



City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: APR 22, 2026 | 1:30 – 3:30 PM - 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 Sima		Leo Lam	x	Ryan Monson	x
Joel Paisner	x	Louis Ernst	x	Toyin Olowu	
City Light:					
Rob Santoff Int. GM/CEO	x	Julie Ryan RP Facilitator	x	Leigh Barreca	x
Dennis McLerran Dep. GM	x	Raman Vishwanathan	x	Maura Brueger	x
Angela Bertrand	x	Carsten Croff	x	Colm Otten	x
Bridget Molina	x	Kirsty Grainger	x	Mujib Lodhi	x
Brendan Armstrong	x	Aditi Duggal	x	Siobhan Doherty	x
Chris Ruffini	x	Carol Albert	x	Kathryn Aisenberg	x
Marcus Jackson	x	Julie Moore	x	Joon Sohn	x
Andy Strong	x				
Other Attendees:					
Paul Menefee	x	Christie Parker	x	Eric McConaghy	x
Julien Loh - PSE		Vanessa Lund	x	Hannah Altshuler-Hansen	x
Adam Day - CenTrio	X	Ellen Pepin-Cato	x	Angela Hyland	x
Saym Imtiaz	x	Kelly Norton	x	Trevor Jex	x
Alice Lockhart	x	Carolyn McConnell	x	Bob (no last name given)	x
Emily Johnston	x	Joe Dougherty	x	Brooke Lather	x
Evan Sutton	x	Kristyn Joy	x	Evan Chen (Yawen)	x
Evan (no last name given)	x	Emily (no last name given)	x	Guest (no name)	x
Matt (no last name given)	x	Jasmine Cavazos	x	Guest (no name)	X
Anna (no last name given)	x				

Welcome and Introductions. The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m.

Public Comment:

- The Facilitator explained the Review Panel charter regarding public comment.
- 17 members of the public attended the meeting, with five attending in person. Nine provided public comment.
 - Eight of the commenters expressed concern about the prospect of data centers in City Light’s service territory, including concerns about water usage, pressure on clean energy



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resources, and impact on bills. Several encouraged increased transparency around agreements with data centers.

- Six of the commenters expressed concern that a Sabey Corporation representative serves on the Review Panel. Several referred to ICE leasing office space at their facilities. They stated support for immigrant communities.
- Two commenters discussed concern around rate increases, particularly for low-income community members.
- Two commenters encouraged prioritizing electrification efforts.

Standing Items:

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

Review Agenda. Julie Ryan reviewed the agenda.

Approval of March 30, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Minutes were approved.

Communications to Panel.

- Staff noted that a media inquiry was received through the Review Panel mailbox requesting the Panel's perspective on an underground rate policy. Staff followed up with the reporter to clarify their understanding, which resolved the inquiry and no further action was needed. The media policy for panel members was discussed.

General Manager's Update. Interim GM/CEO Rob Santoff presented.

1. Meeting with RP.

- Rob Santoff explained over the coming months, he would reach out to set up a time to meet with each panel member. He expressed interest in hearing about their time on the Panel and what matters most to them in this work.

2. Skagit Settlement Update

- On April 7th, City Council unanimously approved the Skagit settlement agreement. This is the result of years of collaboration, with the process to relicense the dams beginning in 2016.
- The agreement incorporates the latest science, tribal knowledge, and reflects public priorities of river restoration & recreation.
- Commitments include
 - Comprehensive fish passage and habitat programs
 - Continued prioritization of flood risk management
 - Tribal cultural access and protection of resources
 - Public recreation enhancements
 - Education and interpretation
 - Estuary and river restoration



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- Adaptive management frameworks grounded in ongoing scientific research and data sharing
- The legislation now heads to Mayor Wilson for a signature, with a signing ceremony scheduled for May 12th.
- Then City Light will file an amended license application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to begin the multi-year review and comment process, with the new license anticipated around 2030.

Review Panel Comment – A panel member described the Skagit settlement as a “tremendous result,” noting that when they first joined the Panel, it was uncertain the process would reach this point. The member acknowledged the complexity of the negotiations and the long-term financial commitments, and commended current and past contributors who helped advance the agreement.

3. Time of Use

- City Light staff shared that the new Time of Use rate will be available to residential customers in May 2026!
- As we’ve been preparing to make the rate available, a big part of our work has been building new tools to support customers. Alongside the rate, we’re launching an online tool called Energy Insights to help customers understand their electricity use and how the new rate could affect their bill.
- With this tool, customers will be able to compare their current rate and the time of use rate, see how the customer’s energy use changes throughout the day, and understand simple ways to shift usage.
- This will not only potentially help customers lower their bills but reduce demand when it’s at its highest.

Review Panel Comment: We are glad that TOU is coming.

