



## City Light Review Panel Meeting Meeting Minutes

**Date of Meeting: MAY 4, 2026 | 1:30 – 3:00 PM** Approved  
**Meeting held in SMT 3204 and via Microsoft Teams**

| <b>MEETING ATTENDANCE</b>     |   |                           |   |                        |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| <b>Review Panel Members:</b>  |   |                           |   |                        |   |
| Bruce Flory                   | x | Kerry Meade               | x | Oksana Savolyuk        |   |
| Cristina Sima                 |   | Leo Lam                   | x | Ryan Monson            | x |
| Joel Paisner                  | x | Louis Ernst               | x | Toyin Olowu            | x |
| <b>City Light:</b>            |   |                           |   |                        |   |
| Rob Santoff Int. GM/CEO       | x | Julie Ryan RP Facilitator | x | Leigh Barreca          | x |
| Dennis McLerran Dep. GM       | x | Carsten Croff             | x | Maura Brueger          | x |
| Angela Bertrand               | x | Kirsty Grainger           | x | Colm Otten             | x |
| Bridget Molina                | x | Carol Albert              | x | Mujib Lodhi            | x |
| Brendan Armstrong             | x | Julie Moore               | x | Brittney Garcia-Stubbs | x |
| Chris Ruffini                 | x | Tarney Sheldon            | x | Joon Sohn              | x |
| Andy Strong                   | x |                           |   | Jeff Wolf              | x |
| <b>Other Attendees:</b>       |   |                           |   |                        |   |
| Paul Menefee                  | x | Christie Parker           | x | Eric McConaghy         |   |
| David (no last name provided) | x | Julie Brown (public)      | x | Justina Guyott         | x |
|                               |   |                           |   | 1st Lt. EWAAB          | x |

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

**Public Comment:**

- A commenter expressed concern about the growing reliance of data centers on the city’s electrical grid. They spoke with concern about nuclear technologies that are being tested elsewhere in eastern WA. They referenced new reactor designs, sharing her opinion that these technologies appear rushed, insufficiently reviewed, and potentially reliant on high-risk fuel. The commenter urged the city to view these developments as significant red flags and highlighted ecological, environmental, financial, and political risks associated with such systems.
- A speaker identifying as “First Lieutenant from the Eastern Washington Aryan Brotherhood” made white supremacist remarks. Panel members immediately objected; the speaker was muted and effectively disconnected, and the meeting continued after a brief pause.

**Standing Items:**

**Chair’s Report.** Leo Lam welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. The chair noted that a follow-up session for review panel members will take place at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the draft letter.



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Participants were reminded to use the separate Zoom link previously distributed for that session, which is limited to review panel members only.

**Review Agenda.** Julie Ryan reviewed the agenda.

**Approval of April 22, 2025, Meeting Minutes.** Minutes were approved.

**Communications to Panel.** Angela Bertrand and Bridget Molina

- Only one message came through the Review Panel mailbox – a customer had a question about their bill. It's been routed internally for response.

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

### 1. 2027 – 2028 Rate Ordinance

- Last Tuesday, we met with staff from the Mayor's executive teams to discuss our upcoming rate ordinance. The ordinance will set our rates for the next two years and will incorporate the three policy changes that we have discussed with you:
  - Large Load/Data Center Policy
  - Expansion of Utility Discount eligibility
  - Rate Stabilization Account (RSA) modification
- Today you will see the materials that were presented.
- We also had the opportunity to meet with the Mayor, where we provided a high-level overview of the strategic plan focus areas and the rate ordinance details.
- Both meetings went very well with City Light getting approval for the strategic plan, rate path and rate policy changes.

