



**Joint Meeting of Water System Advisory Committee (WSAC)
and Creeks, Drainage, and Wastewater Advisory Committee (CDWAC)**

April 12, 2017 Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue

Room 4901

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
WSAC			
Rodney Schauf	Y	Sheryl Shapiro	CDWAC Liaison and CAC Program Manager
Melissa Levo	Y	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Teresa Stern	Y	Joan Kersnar	SPU Drinking Water Planning Manager
Paul Reed	Y	Kelly ORourke	Resource Conservation Lead Program Planner
Michael Godfried	Y	Ellen Pepin	SPU Communications
Joel Carsley	N	Madeline Goddard	DWW Deputy Director
Steven Cole	N		
Michael Williams	Y		
CDWAC			
Ben Billick	Y	Guests	
Christina Ciampa	Y	Ky Lewis	Guest
Schyler Hect	N	Wendy Walker	Guest
Patrick Jablonski	N	Alan Garvey	Guest
Colum Lang	Y	Tushar TBD	Guest
Seth McKinney	N	Hoa Pantastico	Guest
Gary Olson	Y	Kirsi Longley	Guest
Devin O'Reilly	Y		
Mariella White	N		

ACTION ITEMS

- Sheryl will send out the link to the City Council presentation on the CRP's update.
- Sheryl said Committee members should expect a questionnaire about making the meetings longer or alternatives to address this issue.
- Sheryl said she will be sending out a doodle poll about summer schedule and field trips. It will address if we will be meeting in both July and August, and a summer field trip.

- A committee member noted a growing conversation/concern around smart meters and requested interest in a future discussion on the topic. Madeline suggested that we explore inviting City Light to come in a talk about it.

1. Regular Business

- WSAC Chair, Rodney Schauf, opened the meeting at 5:33 PM and reminded attendees to sign-in.
- Committee Members, SPU staff, and guests introduced themselves.
- Meeting notes from March were approved.
- Sheryl indicated emergency exits, exit procedures, and bathrooms.
- Sheryl provided a brief member update, announcing the resignation of Evan Osborne.

2. 2016 Drinking Water Quality Report: Ellen Pepin, SPU Communications

Ellen provided a brief background on the Drinking Water Quality Report requirements and history. She explained that water utilities are federally required to send out a water quality report for the previous year to all houses and apartments in the City, sharing their findings from the previous year. SPU has taken the required language and incorporated it into something that also serves as a communication tool to hit on drinking water quality subjects (so it's not just a dry two-page federally required letter). A prompt for CAC input on themes for the report was sent via email in March; Ellen said she shared CAC input and aggregated the feedback into common themes for the consultants. Those themes included:

- Focus on customers (testimonials)?
- Focus on transparency and lack of trust in government in general
- Value of water we have in this area
- Adding in a heavy equity component
- Value of drinking water vs buying bottled water. This theme came out of outreach conducted for the Strategic Business Plan update, where they discovered that non-English speakers who buy bottled water didn't know they could safely drink Seattle's water. She explained this would be represented in the report mostly visually, to address some of the language barriers. Ellen said SPU is working on ways to take elements of the report that are more visual or that can be transcreated easily into common languages in the City, with smaller translated print versions to share through community-based organizations (CBOs).

Next steps/Timeline:

- The report needs to be in customer mailboxes by July 1.
- Ellen said that as they get a draft report and more visuals, she will share those with the Committees. She said they are hopeful that they will have something to look at on May 10.
- If Committee members are interested, she said additional discussion could be conducted via email or in small groups. Sheryl will be in touch regarding this.
- **Committee member question:** Would you mind explaining transcreation?
 - **Answer:** If you directly translate text, the words and context may not translate across languages and cultures. Transcreation considers the cultural context for words, images and colors, so your end product is meaningful to specific communities.
- **Committee member question:** Do you emphasize that this is a reservoir-fed system, in the context that nationally that's not very common? This gets at the water quality source concern.
 - **Answer:** We want to address it, without throwing any other cities under the bus. We've talked about whether to compare our system to other municipalities. It's a unique

element and there may be a tactful way to promote it. We want to highlight the fact that our water comes straight from the source, and that's special.

