



2027-2032 Strategic Plan Community Engagement Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025 and 2026, Seattle City Light conducted a comprehensive, equity-centered community engagement effort, which informed the development of the 2027–2032 Strategic Plan.

Building on feedback from past engagement and leveraging an integrated approach to engagement, City Light engaged a diverse cross-section of customers, community partners, and stakeholders.

Feedback from community and stakeholder engagement has reinforced four consistent themes:

- Electricity is an essential service,
- Customers want to know that we can meet our region’s increasing demand for power,
- Reliability must also be balanced with affordability and environmental responsibility, and
- Communities expect City Light to remove barriers, build partnerships, and co-design solutions that reflect lived experiences.

We also heard how important it is to connect our work to community members’ shared values around public health, the environment, and community capacity building.

Customers want us to prioritize vulnerable communities. This feedback aligns with the Washington State Clean Energy Transformation Act, which directs utilities to ensure that everyone benefits from our region’s transition to energy that doesn’t harm people or the planet.

What we learned during our engagement efforts will continue to guide our long-term planning and help build stronger relationships within the communities we serve. As a result, the 2027-2032 Strategic Plan reflects our community’s priorities, and we will continue partnering with community members as we implement the plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Working with the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON), we implemented a multi-layered engagement strategy that combined broad outreach, targeted conversations, and ongoing collaboration with community partners to ensure equitable participation.

We began by reviewing recent community feedback to identify key themes and gaps. This helped us develop an engagement approach that centered on promoting dialogue, building trust, and reducing harm—especially for communities that have been historically underrepresented in City of Seattle processes. We also coordinated with other City departments to incorporate utility-related feedback gathered through their engagement efforts.

In response to previous community feedback, we took an integrated approach by combining Strategic Plan community engagement with engagement for other long-term planning efforts including the:

- 10-year Strategic Roadmap
- Clean Energy Implementation Plan
- Integrated Resource Plan

By aligning engagement across multiple planning efforts, we were able to be more efficient, effective, and equitable.

We partnered with DON to plan and implement strategies for reaching customers, community members, and community-based organizations throughout our service area. We also engaged with employees, business customers, and other stakeholders to ensure their interests and priorities were incorporated into our planning.

This engagement helped build community's understanding of the utility's challenges and expand our understanding of the community's priorities. Our outreach aimed to increase City Light's visibility, strengthen partnerships, and ensure the Strategic Plan is informed by the communities we serve.

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

We gathered feedback from more than **2,650 people** representing a diverse cross-section of residential and business customers throughout our service area. We also connected with **hundreds of employees and stakeholders** to ensure our planning efforts reflect their perspectives and expertise. See Attachments 1 and 2 for a summary of the communities and stakeholders we engaged.

Community Engagement Activities

In 2025, we:

- Attended **17 community events**, reaching residents across all seven Council Districts and in multiple franchise communities. Events reflected a strong presence at multicultural festivals and neighborhood celebrations and were often done in coordination with Utility Assistance enrollment opportunities.
- Hosted **25 community and stakeholder conversations**, including with the Indigenous Advisory Council, South Park Neighborhood Association, and the Disability Commission.
- Engaged with **20 language communities**¹, supported by the Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons.
- Reviewed **10 recent engagement reports** including [Seattle's Comprehensive Plan](#) and the [2025-2030 Transportation Electrification Strategic Investment Plan](#) to incorporate previous customer input into our strategic planning processes.

We also shared opportunities for customers to provide feedback on City Light's website, e-newsletter, social media, and blog.

Customer Research

We conducted customer research to better understand perceptions and experiences across Seattle and our franchise communities. Our approach prioritized broad representation and included partnerships with Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons and research firms to ensure meaningful participation from historically underrepresented communities.

We offered in-language engagement opportunities and compensated participants for their time to reduce barriers to involvement. The insights gathered are informing our Strategic Plan and will guide how we deliver on our commitments and achieve our outcomes.

