

Strategic Management Review of City of Seattle Environmental Sustainability Service Offerings for Businesses

Report

Prepared by Cascadia Consulting Group

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Executive Summary

Introduction

As part of its overall commitment to sustainability, the City of Seattle delivers a wide range of outreach and technical assistance services to businesses to help them conserve resources, prevent pollution, reduce operating costs, and contribute to achieving the City's environmental goals. City programs are also driven by the needs to meet mandates and legal obligations, help businesses comply with regulations, and support economic development to build a strong business sector in the City. This study assists the Office of Economic Development (OED) in its larger effort to evaluate whether these services represent an effective mix of offerings to meeting the City's environmental goals, delivered in the most efficient manner, and meet current and emerging business needs. This study also assists OED, in part, to respond to the City Council's Statement of Legislative Intent related to sustainability programs and services provided by City departments to the private sector. This study supports these larger efforts by focusing on:

- **Documenting current conditions** regarding existing City environmental sustainability services.
- **Assessing strengths and challenges** of these services.
- **Identifying opportunities for improvement** that the City should consider further.

OED contracted with Cascadia Consulting Group Inc. to perform this study consisting of a mix of research, stakeholder engagement, and expert analysis. Specifically, the consultant team gathered information on City and non-City services through internet research and data collection from key City program personnel, interviewed 15 business owners/managers or business association representatives, facilitated two meetings with an inter-agency workgroup of key personnel for City programs or departments providing environmental sustainability services, and presented findings and options for improvement in this summary report.

While this study provides initial recommendations for next steps, it is intended to serve as a starting point rather than a complete or final assessment of current conditions and opportunities for improvement. Preliminary recommendations in this report will require further feasibility analysis and should be considered in light of the study's limitations. The primary limitations are that data gathered on existing City and non-City services included only basic information and did not constitute a formal program evaluation, that interviews with business owners/managers and business association representatives obtained insight from current customers of City services and were not intended to be representative of all businesses, and that the inter-agency workgroup provided the perspective of program managers and leads but did not capture input from frontline City staff who provide services and interact with business customers.

Documentation of Current Conditions

Summary of Existing City-Run Programs

The City of Seattle delivers a variety of environmental sustainability assistance services to businesses through multiple channels. Currently, the City has six major programs for businesses, each overseen by a different agency: Energy Smart/Smart Business Services (Seattle City Light), Resource Venture (Seattle Public Utilities), Priority Green (Department of Planning and Development), Commute Trip

Reduction and Commute Seattle (Department of Transportation), and Seattle Climate Partnership (Office of Economic Development).

In general, City programs providing environmental sustainability services to businesses consist of three main elements: engagement, program service delivery, and program support (including back-office functions). These elements formed a framework that helped shape the assessment and resulting preliminary recommendations.

Most businesses in Seattle are eligible for assistance in all relevant environmental areas, but many City programs target their outreach to certain types of businesses by sector, size, or status as historically underserved or disadvantaged. In general, the largest customers who consume the greatest resources and have the largest utility bills receive the most attention, although there is a recent focus on reaching smaller businesses.

Summary of Non-City Programs

Businesses in Seattle are also eligible for a wide range of programs and services sponsored by non-City entities such as county, state, and federal governments as well as businesses associations and non-profit organizations. Like their City counterparts, non-City programs cover the full range of environmental areas, with many focusing on single areas and others providing integrated or general sustainability services. Although non-City programs cover similar areas and provide similar services to City programs, in general they appear to provide complementary rather than duplicative services.

Results of Business Interviews

The overarching themes that emerged from businesses interviewed were:

- **Accessing the current range of environmental sustainability assistance services offered by the City of Seattle can be a daunting task for business owners.**
- **Business representatives interviewed highly value rebate programs and one-on-one technical assistance.**

Findings from the Inter-Agency Workgroup Meetings

Members of the inter-agency workgroup were asked to brainstorm the top strengths of the current services offered by their departments, the challenges or limitations they face, and opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services. Responses varied significantly by department and program. However some strengths, challenges, and opportunities were mentioned multiple times

- Common **strengths** included **ongoing relationships** with the business community, strong public and **business interest in environmental issues**, an **interdisciplinary team** of technical assistance and program management personnel, and the **expertise of City personnel** involved in environmental programs and business engagement.
- Common **challenges or limitation** included **limited or declining resources** (both in terms of funding and staff) and **lack of coordination** between different departments and sections within departments.
- **Opportunity** ideas that garnered support from several participants were to:
 - **Fund and maintain a simple, functional portal** for all services, including a **web portal**.

- **Cross-train intake and field staff** on across the city to provide referrals.
- **Make job responsibilities and funding sources/allocations broader and more flexible.**
- **Conduct coordinated market research** on business characteristics and unmet needs.
- **Establish common metrics** and create a unified evaluation system.
- **Bring departmental leaders together** to develop a unified vision for environmental services.

Assessment

The intent of this step in the study process was four-fold:

- To assess the level of **coordination** and **integration** of current service offerings.
- To identify **gaps** and **overlaps** in services.
- To assess their **connection to the economic development goals** of the City.
- To identify **opportunities for improvement** of City services.

Coordination and Integration of Current Service Offerings

The level of service coordination and integration among City programs varies across departments and also across the three program elements of business engagement, service delivery, and program support.

- There is **no comprehensive or consistent coordination of business engagement or intake**, although several departments do work together regularly on marketing and outreach.
- Service offerings are generally **coordinated within each agency but not across agencies**.
- Programs have **divergent systems for tracking, reporting, and performance evaluation**, making it difficult to share, compare, or aggregate program information.
- City departments generally have **separate staff and resources (if any) for 'back office' functions** and do not currently have an official mechanism for coordinating their program and resource planning.

Gaps and Overlaps in Services

Overall, the environmental sustainability services provided by the City address all major environmental issues faced by businesses. The City has several strong, well run, effective, and nationally-respected programs. However, some potential gaps and overlaps exist.

Potential gaps include:

- **The extent of outreach to different business segments varies significantly.** Immigrant-owned businesses, businesses of color, and medium-sized businesses are perceived as underserved.
- **Insufficient market research** is conducted on the needs and interests of businesses.
- Many **gaps exist in reporting and tracking** of program performance.

Potential overlaps or opportunities to reduce duplication include:

- **Different programs serving the same customers do not necessarily coordinate** service offerings and may not coordinate outreach and marketing efforts.
- **Different programs all have their own support functions.**

Connection to Economic Development

There appears to be **no significant or coordinated effort to integrate the City's economic development and job creation efforts with its environmental service offerings**, except for Community Power Works. In addition, there has been no assessment of the economic development benefits of superior environmental performance of businesses, making it difficult to connect the value of the City's environmental sustainability services to economic development plans, goals, or indicators.

Opportunities for Improvement

Options for improvement were identified using information gathered during the study, with particular a focus on opportunities to make environmental sustainability services more effective, efficient, and better at meeting the needs of businesses. These opportunities are presented by the program element (business engagement, service delivery, and program support) they address.

Business Engagement

- Establish a web portal with clear organization and links to appropriate departmental web resources.
- Conduct joint outreach and marketing to business segments targeted by multiple programs.
- Establish an overall green business recognition program covering all aspects of City services.

Service Delivery

- Cross-train field staff in each department on all environmental sustainability services for businesses.
- Make job responsibilities and funding sources/allocations broader and more flexible.

Program Support and Back-office Functions

- Conduct coordinated market research on business community characteristics and unmet needs.
- Establish common metrics for tracking and evaluation.
- Bring departmental leaders together to develop a unified vision, shared goals, benchmarks, and approach for environmental business services across departments.
- Use technology solutions to facilitate communicate across departments.
- Institutionalize cross-program coordination by making the inter-agency workgroup permanent.

Preliminary Recommendations

This list of preliminary recommendations focuses on making City's environmental sustainability service offerings more effective, efficient, and better at meeting business needs. Although opinions varied about the level of effectiveness and efficiency of services, City staff and businesses expressed general satisfaction with the types of services delivered and did not suggest any major changes to the City's approach or suite of service offerings.

These preliminary recommendations are intended to supplement and not supplant the intake, engagement, service delivery, and program support functions currently used by each department and program. In addition, recommendations recognize that utility ratepayer funds must be used only for utility purposes; however, as Resource Venture has demonstrated, utilities can work together under a shared brand and service delivery platform to achieve their individual goals.

The findings from this study suggest that at least three actions can be pursued in the short- and medium-term that have the potential to improve the business engagement, service delivery, and program support elements of the City's business services. Recommended actions include the following:

- **Develop a simple, high-functioning, web-based portal, with dedicated resources to maintain it and keep it current.** This portal would allow interested businesses to access a single site where they could learn more about all available service offerings and connect to specific service providers that meets needs. Ideally, this web-based portal will also be connected to an office with staff support to provide portal-related information and assistance to interested businesses.
- **Initiate efforts to integrate and coordinate outreach, beginning with a jointly funded pilot project to business sectors and neighborhoods targeted by multiple programs (such as small businesses, businesses of color, or historically underserved areas).** Use the pilot to test the impact of joint outreach and to guide the development of more formal systems for joint outreach and cross-program communication, to the extent that integrating efforts would help departments better achieve their individual goals than uncoordinated programs.
- **Bring departmental leaders together to develop a unified vision, shared goals, benchmarks, and approach for environmental business services across departments.** This group could work together to explore and plan for additional collaboration as appropriate, such as:
 - Cross-training program staff in all City departments.
 - Conducting coordinated market research on business characteristics and unmet needs.
 - Establishing common metrics for program tracking and evaluation.
 - Examining and addressing the logistical and legal issues that pose potential obstacles to collaboration, including commingling of staff and financial resources.

Introduction

Purpose of Study

As part of its overall commitment to sustainability, the City of Seattle delivers a wide range of outreach and technical assistance programs and services to businesses to help them conserve resources, prevent pollution, reduce operating costs, become more competitive through green marketing opportunities, and contribute to improving the overall environmental performance of the City as a whole. These offerings range across environmental areas (such as energy conservation, recycling, and stormwater pollution prevention), City departments, and assistance types. In part as a result of these activities as well as many other efforts throughout the region undertaken by the public, non-profit, and private sectors, Seattle is considered a national and even international leader in sustainability.

However, given the diversity of green business services offered by various City departments and the rapidly changing needs in the marketplace, it is important to take stock of current offerings and evaluate how to best maximize the value proposition of these services and the environmental and economic benefits to the city. Is the mix of services offered **effective** at achieving the City's environmental goals? Are these services delivered in the most **efficient** manner? Do the services, marketing, and delivery methods **meet business needs** (current and emerging) to maximize economic development benefits?

