

SPU Customer Review Panel

2021-2026

Strategic Business Plan Panel Comment Letter Overview

Feb. 8. 2021

Agenda

- Introductions of Kathryn Aisenberg and Panel
- Customer Review Panel – quick recap of role, history
- Key points in Panel Letter
- Comments / Discussion / Questions

SPU Customer Review Panel

- Panel created in 2013; made a permanent standing body in 2017
- 11 seats, 3 vacancies.
- Role is to independently advise the Mayor and Council in collaboration with SPU Director Mami Hara and staff.
- Panel met 21 times over the last 3 years with SPU E-team members. Three-hour meetings, open to public; agendas and materials posted online.

2021-2026 Strategic Business Plan

- Plan is the second 6-year plan since 2013. 4
- Plan includes new SPU vision, mission and value statements
- Overall, the Panel is very supportive the Plan, including **all** of the **18 initiatives and investments**, and the resulting **6-year average annual rate path of 4.2%**
- Important for rates to be stable and predictable
- Key lenses in the Plan: Affordability and Accountability, Risk and Resiliency, Equity and Empowerment

Affordability & Accountability Highlights

- Major focus for the Panel: **asset management of aging infrastructure**
 - Much of water and wastewater/drainage pipe systems are 80 years old +/-.
- Continuous improvement in capital project delivery and operations will help slow the annual growth in rates
- Metrics are important for accountability to ratepayers and city leaders
- We support efforts by SPU to collaborate with Federal, State and local partners to develop cost effective approaches to meet health and environmental regulations

Risk & Resiliency Highlights

- Panel supports R & R initiatives as a focus for how SPU thinks about the future and approaches its work today.
- Key items:
 - Climate change adaptation strategy
 - Completion of operations facilities upgrades
 - South Park flooding response
 - Workforce development

Other Observations:

- **New and existing programs we strongly support:**
 - Proposed: Financial assistance program for individual property owners to renovate or replace their private side sewers.
 - New: RV wastewater collection pilot program
 - Existing: Clean Cities work supported by general fund, performed by SPU.
- **Cost sharing between SPU and SDOT is appropriate on maintenance/cleaning of City's right of ways**
 - Stream culvert replacements
 - Street sweeping program for bicycle lanes



Other Observations:

- **Affordability is an over-arching concern for the Panel**

- Many growing pressures on SPU rates:
 - renovation and replacement of water, wastewater and drainage infrastructure
 - response to climate change
 - seismic resiliency
 - water quality obligations
- Work should begin now to map out how we can address long term aging-infrastructure replacement challenge.

Thank you for meeting with us!

- We appreciate the excellent work of SPU staff!
- We would welcome enhanced engagement between the Panel and the Mayor and Council offices.

Questions? Comments?