

# Customer Review Panel

Q1: March 14, 2022

3:00 pm – 5:30 pm

WebEx mtg

CRP Panel Members and Facilitator			
Bobby Coleman	X	Noel Miller	X
Gretchen Glaub	X	Puja Shaw	
Khalid Mohamed		Rodney Schauf	
Karen Reed, Facilitator	X	Suzie Burke	X
Maria McDaniel	X	Tiffany Sevilla	X
Miki Sodos	X	Thy Pham	X
Staff and Guests			
Akshay Iyengar	X	Jeremi Watkins	X
Alex Chen	X	Karl Stickel	X
Andrew Lee	X	Kate Morrison	X
Ben Marre	X	Kathleen Baca	
Brian Goodnight	X	Keri Burchard-Juarez	X
Cathy Thielen	X	Linda Johnson	X
Dani Purnell	X	Maryam Mason	X
Ellen Stewart	X	Natasha Papsoueva	X
Frank Coulter	X	Paula Laschober	X
Idris Beauregard	X	Sam Stork	X
Jeff Fowler	X	Susan Ellingson	X
Pamela Oakes	X	Erika Hunter	X
Frank Coulter	X	Jacqueline Robinette	X
Andres Mantilla	X	Aninditra Mitra	X
Brian Scott	X	Melodie Garcia	X

## 1. Welcome

Andrew opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first meeting of 2022.

- Special Guest Marco Lowe will be joining us today
- Natasha Papsoueva and Karl Stickel will be presenting today on SBP Performance Reporting and initiative outcomes for the year
- Andrew thanked Karen Reed for her years of service to the Customer Review Panel and SPU

## 2. Public Comments

No public comments were received

### 3. Committee Business

#### a. Meeting Minutes

- Q4 meeting summary was approved
- Cohort 2 Recruitment. An overview of the cohort process was presented. Sam Stork with Department of Neighborhoods (DON) will be leading this effort.
- Facilitation Update. We are in the final stages of new facilitator selection. The new facilitator will be on board by the June meeting.
- Ship Canal Water Quality Project Tour Discussion. Members were complimentary of the tour, impressed by the project and it was good to get to know some of the folks doing the work.
- Fall Field Trip Suggestions: South Park Construction Projects or Cedar River Watershed

### 4. Council/Mayor Update

#### a. Council Update

Presenters: Brian Goodnight, Akshay Iyengar.

The Council has created the committee structure for next two years. The new committee for SPU is Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities. Councilmember Alex Pedersen (District 4 – Northeast Seattle) is the chair.

#### b. Mayor's Office

Akshay gave a brief overview.

- Working to resolve a shortfall in the General Fund. For the most part it does not affect SPU.
- Beginning the 2023-24 Budget process. Departments are receiving initial instructions.
- Anticipating SPU Solid Waste rates

Chief Operating Office, Marco Lowe was introduced to the CRP. Marco reviewed his portfolio, and Mayor Harrell's priorities. Mayor Harrell is very focused on rates and housing.

**Question:** Where is your focus other than SPU?

**Answer:** City Light keeps me very active, and housing is big focus now. We are making sure the city is doing everything it can about housing.

### 5. SBP Rate Path Update

Paula Laschober, Maria Coe and Ben Marre presented the SBP Rate path update.

**Question:** Walking in Seward Park in February, there were large 6-inch pipe in the water. Are those the overflows?

**Answer:** Yes, likely those were the outflow pipes

**Question:** We have been hearing about these nutrient regulations for some time. What is the status?

**Answer:** Still emerging. Final permit has been issued but appealed. We have no treatment plants, but King County does, so this could impact SPU.

**Question:** What comes to my mind is to ask what King County's total operations cost is, and capital costs. It would seem like they need an outside look at this whole program. Some type of performance audit that would represent the interests of all the agencies that need their sewage treated.

**Answer:** That's a great idea. With the rate increases going from 4% to 5.5%, it would be good to have that. I don't see an outside body working with King County to provide that information.

**Comment:** This reminds me of Brightwater. Are any elected officials pushing back on this? Do they know that this should not be a status quo?

**Answer:** We do have Councilmembers (Sawant and Pedersen) who sit on the County Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC). Councilmember Pedersen is our advocate on behalf of our ratepayers on this issue. The RWQC does not have any governance authority on county rates. The authority lies with the King County Council.

**Question:** Would the Customer Review Panel (CRP) like to draft as a response in this issue?

**Answer:** Maybe. Perhaps a meeting with the Chairs of the CRP along with Suzie Burke with CM Pedersen instead to determine how CRP can help. Councilmember Pedersen is interested and supportive. The County Executive is transmitting the proposed rate package in mid-April to the County Council. We have until the end of June to adopt new rates. The CRP members can attend County meetings as citizens.