This study assists the Office of Economic Development (OED) in its larger effort to address these and related issues as well as to respond to the City Council Statement of Legislative Intent (presented in Attachment 1) related to sustainability programs and services provided by City departments to the private sector. Specifically, the Council requested OED to coordinate, integrate, and improve access to the array of environmental sustainability services offered by the city; develop an outreach strategy to communicate this coordinated service to businesses; and identify recurring issues and make recommendations for improvements to the Citywide Business Advocacy Team.

This study supports these larger efforts by focusing on:

- **Documenting current conditions** including developing an inventory of existing services, mapping those services to customer segments, and obtaining qualitative feedback from key City program personnel and from a subset of businesses on their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions regarding these services.
- **Assessing strengths and challenges** including identifying gaps, overlaps, and the economic development nexus associated with existing services.
- **Identifying opportunities for improvement** that the City should consider to improve service effectiveness, efficiency, and ability to meet business needs.

This study provides initial recommendations for next steps and is intended to serve as a starting point rather than a final assessment of current conditions and opportunities for improvement. Additional research and analysis could build on this work to provide further insight into the performance of existing programs, to document the unmet or emerging needs of businesses related to sustainability and economic development, or to further develop the options for improvement and initial recommendations presented here.

Methodology

OED contracted with Cascadia Consulting Group Inc. to perform this study, which consisted of a mix of research, stakeholder engagement, and expert analysis. Specifically, the consultant team:

- **Gathered information on current conditions of City and non-City programs and services through internet research and data collection from key City program personnel.** Information on City-run programs included program descriptions, environmental areas addressed (e.g., water, energy), services delivered and service delivery methods, types of businesses served, evaluation methods including numbers of businesses served and environmental outcomes. Information gathered on programs that serve Seattle businesses but are not run by the City of Seattle included program name, website, environmental areas addressed, and program provider type (e.g., state government, non-profit organization).
- **Interviewed 15 business owners/managers or business association representatives.** This research included interviewing businesses that had direct experience receiving services and assistance from City programs and interviewing trade associations representing the perspective of smaller businesses in diverse neighborhoods.
- **Facilitated two meetings with an inter-agency workgroup consisting of key personnel for City programs or departments providing environmental sustainability services to businesses.** The inter-agency workgroup was engaged to review and confirm or amend current conditions information on their programs; internally assess strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to their programs; brainstorm new or alternative approaches to delivering environmental sustainability services to meet business needs and achieve environmental goals effectively and efficiently.
- **Summarized current conditions, assessed program strengths and opportunities, and identified options for improvement.** The assessment of program performance and options for improvement were based on information gathered during the research phase, the consultant team's experience with environmental assistance programs for businesses, input from the inter-agency workgroup, and consultation with the City's Project Manager for this study.

Study Limitations

This study is intended to serve as a starting point for a larger effort to assess and recommend improvements to Seattle's many environmental sustainability services. The study does not present a complete or final assessment and should be considered in light of its limitations:

- **Data gathered on existing Seattle services included only basic information** on the types of customers served, services offered, and evaluation methods used; no program evaluation was conducted to assess how well the programs are serving customers, providing services, or achieving environmental results.
- **Information on environmental sustainability services provided by non-City entities is further limited.** The study focused on City of Seattle services: data on non-City services was gathered to provide context for the additional opportunities available to Seattle businesses. The list of non-City services presents the environmental area and program sponsor type for well-known services; it is not—and was not intended—to be comprehensive.

- **Interviews with business owners/managers and business association representatives were not intended to be representative of all businesses;** instead the goal was to obtain insight on a few key issues from current customers of City services. In future phases of the broader effort, the City may consider conducting additional interviews to capture the perspective of businesses that have no experience with City programs or a statistically valid survey as part of formal market research.
- **Meetings with the inter-agency workgroup provided an informal assessment from the perspective of program managers and leads** but did not capture input from the City staff providing the services and interacting with business customers; frontline staff may have a different and equally useful perspective on the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of City services.
- **Preliminary recommendations presented in this report will require further feasibility analysis and implementation planning** if the City decides to pursue any or all of them. These preliminary recommendations appear promising based on the research conducted for this study but should be considered in light of the study limitations described above, and the availability of additional resources within the City given the current economic climate.

Documentation of Current Conditions

This section summarizes information on the current conditions of environmental sustainability services for Seattle businesses. It is organized to present a summary of City-run programs, a summary of non-City programs that provide environmental sustainability services to businesses in Seattle, the results of business interviews, and findings from the inter-agency workgroup.

Summary of Existing City-Run Programs

This section presents information gathered on existing environmental sustainability assistance programs and services for businesses provided by the City of Seattle.

Purpose of Programs

Achieving Seattle's vision of creating a more sustainable city requires going beyond municipal operations to foster sustainability among the city's businesses. City programs are also driven by the needs to **meet mandates** and legal obligations (such as around renewable energy and resource conservation), **help businesses comply** with City and other regulations, and **support economic development** to build a strong business sector in the City. Environmental sustainability assistance services for businesses are designed to:

- **Build awareness** among Seattle businesses about opportunities to reduce their costs and the environmental impacts of their operations.
- **Change business practices** and behavior in positive ways.
- **Achieve environmental outcomes** that conserve resources or prevent pollution.
- **Meet legal and regulatory mandates.**
- **Help businesses be more successful** – more efficient, competitive, and profitable – while being environmentally responsible.

Overview

The City of Seattle delivers environmental sustainability assistance services to businesses through multiple channels and in a range of ways. Programs vary significantly in a variety of characteristics. Some services have been available to businesses for decades while others began in the past few years. Some programs are larger and more formal because they were established by legal mandate or have dedicated (non-General Fund) resources, staff, and performance requirements; others are less formal – offered by an agency as part of a larger package of services for businesses or provided through collaboration with other agencies or outside organizations.

Currently, the City has six major programs for businesses, each overseen by a different agency:

- **Energy Smart/Smart Business Services**, from Seattle City Light (SCL) is a pair of programs to help businesses conserve energy. Energy Smart serves large commercial and industrial customers while Smart Business serves small commercial customers.
- **Resource Venture**, offered by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), primarily addresses waste prevention and recycling, water conservation, and stormwater management; Resource Venture implements

several sub-programs including Get on the Map, Food Plus, and the Spill Kit Incentive Program (with referrals from SPU's Source Control Program).

- **Priority Green**, provided by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), primarily addresses green building.
- **Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)**, sponsored by the Department of Transportation (SDOT), primarily addresses transportation and commuting for businesses with 100 employees or more. SDOT also provides support to small businesses through **Commute Seattle**.
- The Seattle **Climate Partnership**, now hosted by OED, offers a carbon footprint calculator which engages businesses on energy, water, waste, and transportation in order to reduce carbon emissions.

Together, these agencies and the Office of Sustainability and the Environment (OSE) also provide more than 20 other services – including specialized, targeted, or pilot offerings and ranging from website information to one-on-one assistance – to support the environmental sustainability goals of each agency.

While most programs focus on one or two environmental areas, three programs – **Seattle Climate Partnership**, **Resource Venture**, and the **Seattle 2030 District** (a public/private hybrid) – provide integrated services covering multiple environmental areas.

Attachment 2 presents a description of and purpose for each program or service.

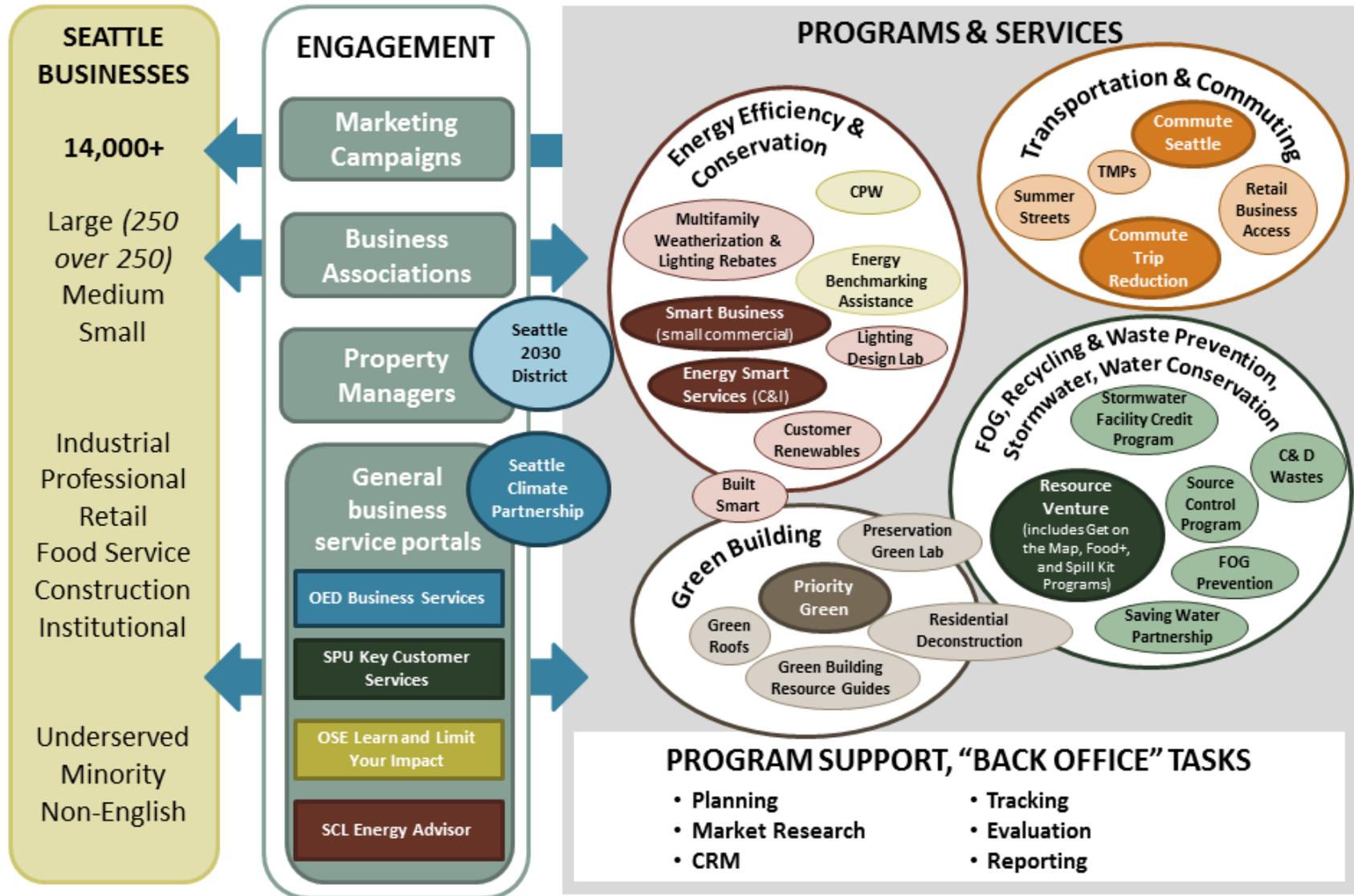
Program Elements

In general, City programs providing environmental sustainability services to businesses consist of three main elements:

1. **Engagement**, which includes marketing and outreach to businesses, responding to customer inquiries and requests, and conducting intake activities to enroll businesses in a program. While all departments undertake business engagement for their own programs, two agencies (OED and OSE) also serve to a limited extent as portals to programs and services outside their departments.
2. **Program service delivery** can include providing:
 - Information through websites, mailings, factsheets and guidebooks, workshops, hotlines, and email.
 - One-on-one technical assistance.
 - Incentives and rebates.
 - Self-assessment tools.
 - Recognition programs.
3. **Program support** includes planning, reporting, and evaluation, as well as 'back-office' functions such as market research, customer relationship management, and service delivery tracking.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual schematic of the service delivery pathways of these programs and services.

