

# City of Glendale

## Citizen Task Force on Water and Sewer

### Detail Notes from Facilitated Sessions

#### 08/20/12

#### Urban Irrigation & Billing - Policy Issues

##### Group A

- A) Keep irrigation.
- B) Irrigation pays more.
- C) Repair Irrigation as needed.
- D) Share repair cost with SRP?
- E) Protect historic district irrigation.
- F) Change to quarterly billing maybe reduces staff demands.
- G) Disclose payment options on bill.
- H) Upgrade payment website
- I) Extend lobby hours by varying work hours.
- J) Eliminate "From the Heart"
- K) Kiosk is a great idea!
- L) Put voluntary demographics on bill

##### Group B

- A) People not paying fair share with irrigation.
- B) Transparency re: disproportionate costs
- C) Managing other departments in same manner?
- D) General Fund money allocations unrelated operations???
- E) Enterprise Funds paying for irrigation deficit? Other funding for historic preservation other than enterprise fund?
- F) Accelerate kiosk install
- G) Reduction in hours = Reduction in service
- H) No cost savings from reduced hours

##### Group C

- A) Irrigation vs. regular payments – are the differences worth the effort?
- B) Is there a possibility for SRP to take over the system completely?
- C) Not decrease in customer service hours – people have to o may flex hours as it is? Training time really necessary?

- D) Customer service hours – Shift/extended by one hour earlier/later/ (8am to 6pm or 7am to 5pm) for the working adult.
- E) What is the cost of the infrastructure reinstall repair when goes completely?
- F) Why force people to use more expensive water? – what is loss of home values?
- G) Irrigation properties should have rate increase to keep up with rising costs.
- H) Kiosks don't add if can't find partners, to foot the costs
- I) What does the city get changed to use credit card payments?
- J) Can you legally pass that credit card cost onto the credit card user?
- K) Accept debit card payments only instead
- L) City should encourage more e-bill payments to save on postage
- M) Review equalizer payments (Same payment each month) to make it easier like APS.
- N) Education program on the irrigation issues – no idea until tonight.
- O) Customers service hours – Services are getting reduced – Careful study needed before drop in service.
- P) Email/phone notification to better manage usage
- Q) Why are phone calls so numerous? What are the issues dealing with?
- R) Disconnections – too long of a process. Money and time of staff spent on the process
- S) No system to handle foreclosures – access to that information, time to review
- T) Review rate structure for Urban Irrigation – for equity.
- U) Collection process (to Council now) be able to collect bad debts.
- V) What about evaporation of water how factored into sewer system/costs?

#### Group D

- A) Merchant fees – renegotiable these with providers to save money?
- B) Read meters quarterly and adjust billing accordingly
- C) Increase usage of irrigation program to affect costs
- D) Make irrigation program self sufficient
- E) Turn irrigation program over to SRP
- F) Alternative schedules 2 or 3 days per week to allow for training.
- G) Campaigning to increase bill pay electronically
- H) Track collections success rate with city to determine if out sourcing is better?
- I) Improve website – needs to be more customer friendly

#### Group E

- A) Switching from irrigation to potable water would result in too large of a cost increase. The current irrigation owner may not be able to afford.
- B) Subsidize desert landscaping
- C) Charge higher “penalties” rate to those non-conforming properties with weeds etc.
- D) Mature landscaping aesthetic benefits outweigh the cost.
- E) If irrigation is to be eliminated, give a reasonable warning example: 5, 10, or 20 years to affected properties.

- F) Upon re-conveyance of title, discontinue irrigation option.
- G) Explore possibilities of passing line repair cost to users.
- H) Who pays for stuffers? – Billing
- I) Eliminate some inserts keep “Connection” and “water bill” only. – Billing
- J) Salary to operating cost ratio should be examined.
- K) Identify “slow periods” close the periods to public use that time for training
- L) Provide incentive to pay bill on line (On line billing.)
- M) Train staff in shifts without cutting hours open to public.

Customer Service Hour Notes:

- A) Consider weekend hours
- B) Staggered shifts
- C) Lobby closes at 5pm – should be open until 5:30/6pm for those who work 8am to 5pm.
- D) Frustration/upset customers trying to meet deadlines of 5pm.
- E) What are the demographics – Same bill to residents & businesses?
- F) Are City of Glendale rates similar to other cities?
- G) What is 9am-10am lobby traffic information? What is the drop-off?
- H) Is there a cost savings for the training time for staff?
- I) Disconnections for foreclosures, renters, can you get advanced notice of foreclosures?
- J) What are the fees for disconnect/reconnect?
- K) Cost of kiosk? Who pays for kiosk? Can it be contracted out?
- L) Auto pay through credit cards?
- M) What amount of accounts that go to collections go unpaid?
- N) Reduction of hours to lobby not staff work time? Proposal is misleading
- O) Web input – glitches to name input field
- P) Account number is required for on-line interactions. Need option to look up by address instead of account number.
- Q) Charge a fee to credit card payments
- R) Is customer base going up or down?
- S) Electronic payments – glitches and time to fix applied to correct accounts fix miss appropriations?