



Water System Advisory Committee (WSAC)
February 14, 2018 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue
Room 4901
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Joel Carsley	Y	Sheryl Shapiro	CAC Program Manager
Steven Cole	Y	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Paul Reed	Y	Kathy Curry	Water LOB Liaison
Rodney Schauf	Y	Alex Chen	Division Director, Water Planning and Program Management
Teresa Stern	Y	Ellen Pepin-Cato	SPU Communications Strategic Advisor
Michael Godfried	P	Kelly O'Rourke	SPU Water Conservation Manager
Kat Dej-Panah	Y	Anna Dyer	Community/Youth Education & Outreach Water Conservation Program Manager
Wendy Walker	Y		
Ky Lewis	On Leave		

Action Items

- CAC Recruitment Flyer will be shared with WSAC members this week to gather input.

1. Regular Business

- WSAC Chair Rodney Schauf opened the meeting at 5:36 PM and reminded attendees to sign-in.
- Committee Members and SPU staff introduced themselves.
- Meeting notes from December and January were reviewed and approved.
- Sheryl indicated emergency exits, exit procedures, and bathrooms.

2. CAC Program Updates

Membership & Ongoing Recruitment

Sheryl provided an update on membership. Sheryl is actively recruiting and welcomes recommendations. Sheryl walked members through the recruitment process and noted that we are looking for diverse voices and a demographic balance. Sheryl encouraged members to share that they serve on the Committees within their networks and offered to provide a resupply of the WSAC business cards if members would like them. She also noted that if they have a person in mind, Sheryl is willing to contact them directly. Kathy noted that WSAC is chartered for 12, so spaces are available, and recruitment is an ongoing process.

2018 WSAC Officers Election

Sheryl shared the nominee statements. Ballots were distributed, and electronic ballots were counted. The results were as follows:

- Rodney Schauf – 8 unanimous votes for Chair
- Joel Carsley – 8 unanimous votes for Vice-Chair

2019 SPU Water System Plan Update

Kathy thanked WSAC for their input during the January meeting on the outreach strategy for the March release of the 2019 Water System Plan (WSP) Public Review Draft. Kathy reported that WSAC input is reflected in the decision to announce the availability of the 2019 WSP Public Review Draft for public review and comment as part of a broader drinking water education effort. Instead of holding a public meeting to announce release of the 2019 WSP, the following actions will kick off the public review process:

- At Your Service Newsletter -- March/April: announcement about the forthcoming March 2019 WSP release;
- At Your Service Newsletter – May/June: announcement that the 2019 WSP Public Review Draft has been released and is available for public review and comment;
- Annual Water Quality Report: information about SPU’s Water System Planning process and announcement that the 2019 WSP Public Review Draft is available for public review and comment;
- Various media announcements about the 2019 WSP Public Review Draft, including social media

Kathy noted that if there was WSAC interest in providing a comment letter, that could be discussed at the March 14 WSAC Meeting when Joan Kersnar is going to provide an overview of the 2019 WSP. The Water Shortage Contingency Plan (one of the appendices to the WSP) will be presented as well, in recognition of interest from a committee member.

3. 2017 Drinking Water Quality Report – Part 1.

Purpose: Gather WSAC input on theme ideas for the annual Drinking Water Quality Report (WQR) that is provided to SPU customers. Also, looking for ideas on how to include an announcement of the release of the 2019 WSP Public Review Draft for public comment.

SPU Strategic Communication Advisor, Ellen Pepin-Cato, gave an overview of the meeting she has had with the consultant team so far, and the initial decisions that have been made. She noted that today would be a good opportunity to gather feedback while the report is still in formation. Ellen will return in April when the report is more flushed out, and WSAC members will be able to look at a draft of the report and provide feedback.

