



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Jackie Flowers, Director, Tacoma Public Utilities
COPY: Economic Development Committee
PRESENTER: Michael Catsi
SUBJECT: Tacoma Public Utilities Economic Development Update
DATE: September 14, 2021

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Please select the type of presentation you will be making to the Council Committee.
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) provides critical resources to communities, including businesses, it serves; providing a foundation for a strong and resilient economy. TPU coordinates with local and regional entities to leverage the region's unique strengths to attract innovation and economic activity resulting in higher quality of life indicators for the region.

BACKGROUND:

Due to COVID, 2020 presented unprecedented challenges for everyone, including our business community. We quickly pivoted to focusing on business retention by assisting in providing resources to our business community. During this time partnerships and collaborations were created and strengthened. The City generously provided CARES funding, in the amount of \$750,000, to assist small businesses with utility assistance. We worked hard to ensure every business that had a pass due balance was aware of the opportunity to apply for these funds. Connecting with the businesses and helping them to apply resulted in the funds being dispersed quickly to businesses in need.

Given COVID, there was a slower stream of business prospects interested in locating in our service areas, but we continue to make connections and showcase the strengths of our region. These strengths include competitive rates. Among port cities, Tacoma Power and Tacoma Water are competitively priced. TPU developed and implemented, what is likely, the first electrofuels tariff in the country. This innovative and unique tariff is designed to attract electrofuel companies, such as those developing green hydrogen. This rate has proven effective at gaining interest from electrofuel companies.

Overall, while economic development has been slower, we are retaining businesses and focusing on business expansion. In addition, there are numerous prospects including beverage distribution, food products, plastic extrusion, biodiesel, call centers, and others industries interested in locating in our service area. We work closely with these companies to ensure their utilities needs are met with ease, and to promote the benefits of locating in this region.

ISSUE:

We are addressing the issue of economic development as the economy struggles to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.



FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION: This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.