- **Committee member question:** For the non-English speaking audience, how are you going to communicate with them?
 - **Answer:** We have an Environmental Justice and Service Equity team and they have several CBOs (community-based organizations) that they work with who will be communicating these messages to the specific communities they serve.
 - **Committee member question:** On the literature being mailed out, will there be a reference to direct people to the information presented in different languages?
 - **Answer:** This is what we've done in the past: we've included tiny print in a couple languages with an SPU Customer Service line who connect you with a translation service. That said, I can't imagine if you don't speak English you'd want the report read to you. We've discussed if we could afford to have it translated or recreated online.
 - **Committee member question:** So, you're saying it's only available in English?
 - **Answer:** Yes, which needs to change. At this time, we know we will have an infographic that will show the financial value of drinking water vs bottled water and this will be in all the "top tier" languages identified by the City.
 - **Committee member comment:** The immigrant population and those with English as a second language might be different audiences for this report. It's not a matter of translating this, it's a matter of creating something just for that audience. If you send them a report like this, but if it's something a little more targeted they may be more responsive.
 - **Committee member question:** El Centro De La Raza: What have they suggested is the best way to translate this message?
 - **Answer:** If you talk to them, they'll say the best thing to do is have a meeting in person. Just about every CBO we work with would say to have a meeting or go to them during one of their community meetings.
 - **Committee member comment:** To tackle that challenge of reaching different populations, you could have a festival later down the road where you unveil the Annual Report. A water conservation day. And you could have translators and maybe a take-home that is in language.
 - **Answer:** In any language, getting someone to read a report is challenging. If it's more than a page, people won't look at it.
 - **Committee member comment:** Perhaps there's a way to make a sexy one pager version?
 - **Answer:** Unfortunately, they must receive this in the mail. We could send this with a little slip that says go online, but then there's an equity issue due to online access.
- **Committee member question:** Do you have data about how many people read it?
 - **Answer:** No, but I want to. It would be easier to measure that if it were online.
 - **Committee member comment:** Perhaps you can include a postcard where you can enter a drawing to win.
 - **Answer:** We did think about a buy-one get-one-free to the Cedar River Watershed. We could code them and at least see how many people used their coupon.
- **Committee member question:** You mentioned addressing trust of government as a goal of this document. Can you somehow try to create some trust in this document? If so, how?

- **Answer:** I can give an example from last year. Right as we were working on the report, Tacoma found lead in their water. There was this concern about Seattle’s water, and whether we were keeping secrets. I think there was a lag in SPU’s communication about the concern, and online there was massive conversations about trust issues with SPU. So, we addressed those concerns in last year’s Report by having a whole page about lead. We made the effort by providing information in a concise and clear way.
- **Committee member comment:** I have a vague recollection of a past CAC presentation on how the City goes to various places to test the water from the tap. It might be useful to do a comparison of the water quality at the source versus at each of the areas around the City. As you’re sending it out to these various locations, they will be interested in the water where they live. Would be easy to do with graphics.
 - **Committee member comment:** For the pollutants, you’ll get non-detects at every site.
 - If you did WQ tests of water bottles across the City, I bet they’d be worse than the tap water.
- **Committee member comment:** One thing that has always impressed me about SPU is that they send out a newsletter flyer that is very friendly. And then you have the bill... which could be improved a lot. If this brochure is part of this stream that touches the customer, then maybe there’s other touch points in the monthly newsletter or bill that could create that trust that people are talking about.
- **Committee member comment:** Along the lines of building trust; When I receive these, I view them as a cheerleading effort on behalf of the company sending it to me. I would assume that they wouldn’t be admitting any fault, downsides, or areas of improvement. That makes me have less trust. If it addresses areas of improvement in the coming year, that could work toward that goal.
 - **Committee member comment:** And maybe even invite some feedback on that
 - **Committee member comment:** I think it’s important to get that customer input, and maybe include a quote from a customer
 - **Committee member comment:** And the quote should be in the language spoken
 - **Committee member comment:** Most people will look at quotes as being fabricated.
 - Devin submitted his idea via an image: combined

