the Strategic Plan under the new GM and potential impacts to system reliability and rate increases? I represent franchises who suffer the most from reliability issues on City Light’s system.

A: The Strategic Plan remains unchanged, grounded in prior stakeholder and customer input, including the SWOT analysis. Sustainability and reliability continue to be core priorities, with an unwavering commitment to addressing these priorities. The mayor understands the priorities and needs, which align with her priorities.

Strategic Plan: Draft Content Vanessa Lund and Ellen Pepin-Cato (from LundFaucett) reviewed the strategic plan content and collected feedback.

Q: AI – Does SCL use AI?

A: SCL is not currently using AI. The City has an AI policy in place, and any future AI use will align with that policy and prioritize security.

Comment: We should prioritize the financial health of the utility – this is the other end of affordability, and we need to find a balance. Perhaps use this as context for the higher rate proposal.



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

A: We plan to spend more time on the financial drivers in this plan and talk about the need for system improvement. On the topic of affordability, we will also provide information resources for customers.

Q: I see a gap in distributed energy and demand side resources in the Power Supply focus area. Are distributed resources, such as solar, peak shifting, and other non-centralized strategies included?

A: Distributed energy resources, including demand response, are included in the IRP and will be reflected in the plan.

Q: My stakeholders are seeing and living through high Puget Sound Energy rate increases and I see how customers are impacted. How are we increasing enrollment in City Light's affordability programs? And are we offering tiered discounts to reduce the energy burden for customers?

A: We will address this in the strategic plan. We are discussing this with the mayor's office and Seattle Public Utilities, as well as the agency that helps us with the income eligibility criteria. We are building partnerships, working on auto-enrollment enrollment options, and income qualification changes. We may have a decision on tiered discounts in May. We were very close to meeting our enrollment goal in 2025.

Q: How are we using DERMS to leverage customer-side resources? This was something we discussed in the letter we wrote for the prior plan. A DERMS system would allow you to integrate Virtual Power Plants (VPPs).

A: The Utility Technology Roadmap includes a phased approach to DERMS, enabling use of customer-side resources and future virtual power plant capabilities. The interim step is to work with DERMS Edge providers, and then advance to distributed management system, and finally to DERMS Utility. We can start the VPPs once we have DERMS Edge.

Q: Will there be a mention of VPPs in the strategic plan?

A: Yes. We may refer to research we are doing. Keep in mind that we will not list every activity City Light is working on in the strategic plan, as we are shifting from reporting activities to focusing on the Outcomes. This is because the Outcomes hold us accountable to delivering results.

Q: What's the timeline for Time of Use rates?

A: We are currently doing an internal pilot and the results of that will allow us to set our timeline in late April or early May. This will set the pace for the transition from TOU an initial opt-in phase opt-out. The full roll-out may take us two years.

Q: Given that (1) Washington state has the most regressive state and local taxes in the country, that (2) the state seeks to reduce or remove some of the most regressive taxes as it brings on an income tax, and (3) utility taxes on water,



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

wastewater and energy are among the most regressive, when is the right time for us to discuss reducing the utility tax at the city and state level?

A: Customers participating in the Utility Discount Program see a 60% reduction in the utility tax. There is not enough time to address the tax policy in this strategic plan, but it will be added to the Panel's upcoming two year plan.

Rate Path Outline Chris Ruffini presented. Materials are in the packet.

Q: That rate increase is large – perhaps it's time we stop and explore the utility business model?

A: We are pursuing things as they make sense. We must make key financial investments to unlock business model changes like this, and transition is expensive. We are also recognizing where we once had a partner in the Federal Government, we are needing to pay for more things on our own. As an example, ADMS is a \$90m investment. We had hoped to get GRIP grant funding for this, and that disappeared with the change in administration.

Rate Stabilization Account Kirsty Grainger presented. Materials are in the packet.

Q: Looking at the 9.5% rate increase, compounded over 6 years it is quite a large number. Is this averaged across all the rate classes? We have to be mindful of what our customers can afford.

A: Yes, this is averaged across all customer classes. That is how we historically report the rate trajectory in the strategic plan.

Q: Are you benchmarking this proposed rate increase compared to those of other utilities? Are future power purchases and large load impacts on ratepayers included in this?

A: The 9.5% reflects a balance between system needs and customer affordability. Yes, the estimated future power supply costs from the IRP and the cumulative load forecast are embedded in this rate forecast.

Benchmarking is ongoing, with other utilities who rolled out much higher rate increases the past two years compared to SCL and currently announcing very high current rate increases. The benchmarking challenge is that while we can gather historical and current rate increases, most utilities do not publish a forward rate path as we do. . Our direct buried underground cable and pole replacements are examples of fundamental infrastructure that we need to look at ensuring lasts into future generations.

Review Panel Letter – Julie Ryan walked through the schedule for the upcoming Review Panel meetings and the completion of the Review Panel letter. Following the next meeting on March 30, she will work with Leo Lam to draft a letter that will go to Review Panel members for review. She also said she would invite each Review Panel member to share their perspectives at the next two meetings.



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

March 30 Agenda. Rate Ordinance and continued discussion of the strategic plan and rate path.

Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Next meeting: March 30, 2026, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.