Figure 1. Current City of Seattle Environmental Program and Service Delivery Pathways



Businesses Served

Most businesses are eligible for assistance in all relevant environmental areas, but many City programs target their outreach to certain types of businesses by sector, size, or status as historically underserved or disadvantaged. In general, the largest customers who consume the greatest resources and have the highest utility bills receive the greatest attention, although there is a recent focus on reaching smaller businesses. Examples of targeted services include:

- **Resource Venture** has historically provided assistance primarily to large businesses related to waste prevention, recycling, and water conservation but is now focusing on small, historically underserved businesses. Stormwater assistance through Resource Venture includes the Spill Kit Incentive Program and serves **industrial businesses** and others (such as auto repair shops) that typically handle **hazardous materials outdoors**.
- **Energy Smart** serves **large commercial and industrial businesses** and **Smart Business** serves **small commercial businesses**.
- **Priority Green** typically engages **developers** and **construction** businesses.
- **Commute Trip Reduction** serves **employers affected by the state CTR law** (generally, those with over 100 employees commuting at peak hours) and provides support to **small businesses in the downtown area** through the partnership initiative **Commute Seattle**.

Data from the City of Seattle business license database and the 2002 and 2007 Economic Censuses provide context for the sizes and sectors of businesses that constitute Seattle's business community. Based on information from these sources, the vast majority of Seattle establishments are small businesses. More than 50,000 establishments are currently registered for a City of Seattle business licenses, but according to Census data only a fraction (approximately 14,250) of them have five or more employees and only 1,800 establishments have 50 or more employees. By sector, nearly half (47%) of businesses with five or more employees are categorized as professional services/offices, about 14 percent are food service establishments, and 13 percent are retail. Attachment 3 presents additional characteristics of Seattle businesses with five or more employees.

Summary of Non-City Programs

A limited search identified 45 programs and services that businesses in Seattle can access and that are sponsored by county, state, and federal governments; business associations; non-profit organizations; and other entities. Undoubtedly many more services and programs exist. The services identified offered trainings, guides, and tools; web-based and printed information; certifications and awards; technical assistance and environmental services; and networking. Like their City counterparts, non-City programs covered the full range of environmental areas, with many focusing on single areas and others providing integrated or general sustainability services.

Although non-City programs cover similar areas and provide similar services to City programs, they appear to provide complementary rather than duplicative services. For example:

- The 2030 District is a public-private partnership between the City of Seattle and the American Institute of Architect's 2030 Challenge.
- Seattle Public Utilities contracts with ECOSS to provide stormwater outreach and training, building on the non-profit organization's experience and community connections.

- Seattle City Light's Energy Benchmarking and Reporting Assistance program provides training and technical assistance to non-residential and multi-family buildings to help them use the federal Energy Star Portfolio Manager to comply with City regulations.
- The Seattle Department of Transportation's Commute Trip Reduction program works in partnership with its King County and Washington State counterparts.

Despite the large number of non-City programs and services available, only the EnviroStars certification program, provided by the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program of King County, was mentioned repeatedly during interviews with business representatives. EnviroStars certifies and promotes businesses that engage in conservation and pollution prevention in the area of hazardous waste management (although businesses that participate are encouraged to go beyond this area and also address solid waste reduction, energy conservation, and air and water quality). The list of programs identified, organized by type of program sponsor and primary environmental area addressed is provided in Attachment 4.

Results of Business Interviews

As part of this study, the consultant team interviewed **nine business owners or managers** with direct experience receiving services and assistance from City programs **and six representatives of business associations** representing the perspective of smaller businesses in diverse neighborhoods. Interviews were not intended to be representative of all businesses; instead, the goal was to obtain the perspective of current customers of City programs. Because interviewees typically had experience working with one or two City agencies, their comments were often about their experiences with a specific program or service rather than the City's environmental service delivery in general; some agencies' programs and services were not commented on because none of the interviewees had direct experience with them.

Although limited to a small sample of businesses that is not fully representative of business perspectives in Seattle, the interviews do provide information about these businesses' experiences, recommendations, and needs around Seattle environmental technical assistance that is valuable and relevant to this effort to evaluate the current conditions and options for improving the City's environmental sustainability services for businesses.

The consultant team interviewed 15 individuals representing the following categories:

- Six small business associations from diverse neighborhoods
- Three small industrial or manufacturers
- Two food service businesses
- One hotel
- One assisted living facility
- One property manager
- One media outlet

The overarching themes that emerged from businesses interviewed were:

- **Accessing the current range of environmental sustainability assistance services offered by the City of Seattle can be a daunting task for business owners.** Business representatives reported that the

current decentralization of services exacerbates the challenges – including limited time, staff, and financial resources – they face to identify and pursue available services.

- **Business representatives interviewed highly value rebate programs and one-on-one technical assistance.** Interviewees cited the financial incentives and assistance provided by rebates as the main benefit. One-on-one technical assistance offered a variety of benefits including building relationships, identifying solutions tailored to their business, receiving assistance implementing solutions (particularly when the business has limited staff or financial resources), and having a go-to person who can identify other sustainability opportunities. Businesses reported they would also value a green business recognition program if it included marketing and promotion and a centralized website if it were clearly organized and regularly updated as programs change.

Additional findings from interviews are presented below. The interview guide is presented in Attachment 5.

Services and Delivery Methods

Most Helpful Assistance Received

- **Rebates**, most commonly through SCL, were cited as an accessible way to address simultaneously environmental concerns and the bottom line. Businesses interviewed had sought rebates in lighting, air compressors, and toilets.
- Interviewees appreciated **one-in-one technical assistance**, most commonly from ECOSS, Seattle Climate Partnership, and the Resource Venture program.
 - For example, **Resource Venture** provided **waste audits, waste reduction and composting assistance, water footprint calculations**, and help for businesses to **establish their “baseline.”**

Interviewee Suggestions

- Business representatives interviewed almost unanimously **selected “one-on-one technical assistance”** as their preferred delivery method, while **webinars were the least favored**.
 - This interest in one-on-one assistance is supported by interviewee’s frequent requests for more face-time, opportunities to build relationships that can increase communication, and assistance tailored to their unique businesses.
- Providing assistance through information posted on websites may be of limited use to small businesses of color, immigrant-owned businesses, or historically underserved or disadvantaged businesses, as several representatives of business associations reported their **small business members are not necessarily web savvy**.
- Interest among interviewees in a City-based **recognition or certification program** relied on being **combined with media marketing and promotion** and varied depending on the business.
 - Businesses who market to an environmentally conscious audience reported great interest in green business recognition, particularly if the City promotes and brands the program (and participating businesses) to ensure the public values this recognition.
 - Businesses who market to a non-environmentally conscious audience may still be interested in “going green” but don’t necessarily want to advertise this. An opt-in program would address their desire for discretion.

- Business representatives mentioned that their major need was to **overcome limited capacity**, which often inhibits the ability of businesses to participate in environmental assistance programs. As a result, they valued **one-on-one, tailored assistance**.
- Some business representatives reported needing additional or ongoing help around **waste**. Some business representatives recommended shifting the focus and outreach of programs to include **immigrant-owned and historically underserved or disadvantaged businesses**, and one mentioned tailoring programs to **industrial businesses**.

Coordination and Ease of Finding Assistance

Experiences with Coordination and Finding Assistance

- **Fragmented assistance programs were a source of frustration** for multiple business representatives. Several said that without the communication and leadership provided by OED, they would have limited awareness of environmental assistance opportunities, particularly as City departments and programs reorganize or shift priorities.
- Several interviewees have and **highly value a green business assistance “go-to” person**, who is able to provide them with specific guidance on opportunities and next steps.
- Some interviewees expressed concern that **City reorganizations will continue reduce the reliability of a centralized source of information**, based on their past experiences.
- Some interviewees reported they saw **inadequate outreach to businesses of color, immigrant-owned businesses, or historically underserved or disadvantaged businesses**.

Interviewee Suggestions

- **Streamlined communications** are highly desired, whether through a well-organized and frequently updated **central website** (“a zillion percent important”), a **one-stop-shop or information hub** (OED was often suggested), or through a **key networking individual** who can connect businesses to relevant programs.
- **A website** would only be useful if kept **current** and **well organized**, allowing users to efficiently find services and promotions across City departments, according to interviewees. A few business association representatives reported that their diverse, small businesses members are not necessarily web savvy and would need **supplementary methods other than a website to find services**.

Benefits and Motivations

Benefits of Assistance

- Businesses mentioned experiencing **resource savings, cost savings**, and the potential for **positive press** as a result of receiving environmental assistance from the City. Programs that conserve resources and reduce costs were described as a “no-brainer” and a “win-win” for the business community.

