

April 23, 2025

MOTION

I hereby move that the following motion be approved:

25-02. That in accordance with Article IV, Section 4.18 of the Tacoma City Charter, the Board has completed an annual performance review of Jackie Flowers, the Director of Utilities, and now approves the annual performance review filed with the Clerk of the Board; the Board also approves an increase in compensation from Step 2 to Step 4, which is a \$44,096.00 increase to \$474,240.00 annually, effective as of May 3, 2025; approves an award of 4 incentive days pursuant to TMC 1.12.345.C; and approves an award of 16 administrative leave days pursuant to TMC 1.12.250(C)(2), to be used within 12 months.



# TPU DIRECTOR OF UTILITIES EVALUATION

JANUARY 2025

## OVERVIEW

The Tacoma Public Utility Board evaluates the TPU Director's performance on a yearly basis. To help guide the Director's work during the performance year, the Board provides feedback on performance to date, along with direction for future performance.

Board Chair O'Loughlin  
and Board Members

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## TPU Mission

Tacoma Public Utilities delivers clean, reliable services essential to quality of life.

## TPU Vision

Tacoma Public Utilities will be a trusted community partner, where employees are proud to deliver equitable, affordable utility services.

## TPU Values

- **Safety:** *We protect everyone's physical and psychological safety.*
- **Belonging:** *We create a place where diversity is appreciated and valued.*
- **Customer Focus:** *We advocate for equitable and affordable service delivery.*
- **Integrity:** *We hold ourselves accountable to the things we do and say.*
- **Respect:** *We treat everyone with courtesy and professionalism.*

## Tacoma 2025 Goals

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### Education

Tacoma leads the region in education for youth and adults by producing more graduates from high school and college, linking residents to employment in the region, and investing in lifelong learning opportunities.



### Equity & Accessibility

All residents are treated equitably and have access to services, facilities and financial stability.



### Livability

Tacoma residents have opportunities and amenities such as connected neighborhoods, accessible and efficient transportation options, and vibrant arts and culture while maintaining affordability.



### Economy & Workforce

Tacoma Residents can find livable wage jobs in key industry areas. Tacoma will be place of choice for employers, professionals, and new graduates.



### Civic Engagement

Tacoma residents are engaged participants in making Tacoma a well-run city. Elected and volunteer leadership of the city reflects the diversity of the city and residents fully participate in community decision making.



### Government Performance

In addition to the community goals articulated by the vision, it is clear that citizens wanted a government that works for them – one that is efficient, fiscally responsible, and effective.

## 2024 Public Utility Board Guiding Principles

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### **GP1: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging**

TPU is dedicated and committed to comprehensive and sustained transformation of systems, policies, practices, and contracts impacted by systemic racism. TPU, using Racial Equity Action Plans, will put the theory of change into action to achieve a collective vision of racial equity.

### **GP2: Financial Sustainability**

TPU is committed to providing safe, affordable, and reliable power, water, and rail services over the long term by maintaining sustainable budget, financial, and asset management practices.

### **GP3: Rates**

TPU rates for power, water, and rail services play an important role in securing a strong economy, establishing equity among customers, and producing revenue sufficient to provide safe, reliable, and environmentally sensitive utility services with rates that are as low as they can responsibly be. TPU strives to ensure rates will be adequate, fair and just.

### **GP4: Stakeholder Engagement**

TPU is committed to proactive engagement and open dialogue with customers and other stakeholders to understand their needs and improve service that informs decision-making while enhancing community understanding of TPU's operations, programs, and services.

### **GP5: Environmental Sustainability**

TPU seeks to be a leader in the preservation, protection, and restoration of our region's environment while maintaining the delivery of reliable and affordable services. We remain committed to environmental stewardship practices, further decarbonization and electrification efforts, and other initiatives to meet these objectives.

### **GP6: Innovation**

Tacoma Public Utilities faces complex challenges including aging infrastructure, shifting workforce dynamics, uncertain sources of supply, changing regulatory requirements, dynamically changing markets and rising customer expectations. TPU is committed to fostering a culture of innovation to meet these challenges today and into the future. Innovation refers to fresh thinking that creates value for customers, including:

- Improved processes, policies and ways of doing business
- New or enhanced products and services
- New technologies and infrastructure

An innovative culture will enable an environment of creativity, experimentation and incubation to achieve new approaches to serve our customers, manage assets, finance investments and realize superior utility performance with the added benefit of enhancing sustainability.

**GP7: Reliability and Resiliency**

TPU will reliably deliver to its customers the power, water and rail services they need and will rebound quickly from all interruptions in such service delivery.

**GP8: Telecom**

Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) owns a hybrid fiber coaxial (HFC) network, portions of which it uses for its own operational needs and leases out the excess capacity to generate incremental economic value for the electric utility. The Telecom Strategic Directive directs the full utilization of the capability and capacity of the HFC network to ensure maximize return on investment, continued public ownership of the HFC network, and value creation for the public and communities served.

TPU is changing the scope of the past Click! public – private partnership, so the private partner can provide the retail video services in a quickly evolving technology and business environment. The industry standard for this model consists of the network owner, Tacoma Power, granting an Indefeasible Right to Use the network’s capacity that is not required for power system needs. Tacoma Power will retain network maintenance responsibilities locating, splicing, repair and relocation on the portion of the network that includes power system functions.

