



# Budget and Rates Outreach and Communications

August 26, 2020

Rebekah Anderson, Communications Manager  
Clark Mather, Community & Government Relations Mgr.



# Overview

- Timeline
- Strategic Directives
- Schedule
- Current outreach environment, staff proposal
- Communications background, considerations, staff proposal
- Receiving PUB feedback throughout



# Schedule Milestones

August 26: Tonight's presentation, PUB feedback

September 9: PUB review of Rail/Water staff proposed budget & rates

September 23: PUB review of staff proposed budget & rates, public hearing

October 6: GPFC presentation on staff's rate proposals



# Schedule Milestones (cont.)

**October 13:** Joint Study Session presentation on staff's rate proposals

**October 14:** PUB 1<sup>st</sup> reading of budget & rates ordinances

**October 28:** PUB 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of budget & rates ordinances, potential PUB adoption

**November:** Scheduled adoption of TPU's budget & rates ordinances by Tacoma Mayor & City Council



# Guided by Strategic Directives

Nearly all Strategic Directives inform staff

- SD-1: Equity and Inclusion
- SD-2: Financial Planning
- SD-3: Rates
- SD-4: Stakeholder Engagement
- SD-7: Reliability and Resiliency
- SD-9: Economic Development



# Current Outreach Environment

Due to COVID-19, organizations have shifted to virtual meetings, if they meet

Other important community conversations happening

Virtual outreach provides safe, new way to engage

- We recognize that some customers still have technology barriers
- We also recognize that many in our community may have other priorities during this unprecedented time



# Recommended Outreach Plan

Outreach coordinated with Environmental Services

Virtual Engagement: September-November

- Neighborhood Councils & Block Groups
- Partnering with existing events of organizations
- Franchise Cities/Local Government Partners
- Chambers of Commerce/Economic Development Organizations
- Key Accounts, including JBLM
- Business Districts

Virtual Community Meetings

- September 23 PUB public hearing and at least one other broad, virtual community meeting to provide customers with diverse times to participate
- Currently seeking partnership with regional organizations



# Sharing what we hear, PUB engagement

Staff will provide written reports

Policymaker updates on engagement schedule

At the request of the PUB & Director, provide updates at upcoming meetings





# Communications Background

In 2020, we will repeat our successful budget and rates communications strategies to prepare customers and stakeholders for 2021-2022.

Our two-fold strategy will continue to be

- 1) inform customers of milestones in ratemaking process and how they can stay up-to-date on the process
- 2) Reinforce the value of our services by telling the story of how we keep costs low while making necessary investments in infrastructure and maintaining service quality on our customers' behalf.



# Communications Considerations

- Non-English speaking customers (translation/transcreation)
- Low income customers who are impacted by even a small rate increase
- Quarantine restrictions on public meetings and ways communication tools could provide new opportunities for the outreach team to reach customers, i.e. virtual events or Facebook live



# Communications Tactics and Timing

## Ongoing

- Use rates web page as central resource and single source of real-time information
  - Post budget, rates, and outreach presentations
  - Post public meeting and outreach dates
- Provide online customer feedback form (comments will be provided to PUB prior to each board meeting)
- Social media posts announcing public meetings, Board meetings, and outreach events
- Monthly email newsletter updates on process with links to rates page
- Quarterly print newsletter updates on process with rates page URL

## August

- Update fact sheet in 5 languages
- Provide messaging for outreach staff to send to organizations



# Communications Tactics and Timing

## September-October

- Link to rates page from home page to increase traffic
- Messaging about the process with link to rates page on MyAccount login page
- Messages about the process with rates page URL on the invoice
- Support and promote virtual events or live stream opportunities for public outreach
- Create and post video series about how we keep costs low
- TV Tacoma educational segment(s) on how rates benefit customers





Thank you

What feedback or questions do you have?



# Contacts

## Rebekah Anderson

Communications Manager

[randerson2@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:randerson2@cityoftacoma.org)

W: 253-348-1745

## Clark Mather

Community & Government Relations Manager

[cmather@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:cmather@cityoftacoma.org)

W: 253-441-4159