SPU has a federal requirement to distribute the WQR on an annual basis, sharing findings from the previous calendar year. The report is also an opportunity for SPU to educate customers on our efforts in water conservation, as well as what the Utility is doing to plan for continued water quality in the future. It is the only piece of mail the Utility delivers to every mailbox in the City. Ellen asked members to look at the key messages and themes in the brainstorm document, and provide feedback on:

- ✓ If they are drawn to any of the proposed themes;
- ✓ If there are themes they have seen in past reports that we should flush out more

- **CAC Member:** I particularly like the “community-centered utility” message, because it emphasizes how SPU will relate to community.
 - **Ellen** gave a brief overview of the origins of a “community-centered utility.” She explained that SPU aims to not just provide services to our community, but to partner with them to ensure we’re protecting our natural resources. Ellen shared examples of what SPU is thinking when they use the phrase “community-centered utility” in this report, including talking with communities who don’t know we can drink our water and taking them to the watershed to share the origins of the City’s drinking water, as well as partnering with them to make sure that message gets out to others in the community. The idea is to partner with the community to ensure a “conservation ethic” is adopted.
- **CAC Member:** I get the sense that people are looking for the ways that things/projects impact them right now. The “right now” is a hook to get them interested and reading further. Could we add “What could you do?” tips to the back, such as regarding flushable wipes or FOG?
- **CAC Member:** Some of the customers don’t trust that we can drink the water. I read an article recently about immigrants coming from countries where they didn’t have good water, and don’t trust our water supply.
 - **CAC Member:** How many people are immigrating here who had bad water?
 - **Staff response:** That’s something we don’t know yet.
 - **CAC Member:** Duwamish River Coalition does similar outreach to fishermen to communicate which fish are less toxic. It’s been a good outreach strategy in the Duwamish Valley, and I’m sure they could share that expertise. But keep in mind that the same group of people may get mixed messages. For example: “you can’t eat these fish, but you can drink this water...” It’s also a challenge to communicate these different messages in another language.
- **CAC Member:** I noticed a huge uptick recently on discussions around microplastics in water. I wonder if the Utility is ready to talk about that with customers? Not everyone is going to separate microplastics found in the ocean, from the watershed. And is anyone testing for that in our water supply?
 - **Staff response:** It’s been one year since the original story came out. Microplastics are generally from wastewater treatment, and since the water supply watersheds are protected, I’d be surprised if testing on our drinking water showed positive for microplastics. It would be good to invite Wiley back to discuss in more detail if there is interest in this topic.
 - **CAC Member:** Zero is a data point too, and reassuring people might be a necessity.
- **CAC Member:** This is an old issue, but there’s so many people drinking bottled water and paying for it, or using Britta filters. Need to keep banging on that issue.
 - **CAC Member:** My preschool filters their water because they had a lead issue; there was only trace issues but there’s none if they filter it.
 - **CAC Member:** Our company recently provided Southlake Alternative School and Dearborn Park Elementary School machines to filter lead because of issues with pipes.

- **A CAC Member** shared that they liked the graphic from last year's report regarding the cost difference between bottled water and tap water.
- **CAC Member:** Are all three themes being considered? Community partnerships could be compelling. And a graphic for that could be compelling if you're going to focus on the community-centered utility message.
- **CAC Member:** A possible way to tie-in the "community-centered" theme with the drinking water quality theme is "empowerment." SPU is a steward of the Public's money, but the community has a huge impact on how SPU operates. The community should feel empowered to make the big changes; need to get people to know that they have a big stake in that change. Part of the empowerment message could be empowering people to drink the water. There's the education piece (that this water is good, drinkable, and superior to bottled water). But you can tie the educational piece into the empowerment message.
- **CAC Member:** The theme of aging infrastructure seems to be getting more press coverage. There was a New York Times article a couple months ago about aging water infrastructure. On WSAC, we've learned SPU is dealing with it. Seems there is more interest and awareness out there. Is that worth describing in your document?
 - **Staff response:** That's a good segue into how the WSP fits into this. If we were going to go with a quality theme, we could cover the aging infrastructure and one way they could learn about it would be to read the WSP.

