



**Stakeholder Engagement (SD-4) Update  
Dec. 15, 2021**

**Dr. John Gaines, Community Relations Manager**



# Overview

## What will be covered today:

- Strategic Directive Overview
- Stakeholder Engagement During COVID-19
- Tracking Engagement Efforts
- Proactive Messages
- Engagement from Around the Utility
  - Customer Assistance Engagement
  - Generation/Natural Resources Engagement
  - Education Outreach Engagement
  - Social Responsibility Outreach
- Stakeholder Engagement Outlook
- Feedback



# Stakeholder Engagement

## Purpose of Report: 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”

## Reporting: Stakeholder Engagement

- On an as-needed basis, not less than biannually to the Executive Leadership Team and to the Public Utility Board



# Stakeholder Engagement During COVID-19

## Prior to COVID-19

- Attendance and updates at community meetings
- In-person meetings
- Community events/festivals/fairs to reach large numbers of customers
- Tours

## During COVID -19

- Virtual community meetings
- Increased written communication
- More customer calls or conference calls
- Some in-person meetings are beginning



# Stakeholder Engagement During COVID-19

## Challenges

- Fostering relationships
  - Lack of in-person presence to interact with customers and answer questions
  - Interpersonal/body language
- Technology access and capability of community groups
- Technology access and capability of community members
- Lack of space on agendas with focus on COVID-19 and other issues
- Interruptions, distractions, and internet issues
- Virtual (Zoom) meeting fatigue



# Stakeholder Engagement During COVID-19

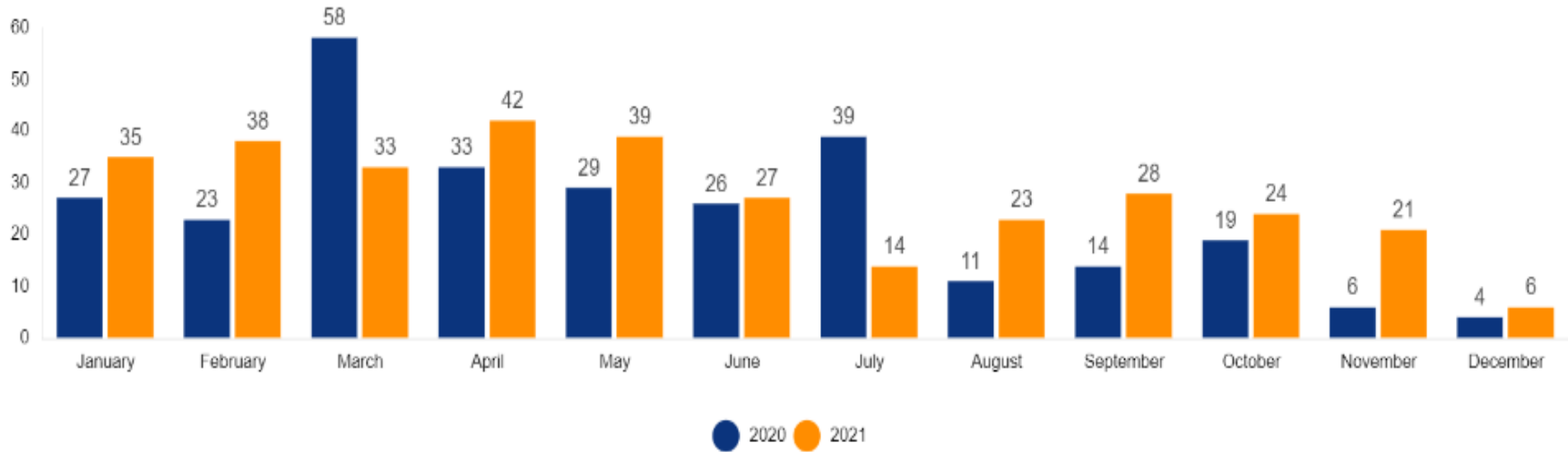
## Benefits

- Additional ways to engage with customers
  - Presentations
  - Chat boxes
  - Follow up with emails/calls
  - Written materials distributed
  - Driving customers to TPU social media communications
- Additional customers participating
  - Customers not previously participating now joining meetings
  - Use of technology vs. in-person meetings
  - Comfort of home or other location
  - Travel time not required



