



# **Review of City Environmental and Sustainability Services for Businesses**

**Seattle City Council  
Regional Development and Sustainability Committee**

# Background

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- Last year, City Council requested OED to work with various City departments to inventory existing environmental, conservation, and sustainability programs and services provided by the City to businesses and identify opportunities to improve service delivery.
- Specifically the SLI asked departments to identify opportunities to **coordinate, integrate, and improve access to the array of environmental sustainability services that the City offers**. This will involve working with other departments to identify and **coordinate environmental services** and **unify outreach and services** to businesses.
- An inter-agency team consisting of staff from OED, DPD, OSE, SCL, SDOT, and SPU was convened conduct this review.

# Current Services - Overview

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- DPD, OED, OSE, SCL, SPU, and SDOT offer 25 services that fall under four general program areas:
  - Energy efficiency and conservation (i.e. Energy Smart/Smart Business Services);
  - Recycling/waste prevention, stormwater, and water conservation (i.e. Resource Venture);
  - Green building (i.e. Priority Green); and
  - Transportation and commuting (i.e. Commute Trip Reduction)

# Current Services - Overview

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- **Programs provide a mix of services:**
  - ‘1 on 1’ technical assistance
  - Assistance complying with regulations
  - Incentives and rebates
  - Information through websites, seminars, workshops etc
  - Recognition
- **Most programs serve all businesses**
- **However many programs target specific segments by sector and size**