Stakeholder Engagement

We met with more than **250 stakeholders** who provided input on affordability, grid readiness, electrification, resource planning, and customer experience improvements. Stakeholder meetings included:

- Key Customers
- Franchise Cities
- NW Energy Coalition
- Building Owners & Managers Association (BOMA)
- Trade allies
- Community based organizations

¹ Arabic, Amharic, Cantonese, English, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Illocano, Mandarin, Norwegian, Oromo, Russian, Spanish, Somali, Tagalog, Taishanese, Tajik, Tigrinya, Vietnamese

- Community engagement partners

Employee Engagement

The City Light Strategic Planning and Performance team approached this planning process with greater intentionality with respect to involving staff in it, which included:

- **Operations Engagement:** Working with Operations leadership to identify opportunities for their teams to be meaningfully engaged and provide feedback to help shape the utility's long-term planning efforts.
- **Cross-Utility Workshops:** Hosting two-day workshops for each of the six Strategic Plan focus areas. Each workshop included 30-40 staff that represented different areas of expertise and positionality in the organization. During the workshops, participants co-developed bodies of work. These bodies of work are setting the stage for how we will accomplish the outcomes outlined in our Strategic Plan.

KEY FINDINGS

Electricity powers the lives of our customers. From daily living to work and play, we support people's quality of life and the community's well-being. We are also facing unprecedented changes in our industry and region. Our Strategic Plan needs to reflect our commitment to providing customers with affordable, reliable, safe, and environmentally responsible energy services while positioning us to navigate a changing energy sector.

- 82% of customers surveyed are satisfied.
- Reliable service remains the top satisfaction driver.
- Rate affordability is a top dissatisfaction driver.
- Solar (88%), wind (84%), and hydropower (79%) remain the most favored sources.
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) customers are less aware of energy-saving technologies than white customers.

Balancing Trade-offs

We discussed how community members would prioritize:

1. **Reliability**, which customers define as keeping the power on and restoring electricity quickly
2. **Affordability**, which includes people feeling like they can afford to pay their bill and knowing how to manage their bill
3. **Environment**, which includes generating and using energy that doesn't harm people or the environment

This exercise sparked valuable conversations about the complexity of our work and the challenges facing the energy sector. As a result, community members provided more informed feedback.

Based on the 785 responses we received, customers consistently ranked reliability as their top priority followed closely by both affordability and the environment. Additional customer research mirrored this prioritization.

Our Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey, fielded in September 30 – October 11, 2025, found that environmental concerns declined as a customer priority whereas cost and outage concerns now outweigh sustainability. We also heard many customers share that we have relatively reliable service while others live in areas more impacted by unplanned outages. Quite a few customers that moved here from other regions shared that our power is relatively affordable, but we know many customers face rising energy burdens. As we implement our Strategic Plan, we will continue to engage customers and communities so that our work continues to be guided by their lived experiences.

What We Heard

Residential customers and community members stressed that achieving a just transition to a clean energy future requires removing systemic barriers, improving access to benefits, and showing how our work connects to personal wellbeing and community health. They asked City Light to expand culturally relevant education and outreach, strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations, co-design solutions that reflect local priorities, and engage youth to build pathways into green jobs. They also want us to continue focusing on offering ways customers can save money and energy.

Stakeholders want us to ensure we have enough power supply to meet rising demand driven by building electrification, electric vehicle (EV) charging, and new development. They emphasized that maintaining reliability is their highest priority and that affordability must be balanced with the need for long-term resource adequacy, grid resiliency, and responsible environmental action. Stakeholders expressed strong support for demand-side management and other efforts to promote stability. They also stressed the importance of improved access to energy data and having the flexibility to adopt emerging technologies such as solar and EV infrastructure.

