

**Public Works and Utilities Division
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS**

STRATEGIC PLAN

June 15, 2007

Department Mission Statement: Act to protect and enhance Spokane's environment such that human health and economic development are sustainable.

- Assist City departments, businesses, and individuals in understanding and complying with environmental regulations.
- Assist City environmental data gathering, maintenance, and reporting with emphasis on quality control and assurance.
- Promote communication, understanding, and cooperation between the City, environmental interests, and economic development interests.

Key Customers:

- Division Director - Public Works & Utilities
- Utility Directors
- Regulatory Entities (e.g. Ecology, Health, SCAPCA, SRHD, EPA)
- City Staff, Citizens, Businesses, City Environmental NGO's & City Utility Customers
- Other Local Government Staff, Citizens, NGO's & Businesses

Definition of Product/Service:

Within the constraints of available staff time, budgets, and City priority, provide the following services to key customers in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible:

1. Assist utilities and other operating departments in reducing contaminant emissions and maintaining compliance with environmental regulations
2. Produce an annual Drinking Water Technical Water Quality Report
3. Coordinate & Assist with Water & Energy Conservation Efforts
4. Cooperatively provide assistance and training on environmental compliance topics (e.g. Critical Materials, Wellhead Protection, Aquifer Protection, Water Conservation, Phase II Stormwater)
5. Assist in planning & coordinating water testing, reporting & data management
6. Ensure Dangerous Waste handling and reporting compliance including assisting in environmental assessment/ cleanup / and reporting
7. Assist and cooperate in policy and code development, regional studies, and planning processes (e.g. Watershed Planning, Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup, Climate Protection) having an environmental nexus
8. Respond to citizen, business, NGO, and regulator environmental inquiries
9. Maintain and update City environmental records, including:
 - contaminated site data (both public & private),

- environmental databases (wells, water testing results, aquifer water levels, WTE & landfill flare air emissions, & greenhouse gas emissions inventory), and
- environmental models (City's Spokane Aquifer Model, WTE Risk Assessment Model; DO TMDL Model)

Strategic Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT):

Strengths:

1. Staff has a wide range of experience in local and regional environmental issues and a wide circle of environmental contacts both regulatory, business, NGO, and citizen. These resources are brought to bear in resolving new problems as they come up.
2. Staff has analytical chemistry, microbiology, and wastewater process control experience, along with strong biological science training. These qualifications provide a solid technical foundation that assists in environmental negotiations and problem solving.
3. Having been in place since the late 1970's and directly involved with City utility environmental challenges, the program has maintained & has available significant historical environmental data.
4. The Program focuses on holistic environmental solutions.
5. Core Competencies
 - Environmental issue communication and negotiation
 - Water quality testing quality assurance
 - Environmental data management

Weaknesses:

1. Staffing and on-going commitments cause us to be responsive rather than proactive most of the time.
2. Filing and records management is not what it should be.
3. While effort is made to respond to regulator requests, there is a request backlog.
4. Staff lacks the depth of knowledge regarding environmental regulations that comes from specialization and lack legal backgrounds that might be important in understanding intricacies of the regulatory framework.

Opportunities:

1. Unmet public environmental concerns elicit political response and there is no end in sight to causes for environmental concern. The challenge is to find meaningful ways to address the concerns before they turn political when possible, and in any case assist the City in finding resolution to the problems.
2. Climate Protection - addressing this issue has the potential to touch a wide segment of the community. It is an issue that aligns with State priorities and can be an economic development plus. It is a political lightning rod but also a very real environmental risk.

3. Conservation - Staff have been helping coordinate conservation issues between the utilities, the Council Office, and other interest groups. There is plenty of opportunity to take on more in this regard where it meets utility and political desires. Time available is the restraint.
4. Phase II Stormwater requirements - Environmental Programs has previously been identified as a player in meeting the Phase II Stormwater requirements. This role needs clearer definition.

Threats:

1. The greatest threat is that the City will fail to meet one of a growing number of environmental legal requirements without prior warning that the risk is faced.
2. Environmental Staff could come out on the wrong side of a politicized environmental issue.
3. Environmental Staff can lose credibility in miss-interpreting regulator enforcement intent.
4. The Program will be hurt significantly with the loss of any further Environmental Staff and given pay, retirement potential, and competing employment opportunities this could occur with little time to mitigate the impact.
5. In situations where dollars are short, it is sometimes easiest to put environmental issues/costs on the back burner.
6. The City's departmental structure can impede Environmental Programs success when departments choose to be less cooperative.

Key Success Factors (KSF):

1. Meet the needs of the Division Director of Public Works and Utilities regarding environmental issues and involving regulatory compliance, regional environmental planning, and new environmental issue response.
2. Meet the needs of the utility Directors involving regulatory compliance, regional environmental planning, and new environmental issue response.
3. Respond to environmental regulatory agency requests and statements of concern.
4. Respond to citizen environmental questions & concerns (includes City staff, business and NGO interests).
5. Maintain City environmental documents and data and provide reasonable response to requests for same.

Goals and Strategies:

GOAL #1 Ongoing Re-assessment of priorities and re-alignment as necessary to better meet customer needs. (Mayors priority on Customer Service) (SWOT – KSF)

Strategies

- Directly Review Environmental Programs Priorities with the Director of the Public Works & Utilities Division and Utility Department Directors (by 9/1/07).
- Survey key customer needs & priorities (by 11/1/07).
- Review current priorities with national environmental standards of practice (by 1/1/08).

GOAL #2 Assure clear two-way communication on environmental issues with the administration, council, and other customers. (Mayor's priority on Customer Service) (SWOT – KSF)

Strategies

- Seek organizational change such that the Environmental Programs Manager reports directly to the Division Director of Public Works & Utilities.
- Coordinate Environmental communications with the Communications Department

GOAL #3 Address records management issues such that more Environmental Analyst and Environmental Programs Manager time is available to address environmental issues. (Mayor's priority on Quality of Life) (SWOT – Weakness/KSF)

Strategies

- Seek secretarial assistance to address the records management issue.
- Perhaps share a secretary with Capitol Programs.

GOAL #4 Provide increased levels of service related to Stormwater Phase II NPDES Permitting, Water & Energy conservation, and Climate Protection, while helping assure continued levels of service in other areas. (Mayor's priority on Quality of Life) (SWOT – Opportunity)

Strategies

- Advocate the hiring of another Environmental Analyst to generally assist and help pick up activities in stormwater, conservation, and climate protection.
- It is important just in terms of providing some certainty of continuing at current levels of service to bring a new Environmental Analyst on board.

GOAL #5 Have in place wellhead protection zoning by mid-2008. (Mayor's priority on Quality of Life) (SWOT – Threats)

Strategies

- Continue efforts with the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board to reach purveyor consensus on desires for Wellhead Protection.
- Coordinate SAJB desires with the Aquifer Protection Council
- Draft and coordinate a document that describes the desires vetted through SAJB & APC (by 8/1/07).

- Draft agreement language and seek Land Use Regulator approval to enter into a regional wellhead protection zoning update process with the SAJB and APC recommendations as starting points (by 9/1/07).

GOAL #6 Complete an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions (by 1/1/08) and a management plan to meet administration and council objectives of 7% reduction below 1990 emission levels (by 8/1/08). (Mayor's priority on Quality of Life) (SWOT – Opportunity/KSF)

Strategies

- Identify the necessary data and get it.
- As necessary seek clarification of objectives and desired processes to define and achieve goals with the Division Director of Public Works and Utilities as the first contact.
- Use intern/summer help to maximum extent practical and be prepared to bring another on when the first leaves in June.
- Use the ICLEI provided software.