Interviewee Suggestions

- Businesses reported being motivated to participate in environmental assistance programs by the **opportunity to save money while doing the right thing for the environment and their neighborhood**. Multiple representatives expressed a sense of responsibility tied to their long-term relationship with the community; they also expressed interest in continuing these activities particularly when supported by financial incentives. One interviewee specifically stated a desire to be a "good neighbor." Business representatives recommended communicating this message across the business community.
- Some interviewees reported that **rebate programs can be challenging for smaller businesses**, which may have difficulty covering initial investment costs.
- A few business representatives suggested increasing **enforcement of current environmental regulations** (i.e., the polystyrene ban), which would reward compliant businesses and could complement programs to promote green businesses that go beyond compliance. However, smaller businesses would be more likely to accept one-on-one technical assistance if assistance programs and employees are separate and clearly distinguished from regulatory enforcement activities.

Experience with Other Assistance (non-City or non-environmental)

- Most interviewees' knowledge and experience with environmental services was limited to programs run by the City of Seattle. **EnviroStars was the only repeatedly mentioned non-City program**.
- When asked about non-environmental assistance businesses had received from the City of Seattle, interviewees mentioned **graffiti removal** and **community development funds**.

Findings from the Inter-Agency Workgroup Meetings

Representatives from the five city departments responsible for the vast majority of Seattle's environmental programs for businesses participated in an inter-agency workgroup to provide input for this study. The inter-agency workgroup met twice to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of existing service offerings and opportunities for improvement. This is one of the first times that key personnel from these departments have met together to discuss environmental sustainability service offerings for businesses. Their collective input proved invaluable to the consultant team as we completed our assessment and developed options to better serve business needs and improve program efficiency and effectiveness.

Key findings from these discussions are presented below.

Strengths, Assets, and Key Benefits of Existing Service Offerings

Members of the inter-agency workgroup were asked to identify the top strengths of the current services offered by their departments. These assets varied significantly by department and program. However four were mentioned multiple times:

- **Ongoing relationships** that departments and their staff have with businesses, trade allies, and trade associations in Seattle.
- **Strong interest** among the public and many in the business community in environmental issues, including climate, energy efficiency, energy independence, and sustainability in general.

- **An interdisciplinary team** of personnel available to assist businesses and manage programs.
- **The expertise** of personnel involved in environmental programs and business engagement.

Other strengths and assets identified by at least one of the inter-agency workgroup members included:

- For DPD, the ability to offer services that are comprehensive and evolve in response to changing needs and interests of businesses.
- For OED, the availability of flexible financing tools.
- The ability to deliver bottom line savings to customers.
- For SCL, the regional infrastructure of institutions and entities engaged in energy efficiency (such as the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance and the Bonneville Power Administration).
- For SPU and SCL, rates provide a relatively reliable source of funding.
- Legal mandates ensure a minimum of investment in resource conservation.

Weaknesses, Challenges, and Limitations of Existing Service Offerings

The inter-agency workgroup also described some of the challenges they faced and the weaknesses of their existing programs. Limitations mentioned by more than one department representative included:

- **Limited or declining resources – both in terms of funding and staff.** This issue was mentioned primarily by agencies whose programs are funded by the General Fund. SCL, on the other hand, considered the current level of funding sufficient to meet near term objectives.
- **Lack of coordination** between different departments and sections within departments on environmental programs.

Other challenges mentioned included:

- Slowness of City processes and bureaucracy, which adversely affects the ability to implement programs efficiently.
- The constraints of regulatory mandates, which can require that funds only be spent on specific activities (such as energy efficiency), making it more difficult to collaborate across departments.
- Difficulty understanding and reaching the large number of businesses in the city, given limited available resources.
- For OED, the decline in attention to climate change and the absence of policy initiatives to reduce carbon emissions.
- The lack of adequate data systems for back-office activities such as tracking, reporting, and customer relations management, as well as the difficulty of integrating data from different sources.
- Complications caused by differences in how each department classifies businesses – which has consequences for how departments can coordinate services. For example, SDOT considers businesses 100 or more employees as “large” because of CTR regulations, while SCL and SPU consider businesses as “large” based on utility rate class (i.e., level of resource use) rather than by number of employees.

Opportunities

The inter-agency workgroup brainstormed and then discussed a range of opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services. Options identified through the brainstorming exercise addressed business engagement, service delivery, and program support functions.

Brainstormed ideas that garnered support from several participants were to:

- **Fund and maintain a simple, functional portal for all services including establishing a web portal** with clear organization by topic (for example, energy, water, waste) and links to appropriate departmental web resources. Workgroup members suggested that, if such a portal existed, responsibility for updating web content should remain with departmental owners and each departmental website should be linked to the central portal in such a way as to ensure good customer experience.
- **Cross-train intake and field staff** in each department so that they are aware of environmental business services across City departments and can provide a “one hand-off” referral to the appropriate contact in the correct department or program.
- **Make job responsibilities and funding sources or allocations broader and more flexible** to allow staff and programs to be flexible, collaborative, and motivated to achieve citywide environmental goals.
- **Conduct coordinated market research** to inform all programs and departments about the characteristics of the business community and unmet business needs.
- **Establish common metrics** and create a unified evaluation system to measure the overall impact of all programs (workgroup members noted that they have a great story to tell).
- **Bring departmental leaders together** to develop a unified vision for environmental business services across departments that articulates desired outcomes (such as conservation and performance) and addresses how those outcomes can best be achieved.

Other ideas mentioned by workgroup members included:

- Cooperate on joint or unified outreach (workgroup members mentioned that this used to happen more, (especially between SCL and SPU, but does not currently take place).
- Train field staff to recognize multiple opportunities for businesses across departments and to link business to all opportunities.
- Establish an overall green business recognition program that encompasses all aspects of City services; such a program can also act as a portal to cross-departmental offerings.
- Use technology solutions to break down silos.
- Understand the legal constraints of fund sources; find ways to cut across department lines.
- Deepen staff (all staff, including but not limited to intake and field staff) awareness of programs across departments.

The inter-agency workgroup was in general agreement on the benefits of three opportunities:

- Establishing a **one-stop shopping portal**.
- Increasing **coordination of outreach**.
- **Reaching more businesses**, particularly in specific sectors that are not necessarily well served today.

All members of the inter-agency workgroup expressed interest in the City creating a **one-stop-shopping portal**. This portal is intended to make the customer's service experience smoother by reducing the number of handoffs needed to connect the customer to the right person or resource. The unified portal would supplement rather than replace existing portals (such as SCL's Energy Advisor hotline) and is not intended to sidestep or eliminate the specialized expertise of department and program staff. Workgroup participants also noted that creating a central portal would require obtaining resources to identify specifically what would best help businesses, developing the portal, and maintaining it as City services and programs change. Two main structures were identified for creating a one-stop-shopping portal, each of which has many implementation options; the City may need to use both structures:

- **Create a dedicated general sustainability assistance portal either on the web or in person** (such as a hotline) to supplement existing intake pathways and serve businesses that have a general interest in getting help but do not know where to start. Some options include formalizing role of OED staff in this pathway, developing a new website or hotline in-house (potentially building on the existing Climate Partner Tool), or purchasing a portal platform (such as ICLEI's Green Business Challenge, currently launching in Bellevue).
- **Cross-train existing program field staff to recognize opportunities to link business customers to additional services** and to provide a simple, direct referral to the appropriate contact in another program or department.

More coordinated outreach can help programs more effectively and efficiently provide services to businesses. Joint outreach was more common in the past, particularly with coordination between SCL and SPU. These utilities still coordinate some marketing efforts, including purchasing shared advertising space and coordinating outreach at industry trade shows and other business-oriented events. However, members of the workgroup expressed that coordinated outreach was less common now than in the past, in part because of changing program priorities. They noted that reinvigorating coordinated outreach efforts would be beneficial in certain circumstances. Coordinated outreach can include partnering to conduct market research, cross-promoting services, and jointly providing services with multiple environmental benefits that cross departments (such as increasing the efficiency of appliances that use hot water to conserve both energy and water). The coordinated outreach discussed by workgroup participants was intended to supplement and not supplant the outreach activities currently undertaken by individual departments and programs. In addition, the discussion recognized challenges in coordination outreach posed by legal constraints that that utility ratepayer funds must be used only for utility purposes; however, as Resource Venture has demonstrated, utilities can work together under a shared brand and service delivery platform to achieve their individual goals.

Key program personnel expressed a desire to **reach more business** and increase demand for their green business services, particularly in specific sectors that are not necessarily well served today. However, workgroup members also noted that this outreach effort must be accompanied by ensuring that departments have sufficient resources to expand their capacity to deliver services to meet this increased demand – either by increasing resources, or by redirecting existing resources *away* from something else

and *toward* these services. Suggestions for reaching more businesses included focusing on three business sectors:

- **Commercial tenants**, reached through property managers.
- **Immigrant-owned businesses and businesses of color**, reached through trusted local advocates and with a comprehensive communications/outreach strategy. These businesses have historically been underserved by City services and are currently the focus of programs such as Resource Venture and Community Power Works for Business.
- **Small industrial businesses**, reached through one-on-one outreach.

Program personnel also noted that **mid-sized businesses** face a gap in assistance. For example, SCL offers dedicated services to large and small businesses. Mid-sized businesses lack the resources of large businesses and are not targeted by small business-focused programs.

Assessment

The consultant team used the findings from information gathered about current City programs, from business interviews, and from the inter-agency workgroup meetings as the basis for its assessment of current conditions and opportunities for improving the City's environmental sustainability service offerings for business.

The intent of this step in the study process was four-fold:

- To assess the level of **coordination** and **integration** of current service offerings.
- To identify **gaps** and **overlaps** in services.
- To assess their **connection to the economic development goals** of the City.
- To identify **opportunities for improvement** of City services, specifically around **business engagement, service delivery, and program support**.

The consultant team's findings related to each of these areas are presented in the following four sections. These findings are based only on the information collected during the course of this study and on our knowledge and experience in program evaluation; they should not be interpreted as a comprehensive assessment of all services or of the performance of specific programs. Rather, the findings are meant to serve as a starting point for further discussion and to provide context for the preliminary recommendations presented at the end of this study.

Service Coordination and Integration

The level of service coordination and integration among City programs varies across departments, and also between the three program elements of business engagement, service delivery, and program support.

Business Engagement

- **There is no comprehensive, widespread, or systematic coordination of business engagement, although several departments work together regularly on marketing and outreach.**
 - City departments generally manage marketing and outreach for their own programs, including doing their own direct mailing, managing their own websites, and conducting direct outreach.
 - SPU, SCL, and DPD share booths at business-related events and cross-promote incentives and services when doing independent outreach; SPU and SCL sometimes share purchases of advertising in trade publications and other business-oriented media.
 - SDOT works with OSE, SCL, and SPU on the Summer Streets program; they use the program as a channel for spreading the word about City services available to businesses.
 - SDOT also supports the partnership initiative Commute Seattle, which promotes the Seattle Climate Partnership's Carbon Calculator, through their outreach to businesses on commute trip reduction.