# Tracking Engagement Efforts

Engagements by Month



# Tracking Engagement Efforts

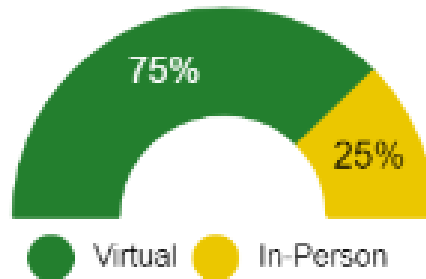
## Stakeholder Engagements

**2020 Engagements**

**2021 Engagements**

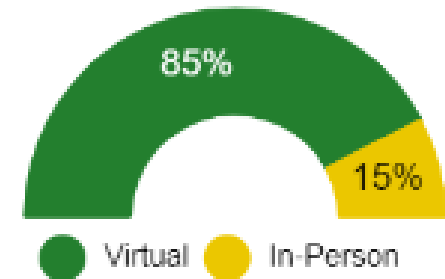
**Total**

**289**



**Total**

**330**





# Proactive Messages

## Proactive Initiatives

- COVID-19
  - Customer Assistance Programs
  - Utility bill assistance
  - Extended payment plans
  - Moratorium policies
  - Other COVID-19 related items
- Advanced Meters
- Power conservation
- Water conservation
- Commitment to racial equity and DEI



# Engagement from Around the Utility

## Outreach Coordination Committee

- Coordinate outreach effort
- Share information to use during outreach
- Brainstorm
- Create and update talking points for outreach
- Partner on appropriate outreach

## Engagement Updates

- Customer Assistance Engagement
- Generation/Natural Resources Engagement
- Education Outreach Engagement
- Social Responsibility Outreach



# Customer Services Engagement

## Assistance Programs During COVID

- Emergency assistance for residential customers
- CARES assistance for small businesses
- Rental and utility assistance

## Outreach During COVID

- Outbound calling campaign
- Virtual webinars
- Socially distanced events

## Welcoming Customers Back

- Lobby remodel
- Appointments
- Vulnerable customers



# Generation/Natural Resources Engagement

## Outreach to the communities around our hydro projects

- Tactics
- Cowlitz River Project
- Cushman Hydro Project
- Nisqually River Project
- Wynoochee River Project
- General Updates



# Education Outreach 2021

## Pivoting

- Impacts of COVID-19 on school outreach
- Pivoting TPU Academy (41 students served)
- Eastside, Al Davies, Schatz

## Creating

- Girl Scouts Conference (86 Girls in year 1!)
- Teacher Professional Development Series

## Partnering

- SEED Internship Program
- Palmer Pathways pre-apprenticeship recognition



# Social Responsibility Outreach

## Community Connection

- As of December 10th, TPU employees have given more than \$252,450 in cash and product donations.
- United Way Campaign in September & October raised over \$202,500!

## Community Support/Sponsorship Program

- Provided over \$143,750 of sponsorship funding for 27 non-profit organizations
- Partnered with many of our sponsored partners to share TPU COVID-19 assistance information with their clients and network



# Stakeholder Engagement Outlook

## Continued COVID-19 Updates

- Customer Assistance Program
- Utility bill assistance
- Payment plans
- In-person outreach and engagement

## Other Updates

- Rates outreach
- Advanced Metering Program
- Conservation





Thank you

What feedback or questions do you have for us?





# Contacts

## **Dr. John Gaines**

Community Relations Manager

[JGaines1@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:JGaines1@cityoftacoma.org)

C: 253-260-0065

