Finance Department – Stakeholder Interview Questions

1.1 Attendees – July 24th, 2017
Finance: Andy Cherullo, Susan Calderon, Teresa Sedmak, Tina Hemphill
Environmental Services (ES): Chris Johnson, Shane Pettit

1.2 Interview Questions

1. What does your vision for Tacoma’s environment look like in 20 years?
   • More public space, and more utilization
   • More “place making” downtown, increased vibrancy
   • Get away from past stigmas, and market our cool things
   • Build momentum of the last 20 years with our development, Foss, etc.

2. What do you view as the biggest strengths and weaknesses of ES?
   • Strength
     o Well run, efficient, effective, and work well together
     o Have best practices
     o Great programs (eg, Tagro)
     o Good service
     o Good long term capital plan
     o Willing to try new things (eg, glass containers pilot)
     o Eyes on every parcel with solid waste
     o Separate sewer system
     o ES is willing to move quickly
   • Weakness
     o Not everyone knows our services
     o Need a
     o Not part of TPU
     o Succession & budgetary knowledge of next management level
     o Tree canopy
     o ES is willing to move quickly, but when doing so it doesn’t always get input from stakeholders

3. How could communications and cooperation be improved between our departments?
   • ES could better use Finance as a resource that includes a broad set of services
   • Having Finance involved early on can help ES implement better
   • Increased utilization, communication and reaching out between ES and accounting
   • ES & Finance building bridges at all levels in our departments, not just at the director’s office
   • Finance can help review processes (eg, warehouse controls to prevent audit findings)
4. How could ES better serve its customers?
   - Have a touring EnviroTinyHouse to increase awareness of concepts that EnviroHouse is touting
   - Continually look at reducing costs (utilities have more stable revenue sources, but think as if it is not going to continuously go up)
   - Have better controls and additional scrubs on financial information provided
   - Show the rate model again. Give a better understanding of what the rate model does, how it works, how it informs decisions (eg, reserve levels), demonstrate increased confidence in the rate model
   - Preserve institutional knowledge from retirements

5. Is there anything your department has planned in the next 20 years which could impact Environmental Services, such as major initiatives, policies, or codes?
   - Reviewing financial policies/reserves related to risk levels