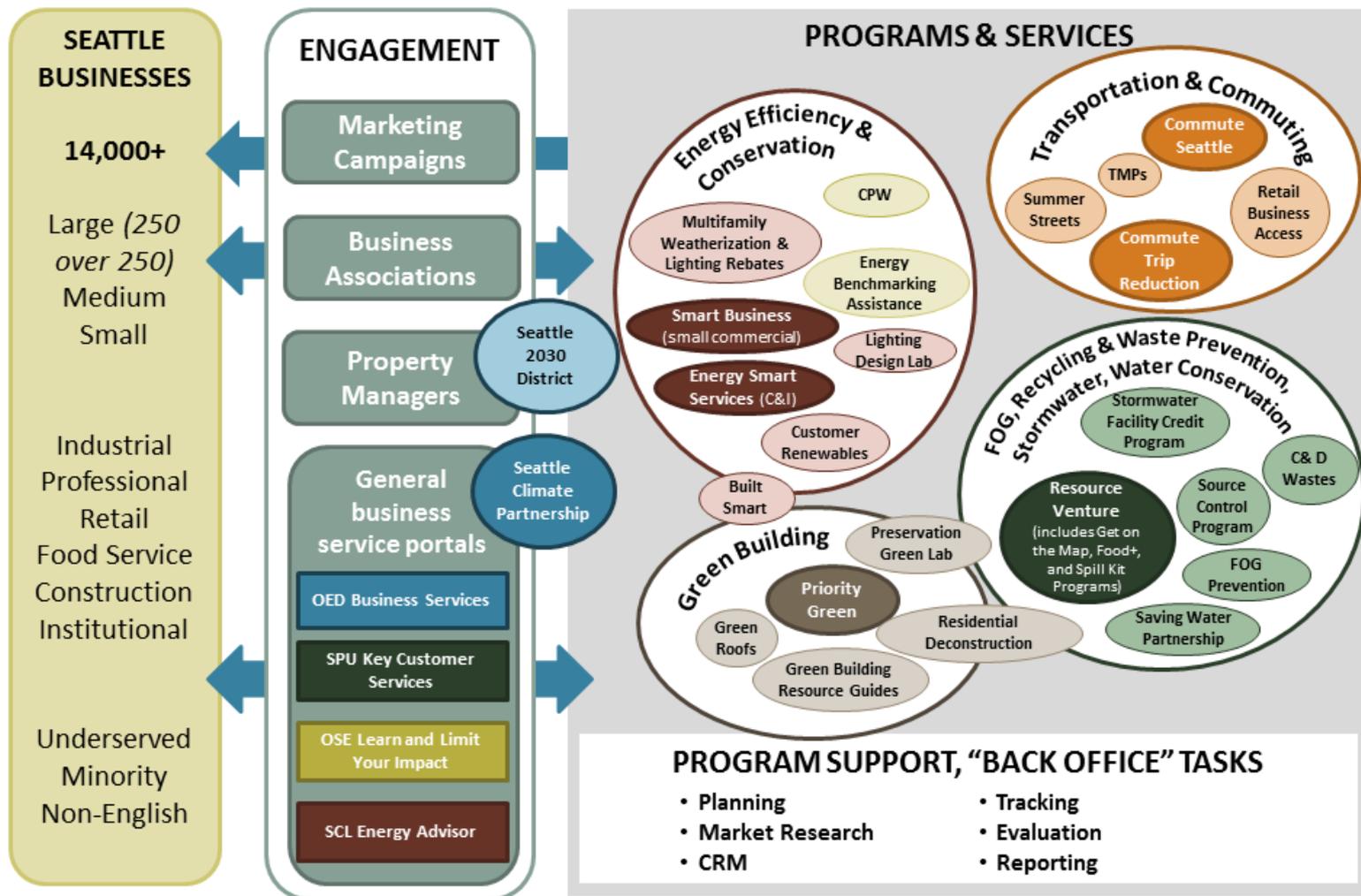
# Current Services - Overview

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Services consist of three main elements:

- **Business Engagement**
  - Marketing & outreach to businesses
  - Responding to customer inquiries, request for assistance, information
  - Intake into programs
- **Program service delivery**
  - Providing assistance; delivering information...
- **Program support**
  - ‘Back office’ functions, market research, CRM...

# Current Environmental Program & Service Delivery Pathways



# Business Interviews: Key Findings

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- 15 business representatives interviewed
  - Business associations, small manufacturers, food service businesses, assisted living facility, hotel, media outlet, property manager
  - Limitations: small size, # of associations, limited diversity, FOC
- Businesses valued:
  - Definitely: **rebate programs** and **one-on-one assistance**
  - Potentially:
    - **Recognition program** only with associated **marketing**.
    - **Centralized website** if **well organized** and **up-to-date**.

# Business Interviews: Key Findings (cont'd)

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- Interviewees reported **difficulty finding services**:
  - Lack of awareness, challenges from City restructuring.
  - Recommended streamlining communications:
    - **Central information hub**
    - **Central website** (only if well organized and up-to-date)
    - **Key go-to person** with a network to services
- Interviewees mentioned needs around:
  - **Lack of capacity to make changes** (one-on-one assistance helps).
  - **Perceived lack of focus on ethnically owned businesses** (who may be hard to reach through a website).
- Businesses said they are motivated by **saving money, complying with regulations, doing the right thing.**

# Current Services - Assessment

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- **Business Engagement**
  - No systemic coordination of business outreach
  - Multiple programs target similar business segments
  - No fully functional one-stop portal
- **Program service delivery**
  - Service offerings are coordinated within each agency
- **Program support**
  - Programs have different tracking and evaluation systems
  - No formal mechanism for resource planning

# Preliminary Recommendations

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- **Improve effectiveness** (i.e. better outcomes)
  - Develop a simple, high functioning web-based portal.
  - Cross-training of program staff in all departments.
  - Establish common metrics for program tracking and evaluation.
  - Address logistical and legal issues that are potential obstacles to collaboration, and commingling of staff and financial resources.
- **Improve efficiency** (i.e. better outcomes at lower cost)
  - Initiate efforts to integrate and coordinate outreach, beginning with a jointly funding pilot outreach project to business sectors targeted by multiple programs.
- **Maximize economic development benefits**
  - Coordinated market research on the characteristics of the business community, and to identify gaps in service, unmet needs.

# City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development

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