**GP9: Economic Development**

The Utilities are an asset that can aid in improved quality of life for all TPU customers and stakeholders. TPU supplies critical resources to the communities it serves and provides the foundation for building a strong and resilient economy, which will ultimately result in more revenue for TPU.

**GP10: Government Relations**

Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) is committed to building and strengthening respectful and mutually productive relationships with tribal, federal, state, and other local units of government in order for public policy to benefit TPU customers and to foster the outcomes set out in TPU’s Strategic Directives.

**GP11: *combined with GP5***

**GP12: Employee Relations**


Tacoma Public Utilities Leadership along with the Public Utilities Board consider employees our most valuable assets. TPU employees are the face of the utility to our customers and their dedication keeps the utility running on a day-to-day basis.

TPU is committed to creating and maintaining a positive, supportive environment where employees are inspired to do their best work. This commitment ensures that all employees benefit from a safe, productive work environment, fair and equitable compensation, recognition of efforts, and the sense that they are valued.

**GP13: Customer Service**

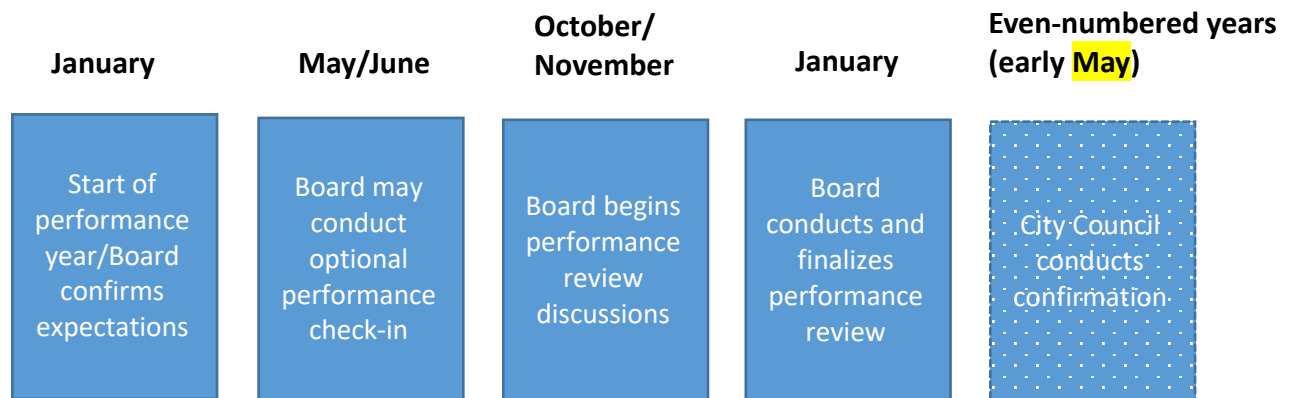
As a municipal utility, TPU is committed to providing the highest levels of customer services. The Public Utility Board has established this directive to ensure positive customer experiences in their interactions with TPU staff, Board Members, consultants, and sub-contractors.

**GP14: Resource Planning**

TPU's highest priority is providing safe and reliable power, water, and rail services that meet or exceed customer needs over the long term (20 to 60 years). 

## Performance Management Process

Performance Year: January 2024 through December 2024





## Ratings Definitions

**Exceptional Performance:** Demonstrates particularly excellent sustained performance of such high quality that it results in meeting organizational goals that would not otherwise have been achieved. Exerts a significant positive influence toward organizational growth. Demonstrates the performance characteristics outlined in the "Exceeds Expectations" and "Effective" categories.

**Exceeds Expectations:** Demonstrates unusually good performance that exceeds expectations in critical areas. Exhibits sustained support of organizational goals. Improves the quality and/or cost effectiveness of management practices, operating procedures, task assignments and/or program activities. Effectively handles difficult and unpredicted and/or unprecedented problems.

**Achieves Expectations:** Demonstrates good, sound performance that meets organizational goals. Completes critical activities in an effective manner. Applies technical skills and organizational knowledge to successfully carry out assigned duties. Plans and performs work according to organizational priorities and schedules. Communicates clearly and effectively.

**Requires Development:** Performance is deficient in one or more key areas and will require additional training or assistance to fully achieve expectations.

**Unsatisfactory:** Shows a lack of awareness of or regard for policy implications or assignments. Circumvents established procedures, resulting in unnecessary expenditure of time or resources. Reluctance to accept responsibility. Performance failed to meet expectations in essential areas of responsibility and/or critical goals were not met. Work is behind schedule and/or of poor quality.

## Section 1: Assisting the Board with Policy Making Role

*Description/behaviors: Provides accurate and timely information, alternatives, and recommendations; demonstrates support of strategic goals; delivers concise written and verbal communications; ensures timely follow-up; is future focused; conducts advance planning.*

2024 saw transition of leadership in two key positions: Rail Superintendent and Water Superintendent. The Director established a comprehensive recruitment strategy for the Rail Superintendent involving industry experts, rail customers, rail employees and board members. The City Charter requires confirmation of the Public Utility Board for the Rail Superintendent. Board members were offered the opportunity to meet all final candidates, and the Board Chair participated in the executive leadership team interview panel. Public Utility Board confirmation of the Rail Superintendent occurred on September 25, 2024. Following departure of the Water Superintendent, an interim appointment with Board confirmation was made to provide continuity to the budget and rates process as well as key projects. Recruitment for Tacoma Water's next Superintendent will occur in 2025.