- **Multiple programs target similar business segments, but it is not clear that outreach and marketing efforts to these specific segments are well known or consistently coordinated across departments.**
 - Some programs make concerted efforts to coordinate and streamline outreach to targeted business segments, such as the Summer Streets program. However, input from the inter-agency workgroup suggests that this practice is not systematic and that additional opportunities exist for improving coordination of outreach to targeted business segments.
- **Despite coordination efforts, no fully functional one-stop shopping portal exists today.**
 - No central web portal or clear contact exists for businesses that do not know which department provides the service they need or for businesses that are interested in information about environmental sustainability services in general.
 - The “GO Green” button on the GrowSeattle website supported by OED lists other City services and provides links to some of those services, as does the “Learn and Lower Your Impact” page on the OSE website, but the information is not complete or highly accessible.

Service Delivery

- **Service offerings are generally coordinated within each agency.**
 - SCL Energy Advisor services provide businesses with one-stop shopping to obtain information and assistance on saving energy.
 - SCL is now branding its business services under the Energy Smart and Smart Business names and directing businesses to appropriate resources according to their size.
 - Resource Venture provides integrated assistance to businesses on water, waste, and stormwater.
 - DPD provides most of its services to businesses through the Priority Green program.
 - SDOT addresses the commute trip reduction needs of the business community through two coordinated programs: CTR support directly from SDOT for “CTR-affected” employers and assistance Commute Seattle to for small employers and businesses in the downtown area.
- **Services are not generally coordinated or integrated across City agencies.**
 - SCL and SPU coordinated service delivery in the past but do not do so now.
 - Seattle Climate Partnership provides businesses with an Excel-based tool to measure their carbon footprint followed by suggestions for how to reduce emissions through reducing waste, increasing recycling, conserving water, changing transportation practices, and saving energy. No effort is made by the City to provide integrated assistance to businesses that use this stand-alone tool.
 - The 2030 District is an exception: a public-private partnership coordinated across department. The 2030 District is led by the private sector and supported by the City through DPD with funding from EPA, in-kind contributions from NEEA/Better Bricks, and participation from SCL, SPU, SDOT, and OED.

Program Support

- **Programs have separate systems for tracking, reporting, and performance evaluation, which hinders their ability to share, benchmark, or aggregate program information.**
 - Departments have separate customer relationship management (CRM) systems that make it difficult for program staff to share information across agencies about which businesses are being targeted for outreach or receiving services, which inhibits coordination.
 - Programs use a range of metrics and methods to evaluate program impacts and environmental outcomes, and some programs do not appear to have evaluation mechanisms in place at all.
- **City departments generally have separate staff and resources (if any) for “back office” functions.**
 - Departments do not typically share staff or resources for similar back office tasks such as communications, tracking, reporting, and evaluation. As a result, programs with limited resources often do not have any staff support (beyond service delivery staff) for these functions.
- **City departments do not currently have an official mechanism for coordinating or integrating their program and resource planning.**
 - Some program managers make an effort to align their plans and resources with the plans and services of other departments, but there is no official forum or process to facilitate this.

Gaps and Overlaps

Overall, the environmental sustainability services provided by the City address all major environmental issues faced by businesses. The City has several strong, well-run, and effective programs that serve the business community in Seattle and are nationally known and respected. However, this assessment focused on highlighting gaps and overlaps in business engagement, service delivery, and program support.

Business Engagement

- **The extent of outreach to different business segments varies significantly.**
 - Larger businesses – those with the largest accounts at SPU and SCL and businesses with over 100 employees required to develop commute trip reduction plans – are generally well served.
 - In several departments, special programs exist to serve smaller businesses.
 - Special programs also exist to reach underserved businesses or businesses in disadvantaged neighborhoods. For example, the Get on the Map program within Resource Venture focuses on these groups. However, these programs are not at scale, given the number of target businesses and the diversity of their ethnic backgrounds, language requirements, and needs.
 - Key program personnel identified commercial tenants and small industrial businesses as needing additional attention.

- **Without coordination, different programs may conduct independent outreach and marketing efforts to the same targeted business sectors.**
 - No specific examples of this arose during this study, but as more programs begin targeting specific business sectors (as is the case with current interest in better reaching small, historically underserved, or immigrant-owned businesses), there is a growing potential for overlapping outreach efforts in the absence of cross-program coordination.
 - Uncoordinated outreach and marketing can result in duplicated efforts and fatigue or confusion among targeted businesses, reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of all programs.

Service Delivery

- **Assistance is offered to Seattle businesses to address all major environmental issues they face.**
 - Businesses that needs or wants help reducing its environmental footprint, complying with regulations, or otherwise dealing with the full range of environmental sustainability issues can generally obtain its desired assistance.
- **Immigrant-owned businesses and businesses of color are perceived to be underserved.**
 - Both businesses and associations interviewed and the inter-agency workgroup expressed that this business sector warranted more targeted service.
- **Medium sized businesses (with between 50 and 250 employees) are also perceived as underserved.**
 - SCL in particular is concerned with this class of customer.
- **Different programs serve some of the same customers (such a large accounts or businesses in specific neighborhoods) but do not coordinate service offerings.**
 - As with duplication of outreach efforts, this can frustrate or confuse businesses, leading to lower levels of participation and creating a perception of inefficiency.
- **Market research into the needs and interests of businesses is limited and insufficient.**
 - The inter-agency workgroup noted that they do not know whether or not gaps exist in services or opportunities for engagement are lost at crucial decision points (such as during new construction or when companies invest in new equipment).

Program Support

- **As mentioned above, many gaps exist in reporting and tracking of program performance.**
 - Programs track outreach differently and provide services that are measured in different ways. For example, some programs track both the number of businesses contacted or reached through outreach as well as businesses served directly, while others track only businesses that received a formal service. This variation is necessary in some cases, to account for the different types of services offered and the range of delivery mechanisms, but it poses challenges to gaining insight into the total impact of City services.
 - Departments use a range of methods and metrics for evaluating program impacts; some programs are in the process of developing evaluation systems not yet in place.

- Budget information for these programs is difficult to find. This gap, when combined with the lack of common metrics, precludes the opportunity for high-level performance evaluation, such as the estimated return-on-investment of City spending on these programs and services.
- **Different programs all have their own support functions.**
 - Independent and uncoordinated support functions leads to duplication and to an uneven distribution of these support services across departments, resulting in variations in the quality of support for service delivery and the capacity to track program performance against environmental goals.

Connection to Economic Development

- Based on the findings of this study, **there appears to be no significant or coordinated effort to integrate the City's economic development and job creation efforts with its environmental service offerings**, except for Community Power Works.
- In addition, **no assessment of the economic development benefits of superior environmental performance of businesses** has been conducted, making it difficult to connect the value of the City's environmental sustainability services to economic development plans, goals, or indicators.
 - Compelling messages could be used to make this connection, such as that many of these services help businesses reduce utility costs at a time of growing economic pressures on businesses and that many services can also help businesses more cost-effectively meet the City's high environmental performance standards.
 - OED has begun to highlight the nexus of economic development assistance and environmental services through its "Go Green" button as part of the GrowSeattle initiative; however, the City could make a more concerted effort to document and quantify the economic development benefits of these services to encourage greater participation and support for current and future programs.

Opportunities for Improvement

The final step of the assessment was to identify options for improvement focusing on opportunities to improve environmental sustainability services for businesses to:

- Be more **effective** at achieving the environmental goals of the City or the program goals articulated by the sponsoring departments.
- Deliver services in a more **efficient** manner by maximizing the return on investment of City spending and minimizing unnecessary expenses or duplicated efforts.
- Better **meet the needs of businesses** in Seattle by providing services that address the concerns of the business community and make it easier for businesses to thrive, comply, and be profitable while attaining the highest environmental standards.

Following the structure of previous sections, these opportunities are presented by program element (business engagement, service delivery, and program support).

Business Engagement

- **Establish a web portal with clear organization by topic (such as energy, water, waste) and links to appropriate departmental web resources.**
 - To be useful, the portal would require dedicated resources for design and maintenance to stay up to date.
 - It would also require participation by all linked departments to ensure that the information on the portal remained accurate and that the portal directed users to the most appropriate resources on outside sites.
 - This web portal would supplement and not supplant the existing portals or intake mechanisms of each department.
- **Conduct joint or unified outreach and marketing to business segments targeted by multiple programs.**
 - Use programs that successfully engage immigrant-owned businesses and businesses of color as a conduit for other relevant services.
- **Establish an overall green business recognition program that encompasses all aspects of City services.**
 - Such a program could also act as a portal to cross-departmental offerings.
(According to members of the inter-agency workgroup, several departments have conducted recognition programs in the past, but those programs have been suspended either due to funding restraints or department restructuring.)

Service Delivery

- **Cross-train intake and field staff in each department on all environmental sustainability services for businesses.**
 - Train field staff to recognize multiple opportunities for businesses across departments and to provide a “single hand-off” referral to the appropriate contact in the correct department or program.
- **Make job responsibilities and funding sources or allocations broader and more flexible.**
 - Expand job descriptions of program staff to allow staff and programs to be more flexible, collaborative, and motivated to achieve citywide environmental goals.
 - Explore opportunities and address potential issues associated with sharing staff and funding resources across departments and programs with similar goals.
 - Provide one-on-one assistance to businesses to help them access all incentives relevant for their project (not just those available from a single department).

Program Support and Back-office Functions

- **Conduct coordinated market research** to inform all City departments about the characteristics of the business community and to identify gaps in service and unmet business needs.
 - All departments share a need for up-to-date information about the business community in Seattle; they would benefit from a better understanding of current and emerging business needs and perspectives on environmental sustainability.
 - City departments currently have difficulty gaining approval for independent market research. Limited funds also restrict the opportunities for single-agency market research. Coordinated, joint research could provide a streamlined, cost-effective avenue for obtaining this information.
- **Establish common metrics for tracking and evaluation.**
 - Creating a unified evaluation system to measure the overall impact of all programs would enable City-wide analysis and reporting on the impacts of programs on shared goals.
- **Bring departmental leaders together to develop a unified vision, shared goals, benchmarks, and approach for environmental business services across departments.**
 - A single meeting or series of discussions among departmental leaders about the shared goals of their programs could result in clearer guidance to program and planning staff.
 - A statement issued by high-visibility leaders on the vision would also demonstrate the City's continued commitment to advancing the economic development benefits of environmental sustainability.
- **Use technology solutions to facilitate communication across departments.**
 - Shared information systems, such as shared CRM software that could be accessed by program staff in multiple departments could facilitate data and information sharing and coordination of "back-office" functions.
- **Institutionalize cross-program coordination** by making the inter-agency workgroup permanent.
 - Holding periodic meetings with an established group of key program personnel would improve communication and would deepen program staff awareness of similar and complementary services offered by other departments.