### 2. Renewable Plus

- After six years of dedicated work, Seattle City Light officially launched its Renewable Plus program last week. This voluntary program allows our large commercial and industrial customers to directly support the development of new renewable energy projects in the Pacific Northwest.
- Climate Pledge Arena, Amazon, and the Seattle Aquarium have signed on as our first participants. Through long-term agreements, they will help accelerate the transition to a 100% green power supply. Climate Pledge Arena announced their participation on Earth Day, celebrating their role as the first venue to adopt this model to expand their clean energy supply.
- The work included developing proposals, navigating legislative changes, designing a new rate structure, and integrating a new solar resource into our operational portfolio. In April 2024, we signed long-term power purchase agreements for two solar projects in Central Oregon. The first project, a 400-acre solar farm with 40 megawatts (MW), came online this month. (For our



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Seattle Kraken fans, that's the equivalent of 1,060 NHL hockey rinks!) The second project, targeted to begin operation next year, will have 47 MW. Together, these solar projects will have 87 MW of renewable capacity, enough to power 24,000 homes each year.

- While Renewable Plus participants aren't physically connected to the solar project, we track the renewable energy it generates and retire Renewable Energy Credits on participants' behalf, based on their annual electricity use. This provides verifiable proof that their energy use supports new clean power. These long-term agreements enable us to invest in new solar resources, adding renewable electricity to the regional power grid.

### **RP Member Comment:**

A review panel member expressed strong support for the Renewable Plus Program.

### **3. Thanks to the Review Panel**

- Today you will see the final, designed 2027 – 2032 Strategic Plan. A great deal of work went into developing this new plan and developing the rate path that is needed to support the work.

The Review Panel was thanked for its continued commitment to working with City Light staff. The questions raised and the critical insights shared helped ensure that City Light's strategic plan stays grounded in what customers and stakeholders value.

**Strategic Plan: Final Draft Reveal.** Manager of Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance, Angela Bertrand, presented. Final draft is in the packet.

### **Comment: Are these the new values City Light developed within the last 12 months.**

**A:** Yes. There was a presentation to the Review Panel in September briefing them on the new values.

### **RP Member Comment:**

A review panel member noted that the updated version of the strategic plan appears much improved and provides a clear, high-level summary.

### **Q: Do the additional two files sent earlier today to the Review Panel fit into this discussion of the strategic plan or do they fit into the upcoming presentation.**

**A:** The financial forecast will be included as an appendix to the strategic plan document, consistent with prior years. Staff also noted that the second file with the proposed 2027–2028 rates provides the review panel visibility into the rates that will advance in the ordinance.

**Retail Rates:** Chief Financial Officer, Kirsty Grainger, presented. Materials are in the packet.



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**Q: When was the most recent RSA surcharge ended? Or is still being applied and collected in customer bills.**

**A:** The 4% RSA surcharge ended on March 31, resulting in a rate decrease at the end of that month. The new 9.5% increase can be viewed as effectively replacing that surcharge, though the net impact is somewhat lower because the 4 % is no longer being applied.

**Q: Are there specific targets for the Utility Discount Program or is the goal to increase participation without specific numerical targets.**

**A:** It was noted that the program does have enrollment targets. Staff shared that continued annual growth of roughly ten percent in enrollment may be the target, based upon the Mayor's accountability agreement regarding the expanded Utility Discount Program. The following highlights are from an internal City Light report regarding the UDP program expansion and enrollment were shared at the meeting:

In 2025, City Light expanded the UDP program participation rate from 32% to 37%; beginning in January with 34,173 customers enrolled in UDP and ending in December 2025 with 39,107. We use American Community Survey ACS data for ~107,000 customers in our service area at or below 70% SMI to calculate program participate rates.

City Light has expanded relationships with Affordable Housing Partners, executing over 25 data sharing agreements leveraging already income verified residents utilizing streamlined applications. This can enroll an additional 1200 or more customers annually. City Light also increased the bulk enrollment process with three of the larger Affordable Housing partners, Seattle Housing Authority, King County Housing Authority, and Bellwether Housing to quarterly uploads, which auto enrolls already income verified residents between 800-1000 customers at a time. City Light has updated its policy so if a customer is participating in SNAP, no other income documentation is required.

