

**Response to Statement of Legislative Intent 12-1-A-1  
SPU Workforce Efficiency and Performance**

**Seattle Public Utilities and Neighborhoods Committee**

May 10, 2011

# Council SLI Request

Identify recommendations for improving workforce efficiency and performance that: 1) can be implemented within current agreements; and 2) those that require discussion with labor

Examples:

- Multi-skill job classifications
- Shifts, work hours, and peak work loads
- Performance Benchmarks

# Challenges to Optimizing Workforce Efficiency

- Peak workload demand
  - Daily peaks (e.g. Call Center)
  - Seasonal Peaks (e.g. Water Ops winter)
- Access to assets while minimizing disruption (e.g. traffic and trolley lines)
- Job classifications and jurisdictional issues

# Overtime

Two kinds of overtime:

- Non-emergency overtime (e.g. planned outages)
- Emergency overtime (e.g. watermain break)

Primary areas of focus for overtime reduction:

- Drainage and Wastewater Operations
- Water Distribution
- Solid Waste Operations
- Watershed Services
- Call Center

# Job Classifications

SPU Field Operations and Maintenance has 500+ staff in approximately 50 job classifications.

Most represented by one of 11 unions:

- Limits work employees allowed to perform.
- Increases number of employees required to perform work and can lead to periods of idleness.

# Multi-Skilling

Definition: Training and equipping employees to work on a range of systems and infrastructure

Benefits:

- Increases operational flexibility
- Increases productivity and efficiency
- Reduces redundancies
- Increases employee opportunity
- Promotes succession planning
- Reduces labor costs
  - Annual labor costs
  - Overtime costs
  - Long-term benefits cost

# Multi-Skilling Recommendation

## *In the short term:*

Identify work units conducive to cost-savings through multi-skilling and consolidating job classifications

## *Then:*

- ✓ City Labor Relations, SPU and Labor develop multi-skill model
- ✓ Conduct classification and salary review
- ✓ Negotiate with affected unions
- ✓ Legislation approving new class titles
- ✓ Develop training and skills blocks
- ✓ Transition employees to new series

# Potential Efficiencies Around Scheduling (Shifts, Work Hours and Work loads)

- Reduced scheduled and emergency overtime
- Improved customer service
- Better response to workload demand

# Considerations When Evaluating Work Schedules

Challenge	Options
Improve customer response, reduce overtime, increase coverage	Flex schedule (9/80, 4/10)
Seasonal or peak workload shifts, job continuation	12-hour shift
Increase coverage, reduce overtime, work outside scheduled shifts (early morning, night time)	Shift change
Seasonal workloads	Seasonal shift
Increase coverage, job continuation	Scheduled OT
Increase productivity and efficiency	Staggered shifts
Seasonal workload	Seasonal labor

# Scheduling Efforts in the Field

OT reductions in Water Distribution, Drainage and Wastewater and Solid Waste Operations

LOB	2008	2009	2010
Water Dist.	\$461,504	\$386,524	\$325,291
DWW	\$1,324,671	\$1,174,035	\$992,605
Solid Waste	\$734,731	\$617,508	\$502,982

# Scheduling Efforts in the Call Center

## Customer Response Revitalization Project Dec. 2009 - Present

- 9-hour shifts to better align staffing with demand
- Start times adjusted to match time of day call volume
- Work schedules for all staff modified

# Benchmarks

## Call Center:

- Significant improvement in “Telephone Service Factor”
- Addressing “Not Ready Time”

## Drinking Water:

- Meeting outage benchmarking target (<4% customers with > 4 hours outage)
- Frequently meeting 1 hour emergency response target

## Wastewater:

- Significant improvements in meeting PM schedules
- No backups in 2009 caused by missed maintenance