4. Tree Care Recognition

- For the 13th year in a row, City Light has received the Tree Line USA award.
- This program recognizes utilities that meet the highest standards of tree care and power line management across 5 areas:
 - Caring for trees
 - Training employees on best practices
 - Educating the public about tree care
 - Conserving energy through strategic tree planting
 - Celebrating Arbor Day by engaging the public
- Excelling in these areas helps us lower costs, improve reliability, and build stronger communities.



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Links shared during the General Manager's Update:

<https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2026/03/05/skagit-hydroelectric-project-comprehensive-relicensing-settlement-a-shared-vision-for-the-next-50-years/>

<https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2026/04/15/residential-time-of-use-rate-coming-may-2026/>

<https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2026/03/26/seattle-city-light-earns-national-tree-care-recognition-for-13th-year-in-a-row/>

Rate Path Discussion. Finance Director, Chris Ruffini, presented. The materials are in the packet.

Q: Why do gas heat apartment/condo bills increase by approximately 16–17% instead of 9.5%?

A: The higher increase is due to the fixed charge, which makes up a larger portion of lower-use customers' bills. For example, of a \$39 bill, approximately \$23 is the fixed charge. The fixed charge is increasing for all residential customers to move toward full cost recovery and is projected to rise into the mid-teens up to \$23, with current estimates showing about 60% of customer-related costs covered through the fixed charge. As a result, lower-consumption residential customers see higher percentage increases compared to higher-consumption residential customers. The 9.5% reflects the overall average rate increase, while individual bill impacts vary based on usage.

Q: How are costs structured, and why are some costs included in the fixed charge?

A: Costs are grouped into major categories, including customer-related costs, distribution (delivery) costs, and energy/supply costs. Fixed charges are intended to recover customer-related costs, which do not vary with usage. These include services such as metering, billing, customer service, and collections (eg., printing and mailing bills, notices, and door hangers). Costs tied to energy use or system expansion are recovered through usage-based rates, while fixed charges ensure consistent recovery of baseline service costs.

Q: Are the costs shown on the slide already accounted for elsewhere (e.g., maintenance, technology, capital improvements) or is there a category of costs not reflected?

A: The slide reflects changes in revenue requirement, not the full cost of service. It shows the additional revenue needed for upcoming years (e.g., 2027, 2028) to support new or increased costs, rather than the full existing operating budget. Many baseline costs, including maintenance, technology, and customer-related expenses, are already embedded in the current budget and may be reflected within categories such as inflation.

Costs are broadly organized into three categories: customer costs, delivery (distribution) costs, and energy (supply) costs. These are then allocated across rate components (fixed and volumetric charges). While some items on the slide may appear similar to fixed charge components, they are



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not double counted. Staff noted that a more detailed cost-of-service crosswalk could be provided if helpful.

Q: When fixed charges are increased, is that approved as part of the rate increase process or handled separately?

A: The overall rate increase is approved, and then costs are allocated to variable and fixed rate components. Therefore, fixed charge adjustments are part of the overall rate increase, not separate or additive. The total revenue requirement is established and approved, then allocated across rate components, including energy (volumetric), delivery (infrastructure), and customer (fixed) charges.

The approach to gradually allocate more fixed costs to fixed charges was developed through a 2019 collaboration between the Review Panel and the utility as part of rate design recommendations. The intent is to more fairly recover customer-related costs, which do not vary with usage. Staff noted that this shift also supports equity goals, ensuring that all customers contribute appropriately to shared system costs, rather than placing a higher burden on higher-usage customers. Changes are implemented gradually over time to avoid rate impacts or “bill shock.”

Q: How does SCL balance encouraging increased electricity use (e.g., electrification) while also promoting efficiency, given these goals can conflict?

A: Staff acknowledged the complexity of balancing these goals. Tools such as time-of-use rates, demand response, and demand-side management programs are being implemented to encourage not only efficient use, but also usage at times that benefit the system. For example, shifting activities like electric vehicle charging to off-peak hours (e.g., overnight) helps reduce system strain and manage costs. The approach aims to support decarbonization while maintaining system efficiency and affordability.

Q: Can City Light confirm that residential customers are not subsidizing large commercial or industrial customers, such as data centers?

A: Staff stated clearly that the goal is to design rates so that all customers are paying their fair share, with no built-in subsidies. SCL does not believe there is any cross-subsidization occurring and is mindful of not allowing new large loads to benefit from decades of investment in hydro resources and infrastructure, noting that “it’s not fair and it’s not right.”

Efforts such as including a large load policy in the current rate ordinance are intended to support equitable cost allocation. SCL will continue to evaluate and refine rate design to avoid advantaging any customer group. As an example, the RSA is being shifted to an energy-only charge, an equity measure to ensure costs tied to energy usage are more proportionally borne by higher-use customers rather than disproportionately impacting lower-use customers.

Q: A panel member noted the importance of confirming that there is no cross-subsidization. Customers are concerned about large load customers being subsidized by existing City Light customers. There is an expectation that large customers should pay their



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own way.