How We Can Be Responsive

We are facing unprecedented challenges in the energy sector, and community members want us to take a more systemic and inclusive approach to our work:

- Strengthen internal coordination to improve customer experience and service delivery
- Expand education and awareness through inclusive, culturally relevant, and sustained engagement
- Foster mutually beneficial partnerships with community-based organizations
- Co-design programs and investments with communities to ensure alignment with their needs
- Engage with youth and create pathways into green jobs

SUMMARY

As a result of our community engagement approach, customers had a deeper understanding of our work, and we had a deeper understanding of their priorities. We also fostered trust with our customers and built relationships with community partners and stakeholders.

By incorporating community feedback into our Strategic Plan and other City Light planning efforts, we are better positioned to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes and be more accountable to our customers. As we implement the 2027-2032 Strategic Plan, we will continue to engage with customers and community partners to integrate their input into our work.

Attachment 1: Community Engagement Overview

CUSTOMER RESEARCH

Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey

Participants: 600 residential customers

Methodology: Seattle City Light began the Residential Customer Satisfaction Longitudinal Study in 2021. This survey helps us measure customer experience trends and supports the Strategic Plan and operational and communications improvements. A random representative group of respondents were contacted via home phone (to take the survey over the phone) or via cellphone (sent a text with a link to take the survey online). We expanded the survey from 8 to 14 languages to increase accessibility—14% of respondents completed the survey in a language beyond English (up 4% from the 2023 survey).

Customer Participation Insights Study

Participants: 884 residential customers and 226 business customers

Methodology: Respondents were first sent an email with link to the online survey. Respondents who had not responded received a follow-up telephone call. We worked with the Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons to ensure the surveys reflected input from highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations. The surveys were translated into Amharic, Mandarin, Spanish, and Vietnamese for both residential and business customers. We also supplemented the s gather qualitative insights into customer participation in City Light programs and services

- **Residential Customers:** We hosted 3 focus groups (2 in English and 1 in Spanish) with 24 residential customers and completed 20 follow-up interviews with survey respondents.
- **Commercial & Industrial Customers:** We hosted 3 focus groups (2 in English and 1 in Mandarin) with 17 business customers and completed 25 follow-up interviews with survey respondents.
- **Trade Allies:** Completed 10 interviews with residential trade allies. The goal of these interviews was to identify the interest levels of trade allies in potential new products and services to be offered to residential customers.

City Light Strategic Plan Feedback Tool

Participants: 785 community members

Methodology: Customers had an opportunity to share how they would prioritize reliability, affordability, and the environment and provide other input. We connected with community members at community events and through City Light's communications channels (e.g. social media, newsletter, etc.). We also partnered with Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons to gather feedback in multiple languages.

Customer QualBoards:

Participants: 35 residential customers

Methodology: We conducted a three-day online focus group with 35 customers, which included broad representation across Seattle and our franchise communities. We oversampled customers traditionally underrepresented in surveys including people who are BIPOC and younger respondents.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS

- **South Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA):** Participated in a SPNA monthly meeting.
- **Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC):** Joined an IAC standing meeting.
- **Disability Commission Meeting:** Attended the Disability Commission's standing meeting.
- **City Light Intern Focus Group:** Hosted a learning session with City Light interns, who are youth/young adults engaged in the energy sector.
- **Community Liaison Focus Groups:** Hosted two learning sessions with 22 Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons.
- **Community Partner Conversations:** Hosted two focus groups with seven people who have conducted engagement with diverse communities on behalf of the utility.
- **Human Services Department Community Coordinators Focus Group:** Met with 14 Human Service Department Community Connectors, who work as navigators at area food banks. Participants provided recommendations for helping energy burdened communities.
- **University of Washington Master of Social Work Focus Group:** We interviewed 14 UW Master of Social Work students, who have experience enrolling people in affordability programs. Participants provided recommendations for helping energy burdened communities.