Table 1 assesses each of the opportunities for improvement outlined above in terms of its anticipated contribution to improving effectiveness, increasing efficiency, and better meeting business needs.

Table 1. Opportunities for Improvement – Potential for Improving Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Better Meeting Business Needs

		Improves Effectiveness (better outcomes, more businesses reached)	Improves Efficiency (lower costs, less duplication)	Better Meets Business Needs (better service, more responsiveness to business needs)
Engagement	Establish a web portal with clear organization by topic (such as energy, water, waste) and links to appropriate departmental web resources.	✓		✓
	Conduct joint or unified outreach and marketing to business segments targeted by multiple programs.	✓	✓	✓
	Establish a green business recognition program encompassing all aspects of City services to attract businesses and provide portal-like services.	✓		✓
Service Delivery	Cross-train field and intake staff in each department on all City environmental sustainability services for businesses.		✓	✓
	Make job responsibilities and funding sources or allocations broader and more flexible to allow staff and programs to be flexible, collaborative, and motivated to achieve citywide environmental goals.	✓	✓	✓
Support Functions	Conduct coordinated market research to inform all City departments about the characteristics of the business community and to identify gaps in services and unmet business needs.	✓	✓	✓
	Create a set of common metrics for tracking and evaluating the overall impact of all programs.	✓	✓	
	Bring departmental leaders together to develop a unified vision for environmental business services across departments.	✓	✓	✓
	Further investigate legal constraints of funding sources, improve opportunities for resource sharing and collaboration across department lines where feasible.	✓	✓	
	Use technology solutions to facilitate communication across departments.		✓	✓
	Institutionalize cross-program coordination by making the inter-agency workgroup permanent; conduct periodic meetings of program managers to share, plan, and coordinate programs.	✓	✓	

Preliminary Recommendations

Based on the information collected through this study, from the inter-agency workgroup, and in consultation with departmental leadership, the consultant team has developed preliminary recommendations for improving the City's environmental sustainability service offerings and making them more effective, efficient, and better at meeting business needs.

The preliminary recommendations represent incremental changes and not a major overhaul to the suite of services offerings for three main reasons. First, during the course of this study, it became clear that very little support exists for any major changes to the suite of service offerings. Although there opinions varied on the effectiveness and efficiency of services, all City staff and businesses we spoke with expressed general satisfaction with the types of services delivered and did not suggest that a major overhaul of the City's approach to environmental sustainability services for businesses was needed.

Second, not enough is known at present about the business community's needs and perspectives related to environmental sustainability services or about the economic development benefits of environmentally sustainable practices. More research is needed on these issues before recommendations about major changes to the City's services can be made.

Third, departments delivering services in their area of expertise creates benefits in effectiveness and quality of services. Such programs often have a clearer line of accountability to their departments and a stronger funding base. None of the recommendations are intended to supplant the intake or service delivery methods currently in place; instead the recommendations are intended to build on and supplement existing systems where they share common challenges, needs, and opportunities. In addition, recommendations recognize that utility ratepayer funds must be used only for utility purposes; however, as Resource Venture has demonstrated, utilities can work together under a shared brand and service delivery platform to achieve their individual goals.

The findings from this study suggest that at least three actions can be pursued in the short- and medium-term that have the potential to improve the business engagement, service delivery, and program support elements of the City's business services.

1. Develop a simple, high functioning, web-based portal, with dedicated resources to maintain it and keep it current.

This portal would allow interested businesses to access a single site where they could learn more about all available service offerings and connect to specific service providers that meet their needs. Ideally, this web-based portal will also be connected to an office with staff support to provide portal-related information and assistance to interested businesses.

This portal is intended to supplement (not supplant) existing intake methods. Departments could still choose to promote their department- and program-specific hotlines and websites. The portal itself would contain links connecting users to relevant program webpages on department-hosted websites.

It will be important to ensure that the website is regularly updated and maintained. Web portal ownership, funding, and maintenance procedures and standards would need to be determined before pursuing this recommendation.

2. Initiate efforts to integrate and coordinate outreach, beginning with a jointly funded pilot project to business sectors and neighborhoods targeted by multiple programs (such as small businesses, businesses of color, or historically underserved areas).

Use the pilot to test the impact of joint outreach and to guide the development of more formal systems for joint outreach and cross-program communication. Joint outreach is recommended for services that share in common a target audience. Coordinating efforts to reach the shared audience could increase program efficiency through shared marketing materials and outreach staff. Integrated outreach could also better serve businesses through more coordinated engagement and building technical assistance relationships that lead businesses to seek ongoing assistance for additional environmental outcomes.

Departments would participate and provide resources for shared efforts only to the degree that the integration is expected to achieve outcomes on their individual environmental goals. Resource Venture is one example of integrated outreach, combining the efforts of Seattle's waste, water, and stormwater utilities. Each utility department provides funding based on its own budget and specifies outcome goals for their part of program.

3. Bring departmental leaders together to develop a unified vision, shared goals, benchmarks, and approaches for environmental business services across departments.

Although departments address a diverse set of resource areas (from energy and waste to commuting and green building), they could share high-level goals around increasing participation rates, reaching key business segments (such as historically underserved groups), or increasing resource conservation (specific measures dependent on their resource area). They could also devise common benchmarking methods such as measuring resource units conserved in total or per business as well as lessons learned on approaches that worked (or did not work) in their individual departments. This effort to work together to advance sustainability in the business sector could ultimately result in the development of new approaches to service delivery not identified or recommended in this report.

This group could work together to explore and plan for additional collaboration, such as:

- **Cross-training of program staff** in all departments, particularly intake and field staff.
- **Coordinated market research** on the characteristics of the business community and their unmet needs, as appropriate. Departments, such as SCL, that have the resources and need to conduct independent market research that is very specific to their resource area could share the results of their independent research, where information may benefit other services (such as around general business characteristics and motivators.)
- **Establishing common metrics** for program tracking and evaluation. Where possible, metrics should build on existing data used by departments.
- **Examining and addressing potential obstacles to collaboration**, such as logistical and legal issues around commingling of staff and financial resources. While utility ratepayer funds must be used for utility purposes (for example, SPU's solid waste funds must be used for waste activities and not water conservation), there are ways that utilities (and departments in general) can work together while ensuring that the funds they contribute to joint efforts benefit their utilities directly. For example, Resource Venture combines funds from SPU's solid waste, water, and stormwater utilities to undertake clearly defined activities and achieve specific outcomes in each resource area under a shared brand and service platform.

Overall, the City has several locally respected and nationally recognized programs that can address all major environmental issues faced by businesses. Together, City departments can address the gaps and duplications in effort identified by this research. This study suggests that there are ways that City departments can both take actions individually and work together to better meet business needs and achieve a greater return on taxpayer and ratepayer funds invested in resource conservation through greater efficiencies and improved outcomes. The preliminary recommendations outlined above are a starting point. The process used to conduct this study—bringing departments together to identify solutions and asking business how they can be better served—provide the basis for continuing the dialogue, market research, and leadership needed to drive change that results in greater sustainability for the City of Seattle.

Attachments

This memorandum is accompanied by the following attachments:

- Attachment 1. Statement of Legislative Intent
- Attachment 2. Summary of Seattle Environmental Programs and Services, by Agency
- Attachment 3. Characteristics of Businesses with 5 or More Employees
- Attachment 4. Non-City Environmental Sustainability Programs
- Attachment 5. Interview Guide for Businesses

2011 - 2012 City Council Budget Action (SLI)

Review Draft

Tab	Action	Option	Version
26	1	A	1

Budget Action Title: OED-Environmental Services for Businesses

Councilmembers: Conlin

Staff Analyst: Phyllis Shulman

Budget Committee Vote:

Date		Total	SB	BH	SC	TR	JG	NL	RC	TB	MO
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

Statement of Legislative Intent:

Background:

The Office of Economic Development manages a business services program supporting Seattle’s business community that includes helping businesses navigate permitting and regulatory issues, access financing, and other business technical resources to support the start-up of new businesses as well as growth of existing businesses. Through a variety of departments the City offers a suite of environmental services to help businesses become more environmentally sustainable. The City, also, has established a Seattle Climate Partnership Business Program that has recently moved to OED from the Office of Sustainability and Environment that works with businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and increase their competitiveness through the adoption of more energy efficient operations. From a business owner’s perspective, it can be challenging to navigate the array of environmental services that the city offers and evaluate what may be appropriate for their business.

Statement of Legislative Intent:

The Council requests that the Office of Economic Development coordinate, integrate, and improve access to the array of environmental sustainability services that the City offers and the Seattle Climate Partnership Program components with their business expansion and retention program. This will involve working with other departments to identify and coordinate environmental services and unify outreach and services to businesses. OED is requested to develop an outreach strategy that communicates this coordinated service to businesses. OED is also requested to identify systemic and/or reoccurring issues, process improvements, policy modifications, ideas for new services and recommendations to the Citywide Business Advocacy Team. OED is requested to report back to committee.