3. Water Conservation Program Overview; Joan Kersnar, SPU Drinking Water Planning Manager and Kelly O’Rourke, SPU Resource Conservation staff

Joan set context for the presentation, explaining that Committee input would be considered as the region sets 2019-2028 water conservation goals and program priorities as part of the greater Water System Plan update.

Joan provided water conservation basics, beginning with a review of conservation and curtailment definitions. She then reviewed historical conservation successes, and the basics of demand forecasting. She noted that the 2016 Preliminary Draft Forecast (blue line) does not take into account utility-sponsored water conservation programs. It’s a baseline.

The Committee members were asked to provide their thoughts as retail water customers about the regional water conservation program, and their expectations and suggestions for the program going forward. Current program information and other materials were provided as background. Specific questions they were asked in advance and discussed at the meeting were:

1. What are your expectations of SPU regarding our utility-sponsored water conservation programs for customers?
 2. What types of water conservation services would you like to see from SPU? Why?
 3. Should SPU be increasing, decreasing, or keeping the same its efforts in utility-sponsored water conservation programs? Why?
- **Committee member question:** For the conservation program savings, have you broken it out between hardware versus changes in behavior?
 - **Answer:** We have in the past. It's difficult to tease out because there's such an overlap. The education component and rebate programs go hand-in-hand. We know how many rebates are given, for example, but it's hard to report on behavioral savings.
 - **Committee member question:** Does the water savings chart include wholesale customers?
 - **Answer:** Yes.
 - **Committee member question:** For the red line, is the projected impact of climate change factored in? (See slide 8; 2016 Draft Forecast Compared to Forecasts with Constant Flow Factors)
 - **Answer:** No. And there's a lot of uncertainty around both the demand and supply projections. We develop a spread of uncertainty around the demand forecast, and look at climate change scenarios' impact to both.
 - **Committee member question:** How much does the program cost annually? And what does that equate to per person?
 - **Answer:** When the rough answer of approximately \$2M for serving approx. 1.4 M people served by SPU [1.3M have access to the Saving Water Partnership programs], so a just over \$1 per person per year was given, the response was that the amount seemed reasonable.)
 - **Committee member question:** SPU is making their income via rates. So, when people conserve, you get less income?**Answer:** We anticipate a decline from conservation, so we're forecasting out for this and collect the income we need to. We're going to collect the same amount of total revenue, regardless of conservation efforts. We have a little bit of variability cost. Individual bills will go down, but more people will be paying bills. Population and conservation savings really cancel themselves out.
 - **Committee member question:** Once you dive beneath the large capital project costs, Conservation has a certain erosion factor on rates. The graph shows that even if we don't have a utility conservation program, we're going to be expecting some water use reduction (seen in the first graph).

Joan asked: Why would we want to have a conservation program, if not for cost savings?

- **Committee member comment:** I see a huge nexus with the affordability component, especially in multi-family. Living in an apartment complex, it's frustrating to know you're paying for someone else's toilet leaks. Water conservation could benefit lower income residents, the people who really need it. The multi-family population is growing. I want to see new multi-family sub meters, so people are responsible for their own water use. Especially in the multi-family units where there are huge price differences between units.
- **Committee member comment:** The one response I received from multiple people in my office: they are not low income but they would love to get that rebate on the new toilet. But they thought \$100 wasn't enough.