COMMUNITY EVENTS²

- **P-Patch Earth Day Celebration** (District 3: Central District)
- **Duwamish River Community Coalition Job Fair** (District 1: South Park)
- **Chinatown-International District Celebration** (District 2: Chinatown-International District)
- **Byrd Barr Place Block Party** (District 3: Central District)
- **SeaTac Summer Night** (Franchise City)
- **Lake City Summer Fest and Parade** (District 5: Lake City)
- **Othello International Festival** (District 2: Othello)
- **Yesler Back 2 School Fair** (District 2: Yesler)
- **Celebrate Shoreline** (Franchise City)
- **Big Day of Play** (District 2: Rainer Beach)
- **Rainier Beach Back 2 School Bash** (District 2: Rainier Beach)
- **Tukwila Community Play Day** (Franchise City)
- **Senior Resource Fair** (District 4: Magnuson Park)
- **One Seattle Community Resource Fair** (District 7: Downtown)
- **Ballard Library Resource Fair** (District 6: Ballard)
- **Utility Resource Summit** (Franchise City)
- **Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections Home Fair** (District 2: Hillman City)

² Nine of the 17 events were conducted jointly with the Utility Assistance Programs.

Attachment 2: Stakeholder and Employee Engagement Overview

BUSINESS CUSTOMER AND STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

- **Quarterly Key Customer Meeting:** We presented an update on the strategic planning process and gathered input from our business customers at the quarterly meeting in June 2025.
- **Annual Key Customer Forum:** We hosted this annual forum that brought together approximately 80 representatives from our largest and most engaged customers. A moderated panel discussion with subject matter experts provided additional context on key initiatives, and customers participated in leader-facilitated tabletop discussions focused on collaboration and evolving business needs. Initial feedback from attendees was positive, with many expressing their appreciation for the transparency and opportunity to engage directly with City Light leadership.
- **Building Owner and Managers Association (BOMA):** 25 members participated in a briefing on the Strategic Plan. BOMA members emphasized the importance of reliability, grid resiliency, and rate predictability. They also noted the importance of partnering with building owners to support their efforts to comply with clean energy legislation.
- **Franchise Cities:** Hosted a meeting with 10 Franchise City representatives to provide an update on our Strategic Plan. Representatives asked about planned updates to Utility Assistance qualification and efforts City Light is taking to connect community members with affordability resources. They also asked about how we are planning to help them work through the City Light process for infrastructure projects in their jurisdictions.
- **Northwest Energy Coalition (NWECC):** We presented to 52 attendees at the NWECC Caucus, which represents a mix of NWECC employees, policy organizations, energy companies, and other electric utilities. Discussion focused on how we are managing cost pressures and ways we can mitigate them with demand-side solutions. They also inquired about Skagit relicensing and our plans for expanding energy resources.
- **Integrated Resource Plan Advisory Panel:** In 2025, we conducted 4 meetings with representatives from local nonprofits, government partners, and energy providers on our long-term load forecast and assessment of energy resource needs to inform City Light's strategic planning efforts.
- **Energy Efficiency Strategy In-Depth Interviews:** We hosted conversations with representatives from District, Emerald Cities Collective, NW Energy Coalition, Spark NW, and four (4) trade allies on energy efficiency and demand response to inform City Light's strategic planning efforts.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Operations All-Hands Meetings

City Light leadership attended all-hands meetings at the South Service Center, Skagit Hydroelectric Project, and Boundary Hydroelectric Project, as well as a Joint Operations management meeting. At these meetings we heard about a range of issues including technology, training, and process

improvements. Operations staff also expressed a desire for continued communication about strategy and an interest in breaking down silos across the organization.

Strategic Planning Workshops

City Light leadership also conducted two-day workshops for each of the six focus areas. Each workshop included cross-functional representation of 30-40 staff from all levels of the organization. During the workshops, participants co-developed bodies of work that would support each of the 20 outcomes. These bodies of work are setting the stage for how we will accomplish our Strategic Plan goals and outcomes.