Water Planning and Program Management Division Director Alex Chen asked members to describe what it means when they hear the tagline "community-centered utility." Members shared the following:

- **CAC Member:** Seems too compartmentalized. There are a lot of communities in the City, and they each have different needs. How do you tie that all in?
- **CAC Member:** The addition of the word "All" helps a lot. Because it does not matter the size of the community; need to be more inclusive of all communities including smaller communities. It also builds out into communities such as wholesale customers.
- **CAC Member:** "All community-centered utility" or following on the RSJ thread "all communities inclusive." Just saying community centered sounds like you're drilling down to a much smaller subset.
- **CAC Member:** "A Utility for our whole community" or "our communities."
- **CAC Member:** It seems to me that what you're trying to generate a sense of trust in all these communities that they can be confident that our water is of the highest quality. I don't know if you can use the word trust, but how do you generate that feeling among customers? It's a reasonable and admirable goal. And that trust may mean different things to different communities.
- **CAC Member:** It's really about stewardship of our resources, our money to the ratepayers. Looking out for the interests of the tax payers, rate payers.
- **CAC Member:** "P" in SPU means it's a *public* utility. That's a different relationship that customers have with SPU, that they may not think about or know about. SPU is not a cable company. When I think community-centered, I assume they are trying to look at the whole community at once.

Ellen asked members if they would be interested in a flow chart of what happens to their drinking water before it gets to the tap. In the 2016 report, they included a map of the watershed. This years' graphic would cover treatment flow.

- **CAC Member:** I think it would be appealing. For most people, we just turn on the tap and hope it's coming from somewhere safe. I don't think the average person knows where it comes from.
- **Staff response:** One complexity is that we have different treatment processes for different watershed. It's a difficult story to tell, whether in pictures or words.
 - **CAC Member:** Could use icons to represent different treatment options.
 - **CAC Member:** I feel like it's something that an infographic should show.
- **CAC Member:** I think that empowerment comment (see above) ties into the treatment graphic. The graphic gives people a sense of what "water treatment" means; that it's not just running it through a simple filter. Don't need to go into technical detail, but it should build confidence.
 - **CAC Member:** And possibly include in that flow chart: Between treatment piece and faucet, represent the replacement / addressing of aging infrastructure.

As we were running out of time, Ellen asked members to consider what is the most important from the focus questions [on the discussion document that was handed out]. She posed the questions, "How do we make sure all communities get the message we're trying to get across? If you weren't going to read a whole report, how would you want to receive the most important messages?"

- **CAC Member:** Include a data-driven study dollar amount for the savings on tap vs bottled water. In seven different languages, in big font: "Save \$2000 per year".
- **CAC Member:** How do you separate different languages?
 - **Staff response:** There are some materials we translate into the City's' top seven languages. Historically, this hasn't been done that way. We have been providing a translation phone line for reading the report. In 2017, we took a tiny step forward and translated the bottled water message. But what if we made a 1-page summary, had it transcreated, and figured out how to distribute? It would take extra money and extra time, but it could be worth it if the same communities that don't read it are the same ones that don't trust the water.
 - **CAC Member:** Could you translate this into all languages, and post on SPU website?
 - **CAC Member:** I imagine there is connections with community leaders; those would be the best venues for sharing this message.
 - **CAC Member:** Print a 1-page piece in multiple languages that could go to community centers.
 - **CAC Member:** De-emphasize the words, and make it more an infographic. Some folks don't speak English, but other folks are just millennials and won't take the time to read a document.
 - **CAC Member:** Infographics tend to be easier to read; immigrant's kids speak English and often serve as the translators. Have an infographic appeals to many.
 - **CAC Member:** Do you know which % of the population falls into the immigrant / non-ESL category?

- **CAC Member:** You should also include anyone that is busy with a short attention span.

4. Regional Water Conservation Program

Purpose: Gather WSAC input on the education, outreach and technical assistance elements of the Regional Water Conservation Programs

Kelly gave a brief overview of the Saving Water Partnership, a regional water conservation program. Kelly explained that in 2017, the Water Operating Board set the strategic direction for a 10-year period. The outcome was to de-emphasize rebates and increase education, outreach, and technical assistance. Now they are working with staff-level wholesale customers to explore how to implement that change. They also want input from retail customers, such as members of WSAC.

