



Advanced Meter Project Customer Benefits and Capabilities Summary

Advanced Meters will provide our customers with greater control, choice, and convenience. Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) Products and Services surveys conducted in 2016, 2018, and 2020 showed strong interest from our residential customers for the benefits outlined in this summary. The required capability of each benefit is enabled by advanced metering. By the end of 2022, we will update 180,000 electric and 107,000 water meters with digital technology that provides these new benefits and modern capabilities to all of our customers.




Customer Benefits Over Time

✓ = Capability meets a customer request

○ = Request not met

	Benefit	Customer Request	Current Capabilities – Prior to Advanced Metering	Future Capabilities – With Advanced Metering
Cost Savings Benefits	1. Monthly Billing 	“I want to pay every month for the actual power and water I use.”	Available for Select Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most residential customers are on bi-monthly billing and receive a bill once every two months, based on one meter read. ✓ Most small businesses, general class customers, and industrial customers are billed each month, based on one meter read. ○ TPU’s Budget Billing offers customers the option to pay a consistent, estimated bill each month based on an annual average, recalculated every 12 months. 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All customers will receive a bill once every month, typically based on multiple meter reads. ✓ Customer feedback has indicated most people prefer monthly billing since billing amounts are smaller and more manageable than larger bills once every two months—especially for 5-service City of Tacoma customers who have larger bills. ○ Budget Billing will still be available for interested customers.
	2. PrePay 	“I want to pay for the power I use in advance, when I have funds available and to avoid large bills.”	Unavailable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TPU previously piloted a pay-as-you-go service called “PayGo.” This pilot ended in 2019. 	Available for Residential Electric Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ PrePay helps customers with irregular paychecks manage their bills by empowering them to pay-as-they-go. ✓ PrePay will be a voluntary pay-as-you-go service.



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Cost Savings Benefits	3. Selectable Bill Due Date 	“I want to choose the specific day of the month my utility bill is due.”	Partially Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers may select an alternate due date, choosing from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing bill due date or One other alternative date based on when their meter is read. 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers will be able to choose a specific day of the month for their specific bill to be due. Selectable bill due dates help customers with fixed incomes by allowing them to choose a bill due date that coincides with their income or payment schedules.
	4. Expanded Ways to Save – Detailed Water and Power Usage Data 	“I want to know how much water I use each day and each month.”	Unavailable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-monthly meter reads provide total usage during a two-month period. 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hourly, daily, and monthly usage information will be provided via a customer web portal, based on more frequent automated meter reads. 15 min. and/or 5 min. data will be available for electric customers & select water customers. Providing detailed usage data increases a customer’s ability to save money, water, and energy.
Modernization Benefits	5. Automated Meter Reading 	“I want my bill to be as accurate as possible.”	Partially Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-monthly, manual meter reads provide total usage during a two-month period. Billing is most often based on a single manual meter read. 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Billing will be based on multiple automated meter reads with a reduced chance of human error. More accurate, timely bills are based on near real-time data that show where and when unnecessary usage is taking place.


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	6. Easier Move in, Move Out, Reconnection	"I would like to connect my service without someone visiting my home."	Unavailable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connections, disconnections, and reconnections generally require a field visit by TPU staff. 	Available for Most Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remote turn-on and turn-off of residential electric service saves time since it requires no field visits. ✓ Residential electric reconnections occur almost instantly for customers who are disconnected. ✓ In some instances, water customers can utilize a virtual disconnection or reconnection, where the billing account is disconnected, and the service remains physically on. ○ A minimal number of field visits are still required, depending on the circumstance.
	7. Enhanced Personal Privacy	"I want utility staff visiting my property less often."	Unavailable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meter reading staff are required to physically visit a meter to record a read. TPU staff may periodically visit the meter for maintenance. 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No need for regular physical access to read a customer meter since meters are read remotely. ✓ No need for businesses to schedule a meter read due to challenging meter locations. ○ TPU staff may periodically visit the meter for maintenance.

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	8. Faster Outage and Leak Detection 	“I would like to know if I have a water leak or power outage.”	Partially Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tacoma Power’s outage portal allows customers to easily report a power outage online or via text message. Customers can choose to receive updates on their phone or via email. ○ Outage information is based on customer reporting or regional outage event correlation. ○ Water leaks can take months or years to identify. 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Leak and outage information can be detected by the meter, verified, and provided directly to the impacted customer. ✓ Locating and fixing issues speeds service restoration, whether it’s a power outage or a water leak at a customer location. ✓ Tacoma Power’s outage portal will continue to be available.
	9. Improved Safety 	“I want to know and prevent any safety concerns related to my utility service.”	Partially Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Meter reading staff perform routine observations of metering equipment for customer and employee safety. ○ Meter reading staff must physically visit a meter to record a read, which increases unnecessary customer exposure to staff and vice-versa (e.g., dog bites). 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New electric meters will provide high-temperature alarms and automated disconnect switches to help prevent fires and improve safety. ✓ Installing advanced meters will allow the utility to inspect every meter for customer and employee safety. ✓ In the long term, Advanced Metering reduces unnecessary customer exposure to staff and vice-versa (e.g., dog bites).

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	10. Reduced Environmental Impact 	“I want to minimize my impact on the environment.”	Partially Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-person meter reads and rereads require vehicles with associated emissions and costs. ✓ TPU makes every effort to reduce its carbon footprint through fuel-efficient vehicles and processes. 	Available for All Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Less in-person meter reads and rereads, plus leak and outage detection, mean fewer vehicles on the road resulting in reduced emissions and associated costs. ✓ TPU makes every effort to reduce its carbon footprint through fuel-efficient vehicles and processes.

Advanced Meters are a foundational modernization project. Modernization projects typically build on one another over time. Some customer benefits or data are enabled by advanced metering and delivered/enhanced through related projects (e.g., Customer Engagement Portal).