

**SPU Customer Review Panel  
2021-2026  
Strategic Business Plan  
Panel Comment Letter Overview**

Presenter: Noel Miller, Chair, Customer Review Panel

Presentation to Seattle City Council Transportation and Utilities Committee

April 21, 2021

# Presentation Summary

- SPU Customer Review Panel – quick recap of role, history
- Key points in Panel Letter commenting on 2021-2026 SPU Strategic Business Plan
- Comments / Questions

# SPU Customer Review Panel

- Panel created in 2013; made a permanent standing body in 2017
- 11 seats, 3 vacancies.
- Role is to independently advise the Mayor and Council in collaboration with SPU Director Mami Hara and staff.
- Panel met 21 times over the last 3 years with SPU E-team members. Three-hour meetings, open to public; agendas and materials posted online.

# Panel Members

<p><b>Suzie Burke</b> Business Owner, Fremont</p>	<p><b>Bobby Coleman</b> Administrator, Environmental Stewardship &amp; Sustainability Seattle Housing Authority</p>	<p><b>David Layton</b> Professor &amp; Associate Dean Evans School of Public Policy and Governance University of Washington</p>
<p><b>Laura C. Lippman, M.D,</b> Vice Chair, Family Physician</p>	<p><b>Maria McDaniel</b> Community Advocate</p>	<p><b>Noel Miller,</b> Chair Retired Public Works Director</p>
<p><b>Thy Pham</b> Senior Program Officer Global Health Strategy Planning &amp; Management Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation</p>	<p><b>Rodney Schauf,</b> Vice Chair, Director of Engineering, Seattle Sheraton Hotel</p>	<p><b>Puja Shaw</b> Associate KPF Consulting Engineering</p>

# 2021-2026 Strategic Business Plan

- Plan is the second fully-revised 6-year plan since 2013.
- Plan includes new SPU vision, mission and value statements
- Overall, the Panel is very supportive the Plan, including **all** of the **18 initiatives and investments**, and the resulting **6-year average annual rate path of 4.2%**
- Important for rates to be stable and predictable
- **Key lenses in the Plan:** Affordability and Accountability, Risk and Resiliency, Equity and Empowerment

# Affordability & Accountability Highlights

- Major focus for the Panel: **asset management of aging infrastructure**
  - Much of water and wastewater/drainage pipe systems are 80 years old +/-.
- Continuous improvement in capital project delivery and operations will help slow the annual growth in rates
- Metrics are important for accountability to ratepayers and city leaders
- We support efforts by SPU to collaborate with Federal, State and local partners to develop cost effective approaches to meet health and environmental regulations

# Risk & Resiliency Highlights

- Panel supports R & R initiatives as a focus for how SPU thinks about the future and approaches its work today.
- Key items:
  - Climate change adaptation strategy
  - Completion of operations facilities upgrades
  - South Park flooding response
  - Workforce development

# Other Observations:

- **New and existing programs we strongly support:**
  - Proposed: Financial assistance program for individual property owners to renovate or replace their private side sewers.
  - New: RV wastewater collection pilot program
  - Existing: Clean Cities work supported by general fund, performed by SPU.
- **Cost sharing between SPU and SDOT is appropriate on maintenance/cleaning of City's right of ways**
  - Street sweeping program for bicycle lanes
  - Stream culvert replacements





# Other Observations:

- **Long-term affordability is an overarching concern for the Panel**
  - Many growing pressures on SPU rates:
    - renovation and replacement of water, wastewater and drainage infrastructure
    - response to climate change
    - seismic resiliency
    - water quality obligations
  - Work should begin now to map out how we can address long term aging-infrastructure replacement challenge.

# Thank you for your time!

- We appreciate the excellent work of SPU staff!
- We would welcome enhanced engagement between the Panel and the Council and Mayor's offices.

**Questions? Comments?**