Board meeting success is in part dependent on forecasting reasonable and timely agenda topics to enable action at the right time with respect to business function, including anticipating emerging issues in advance of or at time of public discussion. The Director ensures Board packet materials are available by mid-day the Friday before the board meeting, with few exceptions. The Director's office tracks responses to board member questions and follow-up materials to ensure timely action on inquiries. Late 2024 adjustments were made to the board memo submittal process to minimize gaps in information. Specifically, divisions were asked to reinforce quality control/review processes related to Board Action Memos. The deadline for memo submittal was moved up to allow review time by the Director's office.

Early in 2024, as part of her work plan, the Director initiated action on the TPU-wide strategic plan developed in 2023. Development of the TPU-wide strategic plan was made an organizational priority in response to feedback in the 2022 employee satisfaction survey and the City Charter required 10-Year Management Review (completed in November 2023). Feedback from the management review informed initiatives and actions associated with the plan.

While the TPU-wide strategic plan was launched in September 2023, the plan informed the Director's workplan, business unit goals and implementation priorities for 2024. The Director appointed initiative teams to pursue outcomes associated with each of the key objective areas; they are as follows:

- Operational Excellence – Partner with Human Resources to develop a performance dashboard. (Section 2 of this evaluation).

- Customer Experience – Lead the change management effort to create a unified customer experience and external affairs workgroup. (Section 3 of this evaluation).
- Employee Experience – Review anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, develop clear expectations, and require training for everyone to eliminate workplace bullying and harassment. (Section 5 of this evaluation).

Toward the end of 2024, initiative priorities necessary to continue work in key areas as identified by executive leaders based on guiding principles, strategic plans, management review, employee satisfaction, and organizational goals, informed the Director’s proposed workplan, business unit goals and activities for initiative teams. The Strategic Plan developed in 2023 had identified a two-year progression of key initiatives. Simultaneously, the Director is leading strategic planning efforts to expand the timeline of strategic focus to account for key emerging trends the organization faces in the next fifteen years. Expanding the strategy period of time will bring into focus areas of need for the organization as we prepare to meet future challenges.

Many Public Utility Board study sessions in 2024 were focused on development of the 2025/26 Biennial Budget and Rates proposal. The proposals achieved final approval from the Public Utility Board in October and the City Council in December. The Director ensured timely response to board inquiries and follow up questions related to the proposals and provided additional presentations in thematic areas of interest based on board question and feedback.

The Director provided updates to the board for nearly all guiding principles. Highlights from those reports can be found throughout this evaluation. The Directors 2024 workplan anticipated an update to the Customer Services guiding principle. This update was paused pending the December board workshop discussion around guiding principles priorities. The December workshop will guide updates to those principles in 2025.

- Opportunities

Based on feedback from board members, the Director will map out PUB involvement in the 2025 expanded strategy work. It is anticipated this work will take place throughout 2025 to inform the update to the TPU Strategic Plan for implementation in 2026 and beyond.

Board Rating  
(Check one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional performance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceeds expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Achieves expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires development	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory
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## Section 2: General Government/City Council Relationships

Aligns with Guiding Principle 10: Government Relations and Strategic Plan Objective Operational Excellence

*Description/behaviors: Proactively works to develop a collaborative relationship with the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, General Government departments; effectively uses shared resources.*

The Director offered to meet quarterly with the Mayor, City Manager, and Board Chair to discuss areas of common interest or concern. The Director met quarterly with the Council Committee Chairs and the Board Chair to share items of interest and respond to questions. These meetings often led to Council Committee invitations to present on key topics. The Director met monthly with the Deputy Mayor, more specifically in his role as GPFC Chair, to enhance coordination around budget and rates development informed by Board briefings. The Director holds weekly calls with the City Manager to coordinate on key issues. The Director coordinates with the City Manager to arrange at least quarterly joint study sessions of the City Council and the Public Utility Board with topics generally focused on updates to common interest initiatives.

In 2024, the Director and Deputy Director of Administration worked with the Deputy City Manager to resume quarterly shared services meetings with Finance and Human Resources (HR) to advance Business Partnership commitments. Successful consistent meetings occurred with Human Resources in conjunction with the Operational Excellence objective of the Strategic Plan. The meetings with Finance did not occur as frequently, despite the Director's outreach.

The Director established initiative team identified key pain points in HR process prioritizing our desire for role clarity and dashboard development. Those areas include hiring process, onboarding, employee relations and class and comp processes. Human Resources is focusing on implementing Recruitment Strategy Meetings between TPU hiring managers and HR Analysts for comprehensive recruitment planning and metrics around hiring. Key performance indicators (KPIs) related to the hiring practice, such as Time to Fill, Time to Process Position Description Form (PDF), # of Recruitments, # of New/Reclassification and % of Recruitment Strategy Meeting Completed, have been identified to measure performance related to the hiring process. The initial dashboard is anticipated by end of Q1 2025 and will continue to develop. Eventually, KPIs will be incorporated into a dashboard once the recruitment data is able to be extracted from the hiring system. Until data is available from Human Resources, TPU will need to manually track key data to measure performance. Efforts for both the improved data from HR and potential manual tracking by TPU are ongoing with the goal of having a tracking tool early in 2025.

Additionally, in response to concerns raised by the initiative team and in recognition of turnover in key areas, the Human Resources Department resumed meetings with divisional liaisons to review and align hiring processes.