Responsible Council Committee(s): Regional Development & Sustainability

Date Due to Council: December 1, 2011

Attachment 2 – Summary of Seattle Environmental Programs and Services, by Agency

Program Name	Description	Purpose
Department of Planning and Development		
Energy Benchmarking & Reporting Assistance	Per SMC 22.920 buildings are benchmarked on an annual basis, and that building energy use information is to be made available by the owner to potential tenants, buyers and lenders during real estate transactions. The City has developed a series of educational materials – including hands-on training workshops, webinars and a step-by-step “How To” guide – to help owners with benchmarking and provide them information on utility energy-saving programs, rebates and other financial incentives to save energy. (This service will migrate to OSE in 2012)	The program aims to help building owners and managers reduce their energy costs through benchmarking – or measuring and rating a building’s energy performance. By benchmarking, owners get insight into how their building uses – and wastes – energy and can begin identifying opportunities to improve energy efficiency and increase savings.
Preservation Green Lab	As part of the Preservation Green Lab initiative, Seattle is developing outcome-based code. Project Green Lab Project currently in pilot phase working with the Supply Laundry Building redevelopment as a demonstration project. (This service will migrate to OSE in 2012)	Develop a Seattle Model Energy Code that is both more flexible and more effective in encouraging the re-use and energy-efficient retrofit of historic and existing buildings.
Priority Green	Four program elements (Priority Green Expedited, Priority Green Facilitated, Living Building Pilot, and Innovation Advisory Committee) provide an expedited, facilitated, and flexible permitting process for green construction projects. Depending on the program element, project must meet specified LEED, Built Green, DPD’s Alternative Path, the Architecture 2030 Challenge, or the Living Building Challenge criteria to receive benefits and assistance. The Innovation Advisory Committee provides a venue to develop solutions for innovative technologies not addressed by existing code requirements.	To encourage and reward green construction
Residential Deconstruction	Residential projects that salvage and recycle demolition debris receive demolition permit earlier.	
Seattle 2030 District	A public-private collaborative working to create a groundbreaking high-performance building district in downtown Seattle that meet the Architecture 2030 Challenge for Planning performance goals and reduce environmental impacts of facility construction and operations. The primary target is med-large, privately-owned buildings within the defined district area. (This program will migrate to OSE in 2012; however, the 2030 permitting improvements work will remain in DPD)	Dramatically reduce the environmental impacts of building construction and operations, while increasing Seattle’s competitiveness in the business environment and owner’s return on investment.
Seattle 2030 District Streamlined Permitting	Currently provides 2030 District members access to the existing "Priority Green" services; a team convened to evaluate coordination ideas will develop new--or more streamlined—services.	To encourage and reward projects meeting the 2030 District criteria.

Attachment 2 – Summary of Seattle Environmental Programs and Services, by Agency

Program Name	Description	Purpose
Office of Economic Development		
OED Business Services Program	Provide direct services to Seattle businesses, including permitting assistance, financing, advocacy, location assistance, and the development of successful business districts. Also work through partnerships with community-based organizations, community lending institutions, community colleges, individual businesses, and industry associations and business organizations to provide additional services; including business planning and technical assistance, workforce development, corporate strategy, and new market expansion.	Grow businesses, grow jobs, create a robust economy and broadly shared prosperity in Seattle.
Seattle Climate Partnership (also supported by DPD, SCL, SPU, SDOT)	Provides technical assistance, networking, workshops, B2B matching services, and industry forums related to climate action for partner businesses in Seattle	Support business efforts and secure commitments from City businesses to reduce GHG emissions
Office of Sustainability and Environment		
Community Power Works (also supported by OED, SCL)	Building retrofit program for homes, apartments and condos, small businesses, large commercial buildings, and hospitals within areas of downtown, central district and southeast Seattle.	Saving energy and creating jobs.
Learn and Lower Your Impact	Serves as a sustainability information hub and portal to conservation resources provided by other City programs.	
Green Building	Provides Quick Guides to Green TI's" and other tools to help project managers, owners, interior designers and architects apply sustainable building practices. (This was a service of DPD but is being migrated to OSE for 2012.)	To provide information and links to incentives on green building (including retrofits and operations) to commercial and residential building owners and managers.
Seattle City Light		
Account Executive Office	Works with Seattle City Light's largest commercial and industrial key customers (top 150 by revenues) to address customers' unique business requirements.	
Built Smart	Provides financial incentives, technical assistance, and project certification; targets developers of new low- and mid-rise residential buildings of at least 5-units; high-rise buildings eligible for non-shell measures	Encourage developers and contractors to create buildings that exceed energy code and standard practice in incorporating electricity-saving features.
Customer Renewables	Residential and business customers can voluntarily purchase renewable energy credits and participate in a community solar project owned by City Light. Customers with solar energy installations are eligible for state renewable production incentives.	Supports the generation of renewable energy.
Energy Advisor hotline/ Conservation homepage	Advice/assistance from conservation experts on all kinds of energy conservation inquiries.	A central hub for program intake, information, and assistance.
Energy Smart Services	Financial incentives and technical assistance for both existing facilities and new construction projects.	Help medium-large commercial businesses and industrial customers complete efficiency upgrades.

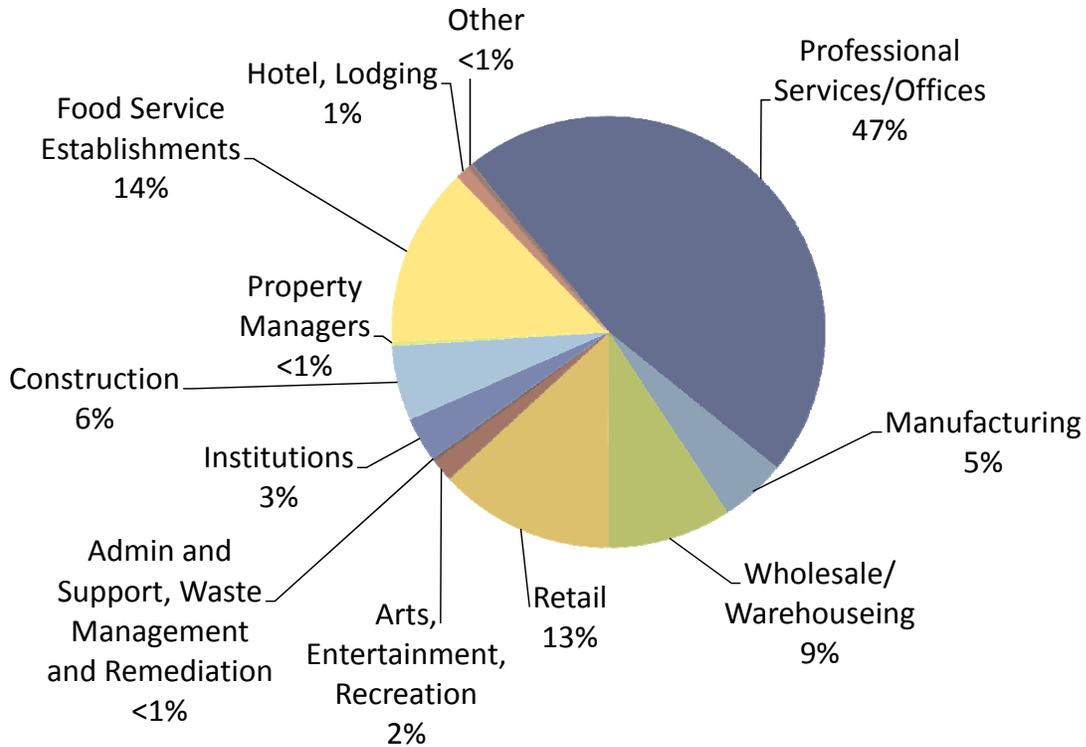
Attachment 2 – Summary of Seattle Environmental Programs and Services, by Agency

Program Name	Description	Purpose
Lighting Design Lab	Seattle City Light operates the Lab with sponsorship from the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance and electric utilities from throughout the Pacific Northwest. The Lab provides technical assistance, training and education to commercial customers and lighting designers seeking information on high quality, energy efficient lighting technologies.	Improve lighting technology, reduce energy use from lighting.
Multifamily (EB) Weatherization and Lighting Rebates	Offers rebates for windows, insulation and lighting to help make existing 5-unit+ multifamily buildings more energy efficient; also currently provides free CFLs, showerheads, and aerators.	Encourage property managers to make efficiency improvements in existing multifamily buildings.
Smart Business	Financial incentives to your small business for replacing existing inefficient lighting with approved energy efficient lighting and equipment.	Save electricity through the replacement of inefficient lighting fixtures with efficient fixtures, and other electricity-consuming equipment.
Seattle Department of Transportation		
Commute Seattle	As an initiative of the DTA (partnership between Downtown Seattle Association, King County Metro, and City of Seattle), Commute Seattle develops innovative transportation access options for Downtown employers, workers and visitors and provides information.	To help achieve DTA's goal of a six percentage point increase in non-SOV mode choices by 2015
Commute Trip Reduction Program	Using state CTR funds, SDOT provides technical assistance to large "CTR-affected" employers (those with 100+ employees commuting during peak hours) in developing and monitoring their programs.	Reduce drive-alone commute trips and vehicle miles traveled.
Parking Management in Neighborhood Business Districts	SDOT responds to business requests for loading zones, short term parking signage and bike racks. In addition, SDOT analyzes best parking management to encourage short term retail parking and mobility over commuter parking.	Prioritize on-street right-of-way to move people and goods, support short term retail parking and loading zones, and reduce commuters using parking that could be for shoppers.
Summer Streets	Works with neighborhood business district chambers to hold public events between May and September to connect neighbors to local business and to each other – to build community in the City's largest public space, our streets.	Provides public space and activities to help people to have fun, celebrate the spirit and personality of their community, discover active, healthy transportation, connect with their neighbors, and support local businesses.
Transportation Management Plans (also supported by DPD)	CTR applies to larger employers, while TMPs apply to buildings. The elements of a company's CTR plan and a building's TMP may be similar. Both might offer subsidized transit passes, for example. Sometimes the property owner and employer might be the same entity and have to meet the requirements of both laws.	Reduce drive-alone commute trips.
Seattle Public Utilities		
Construction and Demolition Wastes (also supported by DPD, King County)	Part of City Zero Waste Strategy, our C&D Program focuses on recycling and reuse through technical assistance, market development and policy guidance.	Divert C&D from landfills and support market development around recycling and reuse

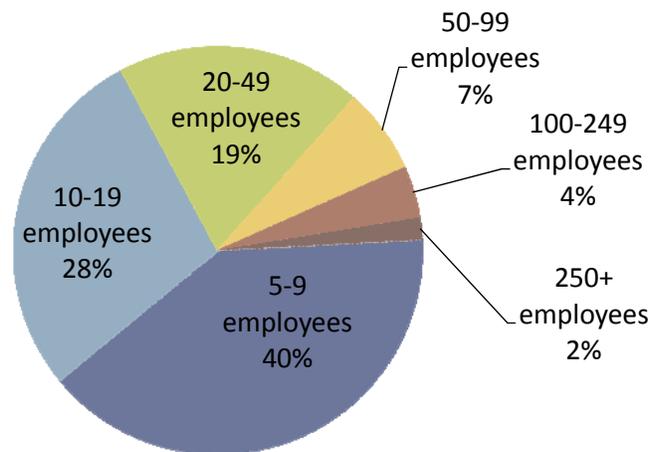
Attachment 2 – Summary of Seattle Environmental Programs and Services, by Agency