- **Committee member comment:** People don't have the know-how to replace a toilet. Being able to have someone do it is costly as well. Especially for non-handy people and elderly.
 - **Answer:** The program only covers the most efficient upgrades. A new toilet is approximately \$150-400 for a toilet. The average cost of a new toilet for the folks we're rebating is probably \$300-350. So, we're covering half. How much should we cover? Part of the philosophy is that we don't pay full cost.
- **Committee member comment:** Belltown, Capitol Hill, Wallingford, and now Broadview: I've noticed the further out I get, the more gardening I see. I was looking for landscaping education workshops; they're all a little far away. It would be great to have another class closer to me. Offering classes in neighborhoods where there is more garden space.
- **Committee member comment:** Speaking from the hospitality sector, the rebate programs are a lot of help. Businesses are looking at the bottom line. They should be recouping an investment within 36 months. If those rebates go away, that incentive will not be there to do those projects because they don't return those investments that quickly. Next fall, we're looking at replacing 420 toilets. With \$100 rebate, we hit our investment return goals.
 - **Committee member comment:** I think we should keep the same commercial rebates, or more.
 - **Committee member comment:** The average hotel is flushed 7x per day.
- **Committee member question:** I rent in the City and all my friends do as well, and I've noticed none of the rental houses have high efficiency toilets. What about rebate program targeted at those leasing the homes? It's the leaser who pays the utility bill so the homeowner doesn't have an incentive to upgrade. The people renting the homes don't benefit from the rebates. Or maybe we should be targeting property managers?
- **Committee member question:** The rebates should be higher in low-income cases.
 - **Answer:** It is. For low-income it's paid 100% including installation.
- **Committee member question:** Question on market rate; SPU could have every homeowner or renter or every commercial customer do one thing, what would it be? And how do we incentivize it? Is it toilets? Is it if every homeowner who has a 1.6g changes to 1.1g?
 - **Answer:** I want to go back to that supply/demand graph. Once upon a time, our demand got close to our supply. Our situation now is really different. Why do you all think, given our supply/demand situation, what are the reasons?
- **Committee member comment:** It's the right thing to do from a social justice and environment. Seattle is a leader, and it's good for the environment. Assuming the program is affordable/accessible across income levels. It's about habitat preservation for salmon.
 - **Answer:** We do have instream flow requirements that provide for salmon habitat.
- **Committee member comment:** I think it's the unknowns we're addressing in a conservation program. We need to be resilient and should be overprepared. We could be expected to be a supply in the future for other areas.
 - **Committee member comment:** To piggyback on that, the graph shows from 2040 out is really a grey area, especially with regards to climate change. We know Seattle is growing in leaps and bounds and we don't know the stress that will have on the infrastructure and system. We need to maintain what we've got with the unknowns.
- **Committee member comment:** If conservation is not a driver because of avoided cost, I wonder if the \$1.7 million for this program is better invested in another program that achieves more? Maybe there's a better way to serve the environment in another program.

- **Committee member comment:** I want to make the 7-generation point. If you get to the point where you have to identify another source, that has mass implications. If you look at the graphs, at 2040 and beyond and that doesn't even include climate change or other unknowns... If you get a couple decades out and you have to get another source, that's a bigger issue. Conservation prevents you needing to get another source.
 - **Answer:** The conservation program has a 10-year funding window but the starting and stopping of a program could be an issue.
- **Committee member comment:** You need to provide a way for people to better understand how they control their water bill. Rebates are a tool for education. Through the process of looking into the rebate, they will learn more.
- **Committee member comment:** The conservation ethic applies to all of the utility including Seattle City Light, Solid Waste, etc. It should be applied across everything. It's an attitude as much as a practical application. If one utility says not to worry about it, it's going to impact my perception of other utility services.
- **Committee member comment:** We just had a catastrophic failure of a treatment plant. If we had a robust culture of conservation of how much water we use and waste, there's less at this end of this failure going into the Puget Sound that impacts the life in the Sound. If you use less, you have to treat less.
- **Guest comment:** I don't know if this is a conservation service, but has SPU thought of social shaming? Utility bills sharing neighbors or similar size households, it changes their consciousness and behavior.
 - **Answer:** We haven't tried that on the water side.. Quick raise of hands: does something like that sound interesting or appealing?
 - **Committee member Comment:** I'm interested in this, but I'd be careful to get input from a diverse audience. Not every culture would feel the same.
- **Guest comment:** In terms of more or less on rebates. Maybe rebates should be targeted more towards low-income. More provided to the people who won't be doing this in any other program.
- **Guest comment:** A couple ideas about the toilet rebate program. The way I understand it, it's up to the customer to buy the toilets. Has SPU thought about buying bulk toilets and selling at cheaper cost?
 - **Answer:** SPU has concerns about liability. Choice of toilet is yours, plumber is yours.
- **Guest comment:** Is there a way to move forward on increasing that rebate? Could you scale it based on efficiency of the toilet?
 - **Answer:** Yep, and we've done that in the past. We used to scale it up. We just got rid of the less efficient toilet. The idea of more dollars for more efficiency is something we support.
- **Committee member comment:** Right now, you're giving rebates; has there been any consideration for savings sharings? You provide the money up front, and it gets paid on your bill over time? Increase the rate slightly to offset it over time?
- **Committee member comment:** What about expanding the program? (not increasing or decreasing) but what about offering assistance for projects that save on the use of potable water / reducing flow into sewer system. Expansion of commercial program for water diversion or rainwater harvesting?
- **Committee member comment:** Why is new construction not covered? Why are those buildings excluded from rebates?

