

# Utility Discount Program Expansion

Presentation to Seattle City Council

By Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities

May 24, 2016



# Mayor's Interdepartmental Team

- Formed in early 2014 to strengthen existing Utility Discount Program
- Partnership between Human Services Department, Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities that would double enrollment to 28,000 by 2018
- More than 25 short and long term recommendations were developed to achieve the increased enrollment
- The majority of the recommendations have been implemented
- Current enrollment is approximately 21,000



# Federal Subsidized Housing issue study

- Under current Municipal Code, those living in federal subsidized housing units operated by Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) or King County, where utility allowances are provided, cannot participate in the Utility Discount Program
- Long standing rationale was due to SHA's rent/utility formula, enrolling a tenant in UDP could end up benefitting SHA, not the customer
- This was the second most frequent reason customers were previously denied access to the program
- A significant number of these denied customers would seek help through the utility emergency assistance programs



# Cooperative effort with SHA

- Due diligence confirmed the utility customer would receive the benefit of participating in the UDP if the subsidized housing restriction was removed
- More than 10,000 customers in Low Income Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher (formerly known as Section 8) would be otherwise eligible
- Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Seattle and Seattle Housing Authority dated May 4, 2016 solidified partnership to help this group of customers

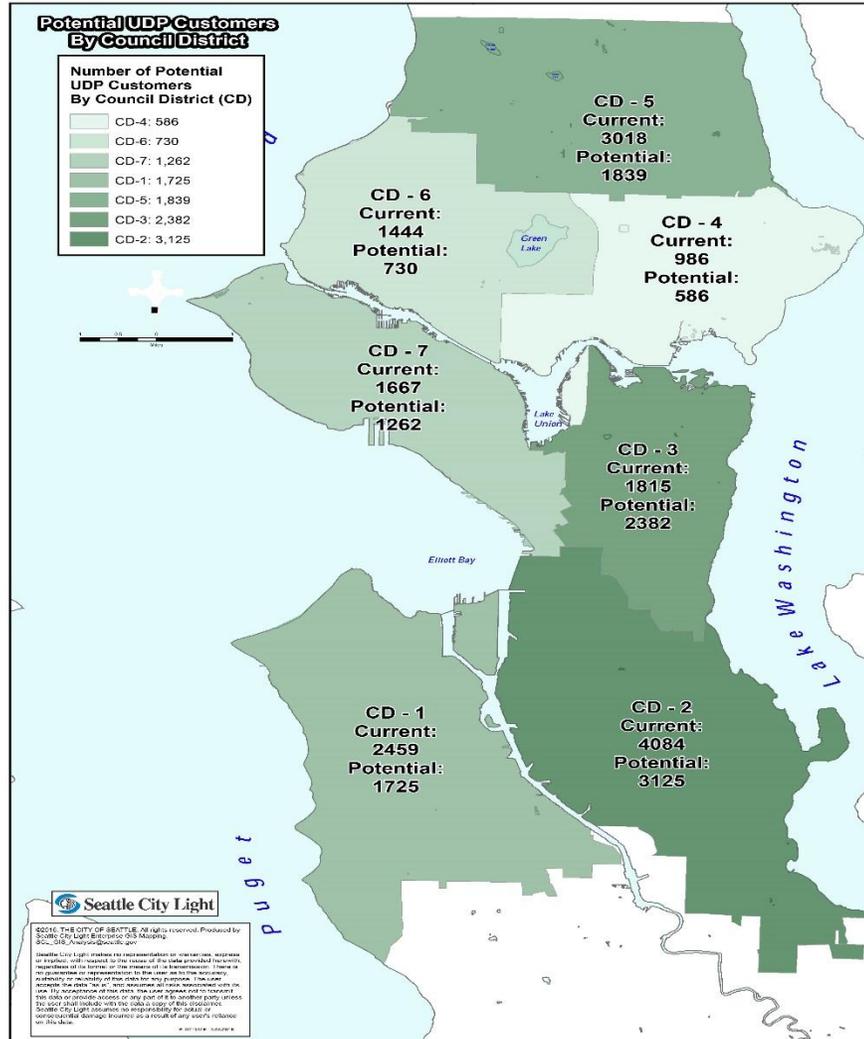


# Implications

- Ordinance is required to amend Sections 21.49.040 (SCL) and 21.76 (SPU) of the Seattle Municipal Code
- City Light will manage within 2016 Budget but small rate increase may be required in 2017
- SPU will manage by increasing efficiencies in 2016; upcoming rate studies will fully contemplate UDP expansion.
- Will achieve Mayor's goal of 28,000 enrollees in 2016 well ahead of 2018 target date
- Customers will be auto enrolled beginning in August of 2016 with the intent of providing better customer service and operational efficiency



# Enrollment by Council District



**Questions?**

