



## Utility Advisory Committee

### Smart Meter Customer Feedback

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#### **Title**

Smart Meter Customer Feedback

#### **Recommended Action**

Provide briefing

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

The Drinking Water Utility completed its conversion of aging residential and commercial water meters to automated meters in mid-2015. The new meters offer features that accommodate water use tracking and subsequent conservation. Additionally, efforts continue to improve the City's utility bill to an educational and conservation perspective. The Utility Advisory Committee will discuss use of the technology, potential other uses, and utility billing practices.

#### **Staff Contact:**

Bill Sampson, Utility Billing Supervisor, Administrative Services, 360.753.8473

#### **Background and Analysis:**

The new Itron automated water meters provide electronic reporting of water use to utility billing staff. In addition to generating water bills, the technology can track water consumption use on a daily or hourly basis.

Currently, water operations staff tracks water use overnight, a time of typically low consumption, in order to identify potential water leaks at homes and businesses. The program is run overnight and generates a list of suspicious high water users. In turn, utility staff notifies homes and businesses of potential leak problems. Customers are consistently impressed and appreciative of this service.

In 2016, the utility is moving forward with purchasing tools from Itron to allow customers to readily track their water use. Additional analytical tools will allow staff to document consumption trends by customer, user class, neighborhood, and so forth.

Changes to utility bills are also being considered. The bills could incorporate more individual account information such as water consumption/conservation. The City is also considering issuing utility bills once a month instead of every other month. There are cost implications to both of these actions.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests:**

N/A

**Options:**

N/A.

**Financial Impact:**

The customer tracking and analytic tools cost \$77,000 with annual support fees of \$24,700. Changing the City billing system to a monthly basis nearly doubles the current costs.