## 6. SBP Performance Reporting – 2021 Reporting

Presenters: Natasha Papsoueva, Maryam Mason, Frank Coulter, Karl Stickel, Ben Marré

Essential Service Metrics and Focus Area Progress: areas of focus are NPDES permitting, Capital Accomplishment Rates & Capital Improvement Projects, SPU Financials, Winter Storm Impacts to South Park and Annual Update to Appendix B (

- Performance Highlights: NPDES Permitting (Ben Marre). Ben provided an overview of the NPDES permit. There was one yellow flag for this metric. SPU could not sweep a street in December due to snow and ice impacting the ability for street sweeping. We reported this to the regulator. We have a good relationship with them, and there was no consequence for that action. Since December have submitted some early information to adjust this requirement in the future to account for this situation in the future if there is a weather event.
- Maryam Mason presented in 2021 Q4 Equitable essential Service Metrics. Reported on 9 investments and initiatives that fall within the four focus areas of the SBP. Reviewed the 2021 SBP Performance Summary Report.

Capital Accomplishment Rates & Capital Improvement Projects – Frank Coulter

- Review of CIP Accomplishment rates and explanations of how SPU plans, and how projects move through PDEB, related to accomplishment rate and Forecasting. Total % accomplishment rate for all Lines of Business combined is 59%.

**Question:** What are the rates based on?

**Answer:** Rates are set based on 85% accomplishment rate

**Karl:** Answered overview of why the spending is so low. Lines of Business (Water, Solid Waste, Drainage and Wastewater) went over their budgets and some projects shifted and how the rate path was impacted, for their Branches/LOBs

**At this point the Committee took a short break.**

Upon returning, the Panel was asked to read the financial materials in the PowerPoint provided for more detail.

South Park Winter Storm Service Impacts – Ben Marré

There was a major event January 1-7 in 2022: Snow melt + Storm+ King Tide. Ben reviewed the multiple storm sewer overflow events and SPU's response. King County and SPU staff were out in the community to assist as possible. We relocated several folks until their homes could be cleaned and have been working on backflow preventor installation. This was a very difficult situation over the month of January. Good news: we are working on the surface flooding, though investments, a resilience district and a King County partnership. Questions?

**Question:** if the pump station had been operational, how much of a difference would it have made?

**Answer:** A huge difference for the surface flooding, but the sewer backups in the basements would not have been resolved.

**Question:** How was Andrew received by the community?

**Answer:** People are very resilient in that community. It left a lasting impression on him. There are definitely a few places where it was not very welcoming, and people do not trust the city. We think some of the outreach that was done was helpful. Everyone wants a long-term fix.

**Question:** Can we be expecting repeating events annually? I have a question of habitability. These are expensive solutions. Is the City thinking of other areas at risk of damage, with housing in these areas?

**Answer:** We have done a lot of mapping of the city. This is the most impacted area. If we are to protect this area, we need a seawall or other solution. As part of the resilience district, how can we do this? Displacement and affordable housing are an even bigger issue right now. This is a complex issue. City is committed to its Duwamish Valley Action plan.

## 7. Review of Strategic Business Plan Focus Area: Strengthening our Utilities' Business Practices

*This Focus area is about “Enhancing rate payer affordability while being adaptive and innovative in delivering services and managing assets and risk”.*

Drainage and Wastewater (DWW)Continuous Improvement Project. Presentation by Amanda Bidwell & Teli Puloka. We are trying to improve employee engagement. We have been working on continuous improvement since 2019, with the DWW First Response Crews. Amanda and Teli reviewed the origins of their efforts and where they see this effort going next. The question was posed to the Panel as to where they thought SPU should focus future continuous improvement?

**Question:** Where are these efforts now?

**Answer:** Right now, efforts are in DWW only. Future plans for Water crews.

Affordability and Accountability CIP Project Planning and Delivery Accomplishments – Tanya Treat presented. SPU is holding bi-weekly standups to focus on our goal. How do we improve planning between our LOBs? How can we plan together, be more efficient and save money? Project Delivery: One of the ideas was the checkpoints and approvals and how to streamline that. Remove duplicate data entry systems, improve capital reporting and transparency.

**Question:** There might be a simple way to provide this information to the CRP by providing presentations that you have sent to the City Council directly, and include them in their Wednesday briefings

**Answer:** Staff will see if that is possible.

The Big Idea (video) – link attached. Over 40 ideas collected to date. There will be a peer review process, and \$70K in funding available.

**Closing and wrap up:** In June how does the Panel want to meet? In person or virtually or?

- A. Susie – in person
- B. Noel:
- C. Maria – Hybrid
- D. Bobbie – Hybrid
- E. Gretchen – in person
- F. Tiffany - Hybrid
- G. Meki – Hybrid
- H. Maria - Hybrid – call in option
- I. Ty – Hybrid. Difficult to manage both. If we are doing hybrid just go all virtual.
- J. A dial in option would be appreciated.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 PM. Next meeting is June 13.