Budget & Rates
Communications & Outreach

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Rebekah Anderson, Marketing Communications Manager
June 13, 2018
Overview

• Overview of historic communications & outreach
• Evolution of TPU’s communications/outreach
• Staff-recommended plan for budget and rates outreach
• PUB feedback/dialogue
Pre-2017 Outreach

• Bulk of community outreach during rate-setting process
  – Neighborhood Councils
  – Franchise Cities
  – Other local government partners
2017 Outreach, New Approach

• TPU staff recommends and management supports revamped approach to rates outreach in 2017

• 2017 rates outreach process part of more concerted, holistic approach to TPU’s communications and community outreach
2017 Rates Outreach cont.

• At least 14 community presentations
  – Tacoma’s neighborhood councils
  – Business districts
  – Franchise cities/Pierce County
  – Metro Parks
  – Black Collective

• Rates presentation available on TPU website

• Presentation focused on telling TPU’s story, rates-related message, providing feedback to TPU
TPU’s Outreach Evolving

• With the support of the PUB and senior management, Public Affairs and Communications Group formed
  – TPU staff assigned to neighborhood/community council(s)
  – Presentations to community organizations
  – More regular interaction, working to strengthen relationships with
    • City Councils
    • General Government staff
    • Franchise cities
    • Other local units of government
    • Native American Tribes
    • Business districts
  – New communications functions added that support these efforts

• PUB-directed outreach for Director’s search
  – Robust engagement to TPU’s customers, neighborhood councils, community and business leaders, franchise cities, non-profit/service agencies, Native American Tribes
Proposed Budget/Rates Outreach

• Presentation Audiences
  – Neighborhood Councils (Coordinated with Environmental Services)
  – Franchise City Councils
  – Other local units of government (Metro Parks, Pierce County, etc.)
  – Community Organizations (Hilltop Action Coalition, Safe Streets, Korean Women’s Association, Black Collective, etc.)
  – Neighborhood Block Groups
  – Puyallup Tribe
  – Business Districts
  – Service Organizations: Rotaries, Chambers, etc.
  – 2nd Supply Partners
  – Wholesale Customers
  – Industrial Customers
Proposed Outreach (cont.)

• Suggested individual and group stakeholder meetings
  – Mayor & Council
  – Other key leaders and electeds
  – Non-profits/service partners (MDC, Pierce County Community Connection, etc.)
Proposed 2018 outreach
Customer Communications

“The new world of engagement...”
Customer Communications Approach

- Integrated, long-view plan
- Engage vs. tell
- Listen to customers

Inform → Consult → Involve → Collaborate → Empower

Inform: Low level of public engagement
Consult: Mid level of public engagement
Involve: High level of public engagement
Customer Communications Strategies

#1: Year-Round Conversation
Customer Communications Strategies

• Ongoing education and involvement with what we do throughout the year that benefits customers and how we control costs
• Coordinate with other services (ES)
• Tailor messages by customer group
Customer Communications Strategies

#2: Early, multi-channel notifications for rate adjustments
Customer Communications Strategies

• Build a narrative for announcing them
  – Here’s the amount
  – Here’s what’s driving it
  – Here’s what we’re doing to control it
  – Here’s what you can do about it (suite of options)
  – How customers can get involved
Customer Communications Strategies

- More notice and resources for public meetings
  - Use available channels (bill package, emails, newsletters, website, social media) to announce dates in advance
  - Have handouts at meetings that refer customers to online resources (web tools, email sign up, Facebook Group)
  - Post links to video and documents for those who couldn’t attend
Customer Communications Strategies

• Use communications channels to reach community groups with updates prior to outreach presentations

• Continuously evaluate if our approach is successful
Customer Communications Tactics

- Video series highlighting projects that benefit customers
  - Pole replacement
  - Filtration plant
  - Stewardship of natural resources
  - Where your power/water comes from
  - Employee volunteerism in the community
  - Maintenance work that maintains reliability
  - Coordination with Public Works to keep project costs down
  - Apprenticeship program
Customer Communications

Tactics

• Explore a variety of engagement methods
  – Invitations to public meetings; handouts
  – Face-to-face at community events
  – Surveys
  – Self-serve, easy to understand web content and interactive tools
  – Email sign up list for updates
  – Public or group tours
  – Facebook Groups

• Implement message and engagement map by customer group
Customer Communications
Messages

• Understanding your bill
• How we control costs
• Everything we do throughout the year that benefits customers
• How we can help you manage costs
  – Budget billing
  – Conservation
  – Payment assistance programs
Customer Communications Channels

- Bill package messaging
- Materials to distribute at outreach events, agencies and public locations
- Packets for electeds
- Messaging for employees
- Tacoma Report and other earned media
- Community partners’ resources (social media, email lists, newsletters)
- Handouts for events, public meetings
- Social media/Facebook Groups
## Timeline

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<th>TPU Board &amp; City Council</th>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Communications</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 27 Power Cost of Service Study Session</td>
<td>Schedule meetings</td>
<td>Update web content</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 25 Water Rate Design Study Session</td>
<td>Schedule meetings</td>
<td>Newsletter story with public meeting dates</td>
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<td>Aug Franchise city meetings</td>
<td>Communications to groups that couldn’t be</td>
<td>Handouts for community</td>
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<td>Collect email addresses at presentations</td>
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<td>Bill messages directing customers to web</td>
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<td>Sept 9/12 Study Session – Water &amp; Rail</td>
<td>Neighborhood Community Councils</td>
<td>Kick off video project</td>
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<td>Communications to groups that couldn’t be</td>
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<td>Oct 10/10 Public Hearing</td>
<td>Neighborhood Community Councils</td>
<td>Follow up newsletter story</td>
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<td>Nov 11/13 Council 1st reading</td>
<td>Community presentations</td>
<td>Updates via web, email, bill</td>
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<td>11/20 Council 2nd reading</td>
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Acknowledgements

Public Affairs & Communications
• Clark Mather
• Rebekah Anderson
• Dan Drennan
• Chris Gleason
• Erika Tucci
• Anita Gallagher
• Erik Andersson
• Jim Sant

Management Services Office
• Barbara Ostrander
• Michelle Rhubright

Customer Service
• Francine Artis

Tacoma Rail
• Daniel McCabe

Tacoma Water
• Jodi Collins
• Sean Senescall
• Lyna Vo

Tacoma Power
• Shannon Rauch
• Bill Berry
• Travis Metcalfe
Questions?