In areas where TPU divisions are shared service providers for other city department (Public Records Office and Customer Service), efforts to enhance accountability and performance

measurement were undertaken. This demonstrates TPU's leadership in measuring its service delivery to other parts of the City. During the budget and rates process, the Management Services Office presented performance data associated with public records requests to both the Public Utility Board, City Manager, and Government Performance and Finance Committee in conjunction with budget requests. Customer Services is updating KPIs used to track performance of the call center and lobby as part of the Customer Experience initiative. That effort includes soliciting input from Environmental Services to ensure their business needs are considered in the refresh of KPIs. TPU is working toward a Business Partnership Agreement with Environmental Services to clarify roles and responsibilities and solidify our commitment to service. Additionally, Utility Technology Services has published a dashboard to measure performance of internal services provided to other TPU divisions.

The Environmental Services Director has been included in the monthly Customer Experience Board meetings, along with Power and Water, to hear updates on key customer focused initiatives and provide input to the process. Those meetings have occasionally led to follow-up meetings with leadership in Environmental Services. One-on-one meetings with other key city leaders such as the Public Works Director have occurred during the year as needed.

- Opportunities

Effective shared services are paramount to operational excellence. While clarification of roles and responsibilities with HR processes and dashboard development has taken longer than initially anticipated, progress is being made on this important outcome. The Director will pursue these efforts into 2025. While manual tracking of data is not ideal it may be necessary. Through the evaluation of key HR processes, priorities identified include need for continued process improvement, clarification of roles and responsibilities, and KPIs related to classification actions. Tracking and trending performance will allow for continuous improvement.

Due to City Charter review and General Fund budget challenges, it was difficult to maintain consistent quarterly meetings with the City Finance Department in 2024. The Director will continue to strive to accomplish this effort in 2025. There were clear gaps in coordination with City finance (i.e., late in budget process gross earnings tax exemption adjustments that were not well coordinated between the two departments) that led to organizational confusion for policy makers, employees and customers. The purchasing department has a process improvement initiative effort under way, which TPU employees are participating in. That coupled with planned improvement associated with the SAP Now! project have led to a planned delay in the timeline to develop a performance dashboard with City Finance. Those processes will inform the future-state dashboard; however, they will not be substantively completed in 2025. Finance dashboard work will be delayed to a later workplan. Coordination in these and other areas are critical to operational excellence.

Board Rating  
(Check one)

- |   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional<br>performance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceeds<br>expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Achieves<br>expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Requires<br>development | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory |
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## Section 3: External Relations

Aligns with Guiding Principle 4: Stakeholder Engagement, and Guiding Principle 13: Customer Service

*Description/behaviors: Ensures high quality, professional, accessible external communications and outreach; engages a diverse and broad base of community stakeholders; dialogues with others about issues of concern; maintains news/media relations; acts as the Utility representative with other government agencies; makes sure the Utility provides exceptional customer service.*

The Director successfully launched the Customer Experience initiative in 2024. With the hiring of the Deputy Director for the Customer Experience and External Affairs Division (CXEA) leading, the change management effort to create a unified customer experience and external affairs workgroup commenced, the priority initiative in the Strategic Plan for the Customer Experience objective. This included organizational consolidation of Customer Service and Public Affairs and Communications. Roadmaps to operationalize changes including technology and process improvement were developed. Key change management efforts centered around improved organizational awareness of the Customer Experience North Star and how it connects employee work to customers including desired behaviors of collaboration, compassion, and advocacy. The Director, Deputy Director of CXEA, and other key customer experience leaders recorded messages to emphasize the Customer Experience North Star and provide success stories that were shared organization wide. *(Customer Service Guiding Principle 13 update February 28)*

The Director appointed an initiative team to support the Deputy Director of Customer Experience and External Affairs for this objective area of the strategic plan. That team completed workshop framework development to engage employees in the Customer Experience transition including customization for varied workgroups and their customer base. Customer Experience North Star training commenced and will continue into 2025. Process mapping commenced and will inform the 2025 business unit goal in this area. Both the training and process mapping work was initially anticipated to commence in 2025, the work is progressing ahead of schedule. The KPIs for the lobby and call center will be refreshed as part of this initiative. Environmental Services has been invited to participate in these discussions.

With the bold goal of 10,000 additional customers enrolled in bill assistance, as defined by the Director's workplan and business unit goal, the Director led an organization-wide rally to connect customers with assistance, urging all employees to get involved. Extensive outreach to stakeholders and customers in 2024 included the business unit goal of achieving 10,000 customers enrolled in bill assistance by December 31, 2024, distribution of State of Washington Climate Commitment Act bill credits, and in the development of TPU's 2026-27 Budget and Rates proposal. Outreach focused on meeting the customers where they are. This included engaging in a variety of community events, attending community and neighborhood meetings in the format of their choosing (in person, remote, hybrid, written), and providing materials in multiple languages.

Bill Credit Assistance Program (BCAP) and Discount Rate Program (LIE) enrollments exceeded 10,000 customers for the 2023-2024 biennium. With the enhanced outreach and promotion around BCAP, customer inquiry increased LIE enrollment by 1,652. Customers who would realize an enhanced benefit from LIE versus BCAP were enrolled in LIE. As a result, the increase in LIE enrollment is being added to the 8,507 BCAP enrollments for a total of 10,159, as of 12/31/2024. The result, BCAP enrollments have more than tripled since 2022. It is important to note that this is generally a transient customer base, moving in and out of rentals. Current enrollments ebb and flow with that movement but the hope is that customers will carry with them their experience in BCAP or LIE and re-enroll when they get a new account.