Kelly quickly walked through the 11 different education, outreach, and technical assistance program components. WSAC members were given a chance to ask brief questions:

- **CAC Member:** The savingwater.org website doesn't cost anything?
 - **Staff response:** No, it's just staff time to update the content.
- **CAC Member:** Have the videos been offered in any other languages?
 - **Staff response:** Leak videos are offered in 5 languages. It's a voiceover. The landscaping videos are not translated.
- **CAC Member:** Are all the videos digitally streamed? some people are old fashioned and might like a hard copy.
 - **Staff response:** They are all posted online. There are no hard copies available.
- **CAC Member:** Is [the garden hotline] multilingual?
 - **Staff response:** I believe they have some folks on staff with language capabilities and then they tap into the language line for additional assistance.
- **CAC Member:** Have you partnered with Cisco [Morris], the gardener?
 - **Staff response:** We have partnered with him in the past, but he is not currently a partner.
- **CAC Member:** Are coupons for seeds part of the program?
 - **Staff response:** Seeds aren't really part of the program, but the program definitely focuses on plants. We do a lot of work around "right plant, right place" including providing plant lists, brochures, and classes. The landscape topic is the hardest; there's a lot of opportunity for conservation but it's hard to address all the issues.
- **CAC Member:** None of these programs are on salmon?
 - **Staff response:** The salmon topic is incorporated in our school program, but the salmon message could be threaded through a little bit more.
 - **CAC Member:** It may also provide more partnership opportunities in the future.

WSAC members were offered five green dots, and asked to identify which of the education, outreach and technical assistance elements seemed the most valuable to them. Kelly encouraged them to think about it either from their personal life perspective (i.e., if trying in their home to be a good steward of water), or from a business perspective. She said the intention is to help SPU prioritize which programs to work towards improving first. Red dots were also provided to CAC members to indicate which elements did not seem like a good expense of time or energy. WSAC members then discussed a few elements (listed below). WSAC members were asked:

- a. How are the ideas for changes in each element sitting with WSAC members?

- b. Which ones are of interest, to bring back to WSAC in more detail?
- c. Since the Committee was running out of time, Kelly encouraged members to share strong reactions and burning or good ideas.

Community Events/Festivals

- **CAC Member:** Can you give us a sense... you attended 22 events in 2017. How did they assess the results of those events? Did they count the number of conversations? How do you measure the value of those interactions?
 - **Staff response:** We haven't done a particularly effective job of capturing that. We capture the approximate number of attendees for the event, rather than how many we spoke to. For SPU, we try to be intentional with events and there is an emphasis on geographic distribution and outreach to underserved areas. Wholesale customers get to choose which events they participate in. We need a hook to get people to the booth and ensure we're getting the conservation message across.
- **CAC Member:** I was at a south-end festival and I think they had the FOG jar. Is there anything that people can touch and feel? It's a great connection. You should ask yourself who your audience is for these events -- Who are you not able to reach with printed media or online? Which communities are served best by in-person presence?
 - **Staff response:** I don't think we have the data points to see which communities we are not reaching, and what their existing level of knowledge is.
 - **Staff response:** I hear you saying we should target events in communities where there's a harder time reaching them.
 - **CAC Member:** I have worked outreach where we have the clicker, and it surprises me that you don't have that. Need to know the dollar per contact, and money savings in water conservation potential. A discussion with a landscaper that might save tons of water per year, more-so than a discussion with a single homeowner. Telling me you had X number of events doesn't tell me much.
- **Staff question:** Can we look at geographical water use, and target based on that?
- **CAC Member:** It would be good to target new residents to the area.
- **CAC Member:** Why not expand the water conservation message to all four lines of business? Water, waste, drainage to creeks. Take a multi-faceted approach and drive home the community-centered message.
- **CAC Member:** As someone who does outreach for my organization, we train volunteers and you could easily train colleagues to speak about other LOB programs.
- **CAC Member:** [Referring to the table top displays] These infographics could turn into booth displays. Interactive displays: lifting to see answers on facts. Could have graphics for water conservation facts.
- Kelly thanked members who contributed feedback, and said she may want to come back to gather more ideas on this element. She said she hopes to develop a booth that is interactive and drives home a water conservation message.