- **Answer:** They go in at code, but there could be an incentive to go above code. We've been going after the worst offender toilets, the 3.5 gallons, rather than the new construction 1.6 gallon. It's harder to justify.
- **Committee member comment:** Shower is one area you haven't touched on.

Sheryl thanked everyone for speaking up during this conversation.

The following comments were received electronically and approved to be included in the notes:

- **Committee Member question:** What is the cost to SPU to maintain the current program? Unless cost is excessive (contributing significantly to our costs) I continue to support an ongoing program
- **Committee Member comment:** We have done a good job of educating and working with folks on conservation and if that were to stop what is the message we are sending, let alone what happens if conditions change and in 2 years we need to reinstate
- **Committee Member comment:** Conservation is a good value and it should reach out to all phases of our lives. Definition: a careful preservation and protection of something; especially: planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.
- **Committee Member comment:** Seattle is seen as a green community; very conscious of our environment. We are an example, a leader in this area, so eliminating this type of program goes against what we project and hope others will emulate.
- **Committee Member question:** What are the negatives of having a conservation program?
- **Committee Member comment:** Services we'd like to see
 - Continue to show the gains of using conservation measures with regard to water usage and the big picture
 - Support the use of water saving equipment and procedures in literature, social media, etc. (Shower timers)
 - Recognize private individuals or businesses that make significant reductions in their water usage.
 - Promote tours of our water system for the public
 - Show impact of lower water usage on sewer treatment system
 - Effort level
 - Maintain same level of expenditure
 - Focus on areas of greatest impact or benefit.
 - Reevaluate where on an annual basis.

4. Customer Review Panel (CRP) Update

WSAC Chair, Rodney Schauf, who sits on the 2016/2017 Customer Review Panel (CRP), provided a brief overview of the CRP process for input on the Strategic Business Plan (SBP). He reviewed the additions the CRP felt were lower priority, and the projects/programs the CRP sought more analysis and cost savings. He noted that while they would love to bring these back to the CACs, the CRP is running against some deadlines for the letter that must go to City Council.

- **Committee member question:** What is the timeline?
 - **Rodney:** We need to wrap up the financial piece by next Wednesday. Need to write the letter, and our mandate runs into May. Our Committee Chair did a presentation to City Council. They had a lot of questions so they've been asked to do a second presentation.