In 2024, TPU was successful in distributing \$7,448,381 in Climate Commitment Act credits from the Washington Families Clean Energy Grant Program to 37,242 households within a very tight timeframe. Of the dollars distributed, 38% went to very low opportunity zones and 24% went to low opportunity zones as defined by the TPU Equity Index. Household income of those receiving credit ranged from 31,140 households at low-income (up to 80% AMI) and 6,102 households at moderate-income (80%-150% AMI). This effort boosted TPU bill assistance enrollment.

Budget and rates outreach throughout our service territory footprint was conducted the latter half of the year, including Director participation in key meetings. In addition to in-person and utility board comment opportunities, comments could be provided via a website form throughout the budget and rates process. The website provided access to all public presentations during the budget and rates development processes. Social media and traditional media outreach including a press release related to proposed rate adjustments helped drive awareness of proposals and comment opportunities. There was additional coverage of utility rates as media covered the general fund budgetary challenges and increase in gross earnings tax.

TPU employees engaged in thousands of conversations at more than 100 community events and youth programs throughout the year. Topics included budget/rates, bill assistance, electric vehicle charging, solar generation, and home heating options. Staff distributed water saving kits and rebates for smart irrigation controllers. *(Stakeholder Engagement Guiding Principle 4 update August 14)*

TPU was active at the federal, state and local levels with particular focus on climate or emissions related policies, customer assistance and protections, and grant funding. *(Government Relations Guiding Principle 10 update March 13)*

The Director was active and engaged with external organizations to further drive community connection. Participation in community organizations such as board seats on the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Board enhanced opportunities to engage with the business community. These venues provided opportunity for engagement with large and small businesses, BIPOC businesses, and community leaders from our broader service territory footprint.



The Director’s role on the United Way of Pierce County Board of Directors aided the organization in framing challenges with respect to utility bill affordability and housing pressures for our most vulnerable customers. This collaboration continues to aid us as we consider and develop an affordability framework that informs income assistance programs and provided important connections for the bill assistance enrollment goal.

- Opportunities

The Director will explore opportunities to further strengthen our multi-lingual outreach. Additionally, Customer Experience North Star training will be deployed organization-wide and tracked through the 2025 Business Unit Goals.

Board Rating  
(Check one)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Achieves expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires development	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory
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## Section 4: Fiscal Management

Aligns with Guiding Principle 2: Financial Sustainability, and Guiding Principle 3: Rates

*Description/behaviors: Analyzes issues and proposes long-term solutions; provides periodic status reports; demonstrates thorough knowledge of budgeting and financial management; implements cost control measures as needed; demonstrates fluency in rates planning and analysis; provides timely and accurate financial reports.*

The Director coordinated continued focus on the emerging trends discussion held with the PUB in the fall 2023 workshop. Those trends were shared with the City Council in a Joint Study Session and provided context to some of the long-range financial planning including planned use of reserves. Both Tacoma Power and Tacoma Water updated their Long Range Financial Plans which informed the revenue requirement establishing budget development and proposed retail rates. The elements discussed in the budget and rates workshop were carried forward to multiple Government Performance Finance Committee discussions in preparation for budget and rates adoption. The 2025/2026 Biennial Budget and Rates were approved by the Public Utility Board in October with final Council approval in December.

Following recommendations from the 2023 Management Review, the Director facilitated adjustments to the Tacoma Power non-production operation and maintenance (O&M) expense metric to better reflect the cost impact in relations to the electricity delivered to customers. The metric will now reflect Distribution O&M costs per customer and Total Power supply expense per kWh sold, the measures are benchmarked against the Western Region instead of nationally. Quarterly financial reports including these benchmarks were provided to the Public Utility Board as well as an annual review of the Wholesale Power Risk Management Program.

- Opportunities

Having successfully completed the 2025/26 Biennial Budget and Rates request, the Director will work with the Board to obtain feedback on the 2024 budget and rates process to inform improvements for future biennial budget development.

Late in process budget policy changes related to gross earnings tax were less than optimal in terms of staff providing policy makers timely information on impact, incorporating changes in budget and rates, and leading a smooth transition. Although the Director recognizes the City Council's emergent need to look for additional revenues in a difficult budget for the general fund. These types of discussions are preferred in non-budget/rates years and should involve policy makers from the Public Utility Board and City Council. The Director is encouraged to work with general government leadership to cultivate those conversations appropriately in joint study sessions and enhance communication with general government leaders to minimize unanticipated policy changes.

Evaluation of lessons learned from the effort to expand bill assistance participation will inform future programmatic enhancements. The Director is urged to make this a priority in the next biennium. Success will be driven by our ability to ease enrollment requirements for qualifying customers including aligning with other programs within our community.

Board Rating

(Check one)

☐

Exceptional  
performance

☒

Exceeds  
expectations

☐

Achieves  
expectations

☐

Requires  
development

☐

Unsatisfactory

## Section 5: Organization Development

Aligns with Guiding Principle 1: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, and Guiding Principle 12: Employee Relations

*Description/behaviors: Exemplifies effective, professional relationships with staff; sets clear expectations for staff performance; clearly articulates the mission, vision and Guiding Principles; sponsors transformational change at the Utilities.*

The Director continues to value employee experience and feedback. This is evident in her leadership style and in the collaborative way in which that feedback is incorporated into processes. In 2024, the Employee Satisfaction Survey was again conducted. The results of the 2024 Employee Satisfaction Survey were very positive with a response rate of 74% and an engagement ranking of 73% favorability. Twelve questions noted measurable improvement in response and zero questions declined in response.