Program Name	Description	Purpose
FOG Prevention	The FOG prevention program provides assistance and conducts inspections to reduce the sewer back-ups from fats, oils, and grease. FOG Program team currently includes Specifier, Program Manager, 3 Inspectors, and 1 Assistant Inspector.	Prevent sewer back-ups due to fats, oils, and grease in drains. Prevent fats, oils, and grease-related impacts to our sewer system per Seattle Municipal Code and our upcoming Consent Decree, currently in negotiation.
Green Roofs	Current program provides research, technical guidelines, and other information for interested businesses, residents, and developers	Ongoing studying and modeling for Stormwater Code development. Outreach and technical assistance green roof companies and developers. Future goals for providing incentives for green roofs when nexus with SPU priorities.
Resource Venture	Provides outreach, education, and technical assistance to businesses on waste prevention & recycling, water conservation, stormwater pollution prevention, green building, climate change. Resource Venture implements several sub-programs including Get on the Map, Food Plus, and the Spill Kit Incentive Program (with referrals from SPU's Source Control Program).	To assist in achieving SPU resource conservation goals. Provides direct business to business type service that can be presented as limited ties to government.
Saving Water Partnership	A consortium of 18 water utilities; provides rebates and financial incentives for residential property managers, ICI customers, and commercial and multifamily new construction and major remodels (for both indoor and outdoor water conservation).	The 1% Water Conservation Initiative is a water conservation goal to reduce personal and business water consumption 1% every year for ten years. [The 1% program reached its 10 year goal at the end of 2010. Future conservation goals will align with the overall SPU Water Supply Plan for the years 2013 to 2018.]
Source Control Program	Conducts compliance inspections and unsolicited educational site visits on stormwater pollution prevention; responds to illicit discharge (spill) reports.	Comply with NPDES permit requirements and prevent stormwater and surface water pollution
Stormwater Facility Credit Program	Provides drainage bill credits to customers with privately-owned stormwater systems that reduce stormwater flow and/or provide water quality treatment.	

Seattle businesses with five or more employees (~14,250 businesses)



Size distribution of businesses with five or more employees (~14,250 businesses)



Attachment 4 – List of Non-City Environmental Sustainability Programs and Services

Program name and website	Environmental Area
Federal Government	
Better Buildings Challenge (http://www4.eere.energy.gov/challenge)	Green Building
Energy Star: Portfolio Manager (tool from EPA/DOE) (http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=evaluate_performance.bus_portfoliomanager)	Energy Conservation
EPA: Energy Star (http://www.energystar.gov/)	Energy Conservation
EPA: WasteWise (http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/partnerships/wastewise/index.htm)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
State Government	
Commute Trip Reduction: State and King County (http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/ctr)	Transportation/ Commuting
Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (schools) (http://www.pscleanair.org/)	Other (Air Pollution)
Washington Department of Ecology: 1-800-Recycle database (http://1800recycle.wa.gov)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
Washington Department of Ecology: Local Source Control Partnership (http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/lsp/index.html)	Stormwater Management
County/Regional Government	
The EV Project (http://www.theevproject.com/index.php)	Electric Vehicle Charging Network
IMEX: industrial materials exchange (http://www.lhwmp.org/home/IMEX/index.aspx)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
King County: Best Workplaces for Recycling (http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/garbage-recycling/best-workplaces.asp)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
King County: EnviroStars (for hazardous waste) (http://www.envirostars.org)	Green Technology/ Pollution Prevention
King County: Green Tools (http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenbuilding/green-tools-program.asp)	Green Building
King County “What do I do with?” recycling database http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/wdidw	Waste Prevention and Recycling
PSRC: Electric Plug-in Hybrid program (http://psrc.org/transportation/ev)	Energy Conservation
Non-Profit	
AIA: 2030 Challenge (carbon neutral goal, national) (http://www.architecture2030.org/2030_challenge/the_2030_challenge)	Green Building
BOMA: International: Energy Efficiency Program (http://www.boma.org/TrainingAndEducation/BEEP/Pages/default.aspx)	Energy Conservation
Built Green (http://www.builtgreen.net/)	Green Building
Cascadia Green Building Council: Living Building Challenge (http://cascadiagbc.org)	Green Building
Climate Counts (rating system) (http://www.climatecounts.org)	Climate
Climate Solutions: Business Leaders for Climate Solutions (http://climatesolutions.org/programs/blcs)	Climate
ECOSS: Green Business Program (http://www.ecoss.org/business_overview.html)	Integrated
EOS Alliance: Northwest Environmental Training Center (NWETC) (http://www.eosalliance.org/about-us)	Green Technology/ Pollution Prevention
Food Lifeline: edible food donation (for restaurants, grocers, and wholesalers) (http://www.foodlifeline.org/help/foodindustry/index.html)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
Global Reporting Initiative (sustainability reporting framework) (http://www.globalreporting.org/Home)	Other (Sustainability)
Green Drinks (networking events) (http://www.greendrinks.org/)	Other (Green Networking)
ICLEI: Green Business Challenge (soon to be in Bellevue) (http://www.icleiusa.org/programs/climate/how-it-works)	Climate

Attachment 4 – List of Non-City Environmental Sustainability Programs and Services

Program name and website	Environmental Area
Impact Washington: technical assistance for achieving ISO 14001 standard (http://impactwashington.org/be-more-sustainable/sustainability)	Green Technology/ Pollution Prevention
NEEA: Better Bricks (http://www.betterbricks.com)	Green Building
PPRC: Pollution Prevention Resource Center (http://pprc.org/contacts/index.cfm?pageAction=searchByState&List=WA&Format=WDDX&region=10)	Green Technology/ Pollution Prevention
Salmon Safe (certification program) (http://www.salmonsafe.org/)	Land Use/ Development
Sustainable Systems at Work/NWEI (5-part discussion guides for purchase) (http://www.nwei.org/discussion_courses/course-offerings/sustainable-systems-at-work-2)	Other (Sustainability)
US Green Building Council: LEED certification and trainings (http://www.usgbc.org/)	Green Building
WSRA and WORC awards (http://www.wsra.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=50 , http://www.compostwashington.org/)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
Business or Trade Association	
Association of Washington Business: Environmental Excellence Awards (www.awb.org/about/awards/awards.asp)	Integrated
NBIS (http://nbis.org/about-nbis/profitable-sustainability/)	Other (Sustainability)
Seattle Good Business Network (www.seattlenetwork.org)	Other (Sustainability)
Washington Clean Technology Alliance (http://wacleanotech.org)	Energy Conservation
Washington Lodging Association: Green Hospitality (http://www.walodging.org/programs/)	Integrated
Private Utility, Business, or Other Entity	
Cedar Grove's Green Scene stickers and General BioDiesel's stickers (http://www.gogreenscene.com/)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
Clean Scape audits (http://www.cleanscapes.com/for_business/waste_audits)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
E-Cycle Washington, for small businesses (http://www.ecyclewashington.org/)	Waste Prevention and Recycling
Green Seal (http://www.greenseal.org)	Other (Sustainability)
McKinstry Innovation Center (clean energy business incubator) (http://www.mckinstry.com/news/view/id/90)	Energy Conservation
PSE and Seattle Steam: utility conservation offerings (http://www.pse.com/savingsandenergycenter/ForBusinesses/Pages/Resource-Conservation-Manager.aspx , http://www.seattlesteam.com/)	Energy Conservation
Seattle Business Magazine: Green Washington Awards (http://seattlebusinessmag.com/seattle-event/green-washington-awards-2011)	Other (Sustainability)

Interview Guide for OED Green Business Program

This interview guide intended to obtain qualitative information on program performance and perceived business needs and benefits associated with the City providing sustainability outreach and technical assistance services. Cascadia will conduct approximately 30-minute phone interviews with 12 to 16 managers at a diverse set of businesses currently served by Seattle’s existing programs.

Although not a formal survey, interviews will address the following questions:

The Business’s Experience with Programs

1. **What assistance from City of Seattle programs has your businesses received on environmental issues** such as waste prevention and recycling, energy and water conservation, climate, stormwater pollution prevention, transportation? (Note which City department provided the assistance.)

*For **associations**, ask “what assistance programs offered by the City of Seattle on environmental issues do you have experience or familiarity with? Have you received assistance from any of these programs for your own business?” (For associations that have not used programs, frame questions about how programs serve businesses in their association.)*

Examples of common programs

- Seattle City Light assistance and rebates
- Seattle Public Utilities’ Resource Venture
- Seattle Climate Partnership
- Saving Water Partnership
- Seattle 2030
- Commute Trip Reduction
- Commute Seattle
- Green Building Program or Priority Green

- **What assistance was most helpful, and why?**
2. **What other help (beyond environmental issues) has your business received from the City of Seattle?**
 3. **What help has your business received from other environmental assistance programs not run by the City of Seattle?** (for example, EnviroStars)
 - **What assistance was most helpful, and why?**
 4. **What benefits did your business experience from receiving assistance?** (for example, resource or cost savings, customer goodwill) *(As possible, distinguish between benefits from City and non-City assistance.)*
 5. **How could the City of Seattle programs you used be improved?** (for example, around type of services offered, environmental issues covered, promotion)
 6. **How easy or difficult was it for your business to find assistance from the City of Seattle that you wanted?**

7. City programs can offer assistance through different methods. Please rank in order of your preference for receiving assistance through the following four methods.

- Information available on the web
- Workshops
- Webinars
- One-on-one technical assistance

8. City programs can also offer recognition (e.g. through a “Green Business” program) or promotion (e.g. listings on a website or announcements in newspapers) as a reward for environmental efforts. How important or not important are the following:

- Recognition (without accompanying media campaign)
- Recognition (with accompanying media campaign)

9. Currently, most assistance is provided through separate programs from each relevant utility or department. To what extent do you think:

- The systems that the City has in place are working well as they are
- This separation makes it difficult to find or receive assistance?
- A central website for finding City programs is needed?
- A one-stop-shop is needed to provide or coordinate this assistance?

10. What additional or ongoing assistance would help your business on environmental issues? (Both by environmental issues and types of services) (Probe: What are your biggest needs around environmental issues?)

Big-Picture Questions

11. If you could design or redesign the City of Seattle’s business assistance programs for environmental issues, what are the top three changes you would make?

12. How can City of Seattle environmental assistance programs better reach businesses?