As this information becomes available, we'll give it to Sheryl. **Sheryl will send out the link to the City Council presentation.**

- **Committee member question:** What does the letter say?
 - **Rodney:** It summarizes the conversations the CRP has had, and their recommendations. The City will use this in their consideration of the SPU rate options. Purpose of the plan is to set the rate path for the next six years.
 - **Sheryl:** That letter gets transmitted with the Plan Update.
- **Committee member question:** Is there any history here? Has the Council generally taken a certain approach? Have they cut it in half or have they generally accepted it?
 - **Sheryl:** The first SBP was just three years ago, so there isn't a lot of history. Looking at it in this 6-year window is a relatively new experience for SPU.
 - **Madeline:** We say it's a 6-year rate path, but we update the plan every three years. I believe at our next visit to the Council, we'll probably show that we started at 6.8%, and DWW alone was 28%. We must show how we cut, manipulated, deferred to get down to the final recommendation.
- **Committee member question:** So, is the primary constraint in terms of raising rates how it affects low income households? Or is it broader, even to middle income?
 - **Answer:** A lot of it is centered around the lower income households. A lot of the attendees of the SBP outreach supported 5.6% but were worried about the folks who couldn't afford that rate increase.

5. CDWAC/WSAC Committee check-in

a) Debrief CDWAC WSAC 3/28 LOB Orientation

- **Guest comment:** I loved the historical perspective. The maps were fascinating. Helped to have a 100-year view to see impact of 100 year ahead.
- **Committee member comment:** In order for us to understand what we're trying to do here, understanding where we started is important. The Presentations were thorough.

b) 2017 Workplan Topics

- Sheryl noted that there is always a very full agenda for our Committee meetings covering a lot of information, leaving less time for discussion. **Expect a questionnaire about making the meetings longer or alternatives to address this issue.** We're 25% through the year, and haven't covered 25% of the topics.
- **Sheryl said she will be sending out a doodle poll about summer schedule and field trips. It will address if we will be meeting in both July and August, and a summer field trip.**
- **Committee member question:** Is there a date for the Longfellow Creek 25th Anniversary event?
 - **Answer:** Not yet. It will likely be in the Fall. Hoping to have a meeting in the next couple weeks with the members of the former Longfellow Creek Watershed Council. Please let me know your thoughts on the way to celebrate the work done and approaches to engage new residents and businesses in the watershed.
 - **Committee member comment:** It might be a good opportunity to bring forward other creek watersheds, that have organizations.
 - **Response** Yes, they could be part of that, inviting their communities to be involved.

- FYI There will be an event on June 17 to celebrate Roxhill Bog, the historical headwaters of Longfellow Creek.

6. Around the table

Committee member shared their thoughts about the meeting:

- **Committee member comment:** I thought today’s meeting went well; I think it was because the way the meeting was setup: the questions were sent ahead of time and having both presenters at the table. Since they were writing notes, it felt more like they were taking our input.
- **Committee member comment:** I would rather do homework than do a longer meeting.
- **Committee member comment** Giving us specific questions is key. What you want from us shows us where the value lies in our input.
- **Sheryl:** If Committee members could share whether they prepared ahead of time, it would help us understand the audience. That preparation goes a long way

Upcoming events / topics of interest:

- **Committee member:** There is a growing conversation about smart-meters. Costing you money, risking your health privacy and safety. Not sure how meters work for SPU but it might be a topic we explore at a future meeting because there are major problems in other cities around the County with these smart meters.
 - **Joan:** We have remote metering for manholes so we don’t have to stop traffic or go into manholes. The objective was worker safety, disruption of traffic, time savings. You really need to know why you’re doing with smart metering. Is it real time reading? And why do you want that?
 - **Madeline:** There is a push for smart meters, and I think City Light is pushing for it. If that’s what you want to hear about, maybe we can get City Light to come in a talk about it.
- **Committee member:** On May 20, CAC Member Devin is hosting a “Geology of the Duwamish” tour. We will include the information in a future email update.
- **Committee member:** Thornton Creek citizen scientists are monitoring for E-Coli. Testing takes place weekly on Wednesday evenings, monitoring at 17 locations on the north and south channel of the creek. Working with Jonathan Frodge with SPU. We’ve got 30 people. Trying to locate sources of e-coli. One of the major ones is dysfunctional sewers.

Adjourned 7:29 PM