The Director led very focused efforts around the TPU-wide strategic plan including operationalizing the Mission, Vision, and Values. This focus included organization-wide area of action identified from the 2022 Employee Satisfaction Survey and the 2023 Management Review. The change management effects were tested in TPU Connects meetings where employees shared their most important value. The 2024 employee satisfaction survey denoted the most improved area as “Executive Leadership Team gives employees a clear picture of the direction TPU is headed.” While there remains room for improvement, the feedback from employees reflects the dedicated effort given to strategy in 2024.

The Director continues to lead and is personally committed to enhancing workplace culture consistent with Public Utility Board Guiding Principle 1 and stated expectations. Workforce demographic data is trended and includes separations and internships. Through the Strategic Planning work, the initiative team is working with HR to develop a dashboard related to hiring data and key equity check points in the hiring process. The Water Department is piloting an exit interview process that will be evaluated with the goal of defining a roadmap to expand organization wide. The organization has proficiently incorporated equity lens review in programs and services with planned continued use of this tool. The Director is tracking Equity in Contracting data and has identified ways for TPU to enhance success of Equity in Contracting priorities including early sharing of planned projects for the year. *(Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Guiding Principle 1 update October 9)*

In follow up to the micro goals of the 2023 Equity Committee Retreat and in support of the Safety (Physical and Psychological), Belonging, and Respect values, a series of trainings were offered in 2024:

- All employees in full-time status completed “Equal Employment Opportunity in Practice: Creating and Maintaining an Equitable Workplace” and reviewed PMP 130 including the

process for reporting, mitigating and resource assistance. Moving forward, this training will be required for all new employees.

- All managers and supervisors completed “Understanding Bias: Intent v. Impact,” “Micro-Intervention: How to Respond to and Resist Microaggressions,” and “Calling in, Calling Out: How to be an Active Bystander”.

The Employee Experience initiative team coordinated a review of anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and processes. Work is ongoing to guide TPU supervisors and managers to reinforce values and desired culture while working to eliminate workplace bullying and harassment.

The 2023 Management Review included five suggestions related to our safety programs. These suggestions were developed based on feedback from employee interviews and benchmark data from other organizations. More than five years have passed since the city launched the city-wide safety office with federated connection to TPU safety functions. Over that time, there has been growth in the program both at the city-wide level and in individual operating sections and the management review underscored the need to clarify roles and responsibilities in this area. The recommendations were incorporated into the Director’s 2024 workplan for follow up action. Those suggestions and subsequent actions are as follows:

*Suggestion #6 – Communicate safety reporting structures to ensure staff are aligned.* This suggestion focuses on the unique safety organizational structure between the city, TPU and operating divisions and the need to further clarify roles, responsibilities, and alignment across the organization. This suggestion was given a HIGH priority with a target of 0-6 months. The workplan called for developing a RACI for the federated safety team including defined areas of focus/responsibility and team commitments. The Director assigned a team of professionals to create a framework of safety functions, identifying roles and responsibilities between enterprise safety, division safety, and management. That final product was shared with executive and senior leaders in November and is now being operationalized.

*Suggestion #11 – Maintain and improve Tacoma Power operational safety.* This suggestion focused on the incident rate in Tacoma Power including benchmarking and best practices. This suggestion was given a HIGH priority with a target of 0-6 months. The Director worked with safety professionals to update quarterly performance indicators that will now be used for the 2024 Q4 report. The Director through the safety professionals developed an organization-wide Safety Management System to provide a systematic approach to managing safety by organizational goals, policy, structure, planning, accountability, and safe standard operating procedures. The framework was shared with executive and senior leaders in November. The five-year roadmap implementation of priorities will be developed in 2025.

*Suggestion #12 – Mitigate from external power industry risks.* Related to personnel safety, this suggestion cited employee concerns due to increase in public aggressors. This suggestion was given a HIGH priority with a target of 0-6 months. The Director through the City Safety Director deployed Crisis Reality's "Verbal SWAT" training with focus on lead employees and employees with direct customer engagement. By year end, 85% of all employees completed the training, exceeding the target goal of 75%.

*Suggestion #14 – Improve the safety culture of Tacoma Water.* This suggestion focused on the incident rate in Tacoma Water including benchmarking and best practices. This suggestion was given a HIGH priority with a target of 0-6 months. The Director worked with safety professionals to update quarterly performance indicators that will now be used for the 2024 Q4 report. The Director through the safety professionals developed an organization-wide Safety Management System to provide a systematic approach to managing safety by organizational goals, policy, structure, planning, accountability, and safe standard operating procedures. The framework was shared with executive and senior leaders in November. The five-year roadmap implementation of priorities will be developed in 2025.

*Suggestion #15 – Continue making railroad safety improvements aligned with the Federal Railroad Administration.* This suggestion focused on the incident rate in Tacoma Rail including benchmarking and best practices. This suggestion was given a HIGH priority with a target of 6-12 months. The Director worked with safety professionals to update quarterly performance indicators that will now be used for the 2024 Q4 report. The Director through the safety professionals developed an organization-wide Safety Management System to provide a systematic approach to managing safety by organizational goals, policy, structure, planning, accountability, and safe standard operating procedures. The framework was shared with executive and senior leaders in November. The five-year roadmap implementation of priorities will be developed in 2025.