City Light expanded its partnership with Public Health Seattle King County's (PHSKC) Outreach and Engagement Team so customers enrolling in King County Energize Program, Apple Health, and Orca Lift can easily enroll in UDP at the same time. And City Light partners with Puget Sound Energy on outreach events making it more convenient for customers to enroll at community-based organization trusted partners hosting events across our service area. And City Light is exploring cross enrollment with city and county programs and longer-term data sharing opportunities with Washington State benefit programs.

In 2025 City Light completed over 60 outreach events pivoting from only program awareness to enrolling customers into assistance programs onsite at in person events. For



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2026, City Light has a goal to increase UDP enrollment by 10% from approximately 39,000 customers to 43,000. As of March 2026, we are at 40,034 customers participating in UDP.

**Q: Do the estimated 30,000 additional individuals represent new participants in the Utility Discount Program, or is that the total number of people who could become eligible?**

**A:** The change in eligibility thresholds would create approximately 30,000 additional qualified participants. This reflects individuals who would become newly eligible, not necessarily new enrollees; these are people who could sign up under the revised limits.

It was also noted that, for 2026, the Utility Discount Program aims to increase enrollment by 10%, rising from approximately 39,000 to 43,000 participating customers.

**Q: The earlier figures seem to imply there are roughly 100,000 eligible households.**

**A:** There are approximately 107,000 customers in the service territory who are at or below 70% of the state median income.

**Q: With the new threshold adding another 31,000 eligible households bringing the total to about 137,000, would it be reasonable to expect more participation among households that are already close to the existing threshold? In other words, do you anticipate higher enrollment among lower income groups, rather than a large increase from those who are newly eligible but closer to the upper end of the threshold? Do you think raising the threshold will increase participation in the lower income quintiles?**

**A:** It is not yet known. Participation patterns are difficult to predict, and it is often unclear why eligible customers choose not to enroll. Ongoing efforts include outreach, human centered design, and community engagement to better understand barriers. It is possible that more customers at lower income levels may enroll, or that those closer to the upper threshold may participate because they have more capacity to engage with program materials. At this point, it is hard to determine how enrollment will shift.

**Q: Residential customers may wonder why the high demand customer group is receiving a smaller rate increase than residential customers. Could you explain why the increase for high demand customers is lower than the system average of 9.5%? And can you elaborate on what is meant by their "usage profile"?**

**A:** The smaller increase for high demand customers is primarily driven by changes in their consumption patterns, which slightly reduce their relative cost of energy. Their usage profile affects how energy costs are allocated, such as the balance between peak and off-peak consumption and their seasonal usage (such as how much they use during higher cost winter months versus lower cost shoulder seasons). Small shifts in these patterns can result in a rate



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increase that is slightly lower than the system average.

**Q: This is the first time I've noticed that the base service charge is essentially doubling over two years, which feels like a radical change to the rate structure. Was there a reason to move so quickly? Would a slower transition have produced a more balanced impact across different customer types?**

**A:** While the change may look dramatic, the actual dollar impact to customers is relatively small—roughly the difference between about one dollar and fifty cents per month. This shift will cover City Light's fixed customer costs. Moving in this direction is important because customer behavior is shifting: more customers are generating their own electricity, and electricity usage patterns are becoming more diverse. Achieving full distribution fixed cost recovery in the future will become increasingly critical in this context.

**Q: How do other utilities with higher levels of rooftop solar penetration handle rate design, and does Seattle need to move just as quickly?**

**A:** Seattle's relatively low rooftop solar penetration means it does not need to adopt rapid changes like those seen in high solar regions such as Arizona. However, adjustments to rate design may become necessary over time as local conditions evolve.

**May 20<sup>th</sup> Agenda.** Strategic Plan and Rate Path Updates

**Adjourn.** The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

**Next meeting:** May 20, 2026, 9:00am-11:00am