School Programs:

WSAC members were asked to share their reactions to youth education ("school programs") because the element received both positive (green) and negative (red) dots.

- **CAC Member:** I feel we should focus on the older students.
 - **Staff response:** Technically, our programs are K-12, but the teachers that sign-up tend to be younger age.

- **CAC Member:** My take is that an elementary school age student isn't going to bring those conservation messages home, but they are going to absorb the message.
 - **CAC Member:** It tends to be K-3rd, and they do absorb the message. But I disagree, kids do bring home the messages they learn. Have you ever had a kid go vegan?
 - **CAC Member:** I put a red dot [to de-prioritize this element], because I think it could be more of a train the trainer opportunity for teachers to download and have enough information to teach the curriculum. If we must pick, I think SPU hours could be more well spent than on school programs.
 - **CAC Member:** I recommend talking to the school and incorporating it into the curriculum. Could be packaged so that it would be implemented by the school.
 - **Staff response:** I worked with a school that trained High School ambassadors who then could deliver the curriculum.
- **CAC Member:** Does this curriculum meet the science standards?
 - **Staff response:** Yes? That's why teachers like them. They get 50 minutes where they are not teaching but it meets the standards.
- **CAC Member:** For High School students, you need to make it more technical. For example, water quality chemistry testing.
- **CAC Member:** Is the content the same for K-12?
 - **Staff response:** No, there are several programs that have more advanced concepts for older kids.

Natural Yard Care Publications

- **CAC Member:** I put a green dot because I still have those brochures.

How-to-Videos

- **CAC Member:** How are they distributed?
 - **Staff response:** They are hosted on the website, and they are passively found. For leaks, if you Google search you might find the videos, but the others are only passively found. We need to do a push on social media.
- **CAC Member:** Do you post them on YouTube? That's where people go to find how-to videos.
 - **Staff response:** They're on the Saving Water Partnership site, but they're also on YouTube.
- **CAC Member:** I have read that Facebook and Google are 80% of the marketing for digital content. It is important that you have a presence on those platforms.

A Committee member shared that they felt this was a great topic to keep discussing, that the conversation was rich. WSAC members were encouraged to email specific elements they were interested in discussing further.

6. Community Insights, Around the Table

- **A CAC Member** went to an event on Monday called "Pint-Sized Science" where they referred a potential member to the CAC Program. At the event, they heard specifically about microplastics and who is testing. The event attracted people very interested in water and watersheds, but specifically Puget Sound. Within WSAC, we're thinking about watershed to faucet, but I think when people sitting outside of this Committee think about water – it's all tied in. People don't separate it out. If we talk about eliminating leaky oil drips, it ties right in with the conservation

message. The event was hosted at a family-friendly brewery, and had great turnout. I also loved that it's a series, and could present an opportunity for SPU to partner for a meeting.

- **CAC Member:** Green Duwamish Symposium is on February 26. Sheryl will forward.
- **CAC Member:** I live on a street with a lot of construction, and is a very steep street. We have issues with sewer and water pipes. Occasionally we have SPU or others coming to dig up the street or install new connections to new houses. I find it interesting when I'm working out of my house, I will go and engage with SPU and other agencies. You see a real mix of willingness to engage and level of information they're willing to share. I had a good positive experience with an SPU staff member trying to clean out a pipe with a large instrument. The work they were doing was really fascinating and gave a good impression of the SPU people. Other times though, they have been less willing to engage and share. Is that something taught? To be sensitive to the people in the neighborhood? It's good PR for the Utility!

Adjourned 7:31 PM