Additionally, in response to the soft tissue injury experience rate, the Director coordinated with the City Safety Director to develop an organization-wide program to reduce soft tissue injuries. In 2024, proposals were received and ranked by a cross organizational team. The selected vendor has begun to assess risks in various operational areas and develop a plan to implement the program.

In the 2024 Employee Satisfaction Survey, "Safety" was the second highest ranked dimension area (after Community Focus) with the top five ranked questions including "I have received the information and training I need to perform my job safely" and "Safety is a priority where I work." Taking proactive measures around safety responsibilities will maintain those strong results by ensuring we have organizational clarity and strong coordination in this discipline.

- Opportunities

The 2024 Employee Satisfaction Survey continues to show growing divide between field and office staff. The Director should continue to look for areas to enhance connectivity of those work groups. Additionally, the survey results continue to highlight the continued need for enhanced communication and process optimization to lessen delays in decision and ensure workflow is smooth. The Director should continue to explore these areas as she identifies future strategic initiatives.

The Director should also continue to sponsor efforts to improve physical and psychological safety, with focus on culture and TPU values. Specifically, follow training related to antidiscrimination and soft tissue injuries. Work on proactive measures such as the Safety Management System roadmap and sponsoring the Equity Committee work.

Board Rating  
(Check one)

- |   |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exceptional performance | <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Achieves expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Requires development | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory |
|---|---|--|---|---|

## Section 6: Operational Effectiveness

Aligns with Guiding Principle 5: Environmental Sustainability; Guiding Principle 6: Innovation; Guiding Principle 7: Reliability and Resiliency; Guiding Principle 8: Telecom; Guiding Principle 9: Economic Development; Guiding Principle 14: Resource Planning

*Description/behaviors: Leads the organization in implementing the Board's Guiding Principles aligned with operational effectiveness; engages key stakeholders in discussions that promote the workplan; regularly monitors progress; provides thorough and regular reporting to the Board.*

The Director provided updates to the board for nearly all guiding principles. The one exception was the Innovation guiding principle (GP6) which will be incorporated with the advanced meter project close out and the follow up presentations highlighting what's next with grid modernization and smart water in 2025.

Related to the advanced meter project, water completed their advanced meter installation in 2024. Power advanced meters are anticipated to be complete by end of quarter one 2025 due to supply chain constraints. The meter project is anticipated to be completed within budget despite the two-year delay in completion, a global pandemic, and critical supply chain constraints. Both water and power teams are updating technology roadmaps related to smart water and grid modernization efforts that will enhance customer experience, increase reliability, and improve sustainability.

Progress was made on joint TPU/GG initiatives related to environmental stewardship and climate change. Climate action plan work included electrification study to inform power resource planning, paperless water-use notification system, rail successful grant awards related to battery electric locomotives. Resource conservation and climate plan efforts resulted in TPU/GG jointly enrolling in low carbon fuel standards, water implementing Watershed Strategic Plan, and rail researching reduction in diesel emissions. *(Environmental Sustainability Guiding Principle 5, update April 10)*

Reliability of power, water and rail services continues to be very strong, as validated both in our operational performance metrics as well as customer satisfaction. As an organization, we continue to strengthen our response capabilities particularly for events that are not localized, involve multiple utilities or agencies or a more regional footprint. Emergency preparedness plans continue to evolve with targeted improvements such as updates to the Continuity of Operations Plans, revisions to incident command system job aids and organizational structure, implementation of activation levels organization-wide, approved wildfire mitigation plan, update emergency fuel plan, and refine public communications plans. There were 17 drills or exercises conducted across TPU, including three that were TPU-wide. *(Reliability and Resiliency Guiding Principle 7, update March 27)*



Given the significant role utility availability, price and capacity play on economic development, utilities are key stakeholders in the economic development team. As such, the organization carefully and consistently engages with economic development partners and customers looking to expand within or relocate to our service territory. TPU has been active in implementing the City of Tacoma Green Economy Strategy participating in recruitment groups. TPU was actively involved in the Select USA tour of Tacoma and in working to place Korean Startups in Tacoma. TPU was active in the City of Tacoma Tideflats Subarea Plan. While customers generally reported satisfaction with their new service experience, there are ongoing efforts by permit teams to improving processes and identify other policy or programmatic changes needed to support the City’s “Home in Tacoma” initiative and electrification. Work in these areas will continue into 2025. *(Economic Development Guiding Principle 9, update July 24)*

Both Tacoma Power and Water completed Integrated Resource Plan work in 2024 including public engagement in the process. Work on these plans will continue to inform important decisions in the coming years such as BPA contracts, improvements at hydroelectric plants, additional water supply project at headworks, implementation of FIRO and potential regional wholesale water contracts. *(Resource Planning Guiding Principle 14, update November 13)*

The report on Telecom (GP8) was transitioned to a written report given we are in contract maintenance and there were no gaps or concerns in performance.

- Opportunities

Much like the federated safety structure, emergency response is federated and has grown as our discipline matures. There is need to clarify roles and responsibilities to strengthen our preparedness and internal coordination. This will be an area of focus in 2025.

Board Progress Rating  
(Check one)

☐ Exceptional  
performance

☒ Exceeds  
expectations

☐ Achieves  
expectations

☐ Requires  
development

☐ Unsatisfactory

## Section 7: Leadership Competencies

### Ratings Definitions

<b>Role Model</b>	Serves as an example of the values, attributes and behaviors associated with the competency. May be sought out as a coach by others and may contribute valuable ideas on how the organization can improve on specific behaviors.
<b>Fully Competent</b>	Consistently demonstrates the values, attributes and behaviors. Requires coaching infrequently and may occasionally coach others.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	Requires coaching on a frequent basis to correct behaviors. Would benefit from additional focus on specific behaviors.