A: Staff stated that the only intentional subsidization within the rate structure is for affordability through the Utility Discount Program, which is supported by all customer groups, including large commercial customers.

Q: Do we know what percentage of eligible UDP customers are participating, particularly those in the lowest AMI bins?

A: Overall participation is approximately 30%. Efforts are ongoing to reduce barriers and better reach eligible customers, particularly those in lower AMI categories.

Q: Will the RSA be applied equally to all customer classes?

A: Yes, RSA surcharges will be applied as a percentage of the energy cost portion equally across all customer types.

Q: Regarding retail vs. residential rates, how will SCL ensure that customers are not subsidizing large energy users, such as data centers?

A: SCL aims to ensure that all customers pay their fair share and that costs are allocated equitably. The utility is mindful of protecting long-term hydro resources and avoiding cross-subsidization. The RSA is applied as an energy-based surcharge so that higher energy users pay more proportionally. SCL continues to evaluate its rate structure to maintain fairness across all customer groups.

Mayor's Office Update: Chief of Staff Officer, Leigh Barreca

Leigh Barreca noted that the Review Panel meeting schedule was adjusted to better align with meetings with the Mayor's Office and was able to provide an update on those discussions. Leigh shared that the large load policy has been presented and received approval to move forward as part of the rate ordinance.

Leigh reported that the strategic plan and rate path were presented to the Mayor's Office, with the strategic plan well received and the rate path generating more questions. Ongoing discussions over the past several weeks have focused on rate pressures and the proposed approach. An additional meeting is scheduled for next week to review the rate ordinance and RSA changes, which is expected to be the final meeting before legislation is transmitted.

It was noted that the upcoming legislation includes two components: a resolution to adopt the strategic plan and a rate ordinance establishing rate schedules. The rate ordinance will implement the proposed 9.5% rate increase and include three key policy elements: a new large load policy for data centers, expansion of the Utility Discount Program, and updates to the Rate Stabilization Account (RSA). Final approval from the Mayor's Office is anticipated prior to formal transmittal.



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Q: Are Seattle City Light management and the Mayor's Office aligned on the strategic plan and rate path?

A: It was noted that alignment is still in progress. The Mayor's Office reviewed the materials for the first time and is in the process of asking clarifying questions. Additional meetings are scheduled to provide further information and refine understanding, with the goal of reaching alignment ahead of transmitting legislation in May.

Q: Will this process be repeated with City Council and is there alignment there?

A: It was noted that the Mayor's Office, as part of the executive branch, will first finalize the legislative package before transmitting it to City Council. The package includes two components: the strategic plan resolution and the rate ordinance for 2027–2028. Council staff have been engaged throughout the process and are aware of the proposals. The Review Panel's recommendations will be shared with both the Mayor's Office and City Council as part of the formal process.

Q: Do we have data on participation in the Utility Discount Program (UDP) by income level, particularly for the lowest AMI groups?

A: Staff noted that detailed participation by income tier was not immediately available but provided context on eligibility. Estimates show approximately 9,000 customers in the 0–10% AMI range, over 16,000 in the 10–20% range, and about 45,000 customers in the lowest 30% overall. Current participation is approximately 34% across all eligible customers.

Staff acknowledged the importance of understanding participation among the lowest-income groups and highlighted ongoing efforts to increase enrollment. These include targeted outreach, partnerships with community organizations and low-income housing providers, on-site enrollment at community events, and streamlined application processes. Additional steps have been taken to reduce barriers, including removing certain application questions, to improve accessibility and encourage participation among eligible customers.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/wa-lawmakers-commit-to-flexibility-to-keep-electric...>

Technology Roadmap. Chief Information Officer Mujib Lodhi presented. The materials are in the packet.

Q: What systems need to be in place to support virtual power plants (VPPs)?

A: City Light will need DERM and Demand response capabilities. Staff are conducting use cases and reviewing business processes.



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Q: Are there plans to use EV batteries as temporary storage and send power back to the grid?

A: Staff noted that EVs are considered a distributed energy resource and could play a role in future programs. With the development of DERMS and DERMS Edge, the utility would have the capability to manage resources such as EV charging, including when customers charge and the potential to draw power back from batteries. These capabilities would be part of broader demand response and distributed energy resource programs.

Q: Do you have any plan to implement that would allow you to use leverage EV batteries for storage and discharging (Vehicle Charging control and V2G)

A: This will be part of the DERMS edge systems and will require policy development. City Light teams are working on developing this.

Review Panel Letter. Julie Ryan, Review Panel Facilitator.

Julie invited RP members to share their perspectives on the strategic plan. She explained next steps in the process to develop the RP letter.

May 4th Agenda. Final Strategic Plan, Final Retail Rates

Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Next meeting: May 4, 2026, 1:30-3:30pm