Competency	Description	Rating
<b>Business insight</b>	Applying knowledge of business and the marketplace to advance the organization's goals	Fully Competent
<b>Cultivates innovation</b>	Creating new and better ways for the organization to be successful	Fully Competent
<b>Strategic mindset</b>	Seeing ahead to future possibilities and translating them into breakthrough strategies	Fully Competent
<b>Collaborates</b>	Building partnerships and working collaboratively with others to meet shared objectives	Fully Competent
<b>Manages conflict</b>	Handling conflict situations effectively, with a minimum of noise	Fully Competent
<b>Interpersonal savvy</b>	Relating openly and comfortably with diverse groups of people	Fully Competent
<b>Communicates effectively</b>	Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences	Fully Competent
<b>Drives vision and purpose</b>	Painting a compelling picture of the vision and strategy that motivates others to action	Role Model
<b>Courage</b>	Stepping up to address difficult issues, saying what needs to be said	Fully Competent
<b>Instills trust</b>	Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity	Role model

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### Board Rating (Leadership Competencies)

(Check one)

☐ Exceptional performance
 ☒ Exceeds expectations
 ☐ Achieves expectations
 ☐ Requires development
 ☐ Unsatisfactory

## Section 8: Overall Comments and Rating

### Board Comments

- Well-done
  - Jackie demonstrated great leadership in getting 10,000 additional customers enrolled in our bill assistance program. This epitomizes the empathy she has for our customers. Additionally, the fact that the employee satisfaction survey showed nothing but progress proves her care for our employees as well.
  - Director Flowers continues to demonstrate her ability to listen and lead with intentionality. The TPU Strategic Plan, developed in 2023 and completed in 2024 is a live and active document that encompasses several initiatives highlighted by employees. The director is adding a long view perspective, 15 years, in addition to the 2 year cycle of updates. This allows for long term and short term planning to interact and goes to stewardship of the Utility as a whole.
  - Shared services has been an area where the Board, GG and TPU divisions are not seeing the same picture on whether TPU is getting the full value for the money paid. Director Flowers has been working diligently to ensure all do see the same picture. She has proposed service level agreements and appropriate KPIs with necessary data collection. The Director doesn't allow these areas of friction to fester, but tackles them head on with the intent to collaborate and move to a solution. She is a natural problem solver and remains adaptable through the process.
  - Safety has been a big focus for 2024 on multiple levels. Her staff thinks through disasters, such as wildfires, projecting what could happen here and how ready the Utility is to respond. The Director is very aware that safety success now doesn't guarantee safety success in the future. She is intentional in preparing (one her strengths), she actively encourages the Continuity of Operations (CCOP) team to grow their knowledge. In the end, the Board is assured that the Utility is prepared with appropriate contingencies. Her work plan also includes personal safety on the worksite, psychological safety, and even Cyber Security so that employees know they are valued, cared for, and are also responsible to and for each other. The Director uses KPIs to verify we are on track and remains adaptable to new measures as necessary.
  - The Director respects this Board's desire to have a solid understanding of all that comes before us well before the actual voting takes place. An outstanding example of this was our involvement in the selection of the next Rail Supervisor. She intentionally made space for all of us to offer input to the initial screening tool and then to meet with the three finalists so that we had some sense of who they were. She went the step further to solicit our input to inform her own decision making. By the time it came to vote to confirm the new Rail Supervisor, there was a complete sense of confidence and we learned new things in the process.
  - The Director also supported a request from Board to bring in a consultant to help hone our skills as a board. One of the exciting outcomes was taking a new look at the Guiding Principles which we are now in the process of reformulating around a few

- key pillars. This is a work progress, but we were all excited to see the new structure help to consolidate our priorities.
- The Director has developed a strong leadership team to do the work of the Utility with innovation in mind. Deputy Director LaTasha Wortham, appointed in 2023, and Deputy Director/CAO Alex Yoon, both appointed in 2023 have helped the director transform the utility. Here are a few highlights:
    - The utility successfully turned around CCA dollars to utility customers in record time,
    - Met the goal of 10,000 new enrollees before the end of the year in our assistance programs
    - Harnessed technology (such as SAP) to enhance the work and the morale of customer service employees
    - Reimagining the budget and rates process to effectively educate the Board in advance of a necessary vote. This is complicated work.
  - Between all these efforts, the Director continues to be engaged in the community at large. She makes sure TPU is at the table to promote Utility careers to Tacoma youth through the Boys and Girls club, supports internship programs, helped host and spoke to a women's conference of the Northwest Public Power Association held in Tacoma, joins fund raising events, speaks to customers when the Utility does rate increase road shows, and, on the national stage, is currently chair of the Large Public Power Council (LPPC). Director Flowers is someone who creates change by bringing people along and valuing their contributions publicly and often.
- Opportunities
    - The budget and rates process was not as aligned as it has been in past biennia. Some Board Members felt that the coordination on the changes to the GET exemptions could have been better.

Board Rating  
(Check one)

☐ Exceptional  
performance

☒ Exceeds  
expectations

☐ Achieves  
expectations

☐ Requires  
development

☐ Unsatisfactory