

ENERGY DATA ACCELERATOR



Introduction

In 2008, Better Building Energy Data Accelerator partners Seattle and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) began the stakeholder engagement process to enable whole-building data access for multi-family and commercial building owners locally. As one of the first local governments to pursue data access in support of benchmarking, Seattle city government worked with local utilities to ensure building owners had access to data to support local benchmarking efforts in 2012. The local stakeholder engagement efforts also resulted in valuable feedback for future iterations of the data access offering from PSE and could serve as valuable input to other local governments embarking on their own efforts.

Impetus for Energy Data Access

With a statewide transparency legislation in place, the building owners needed easy access to whole-building energy usage data and utilities were asked to devise systems to provide the information. Within this context, following the recommendations of the Existing Building Committee of the Green Building Task Force, the City of Seattle decided to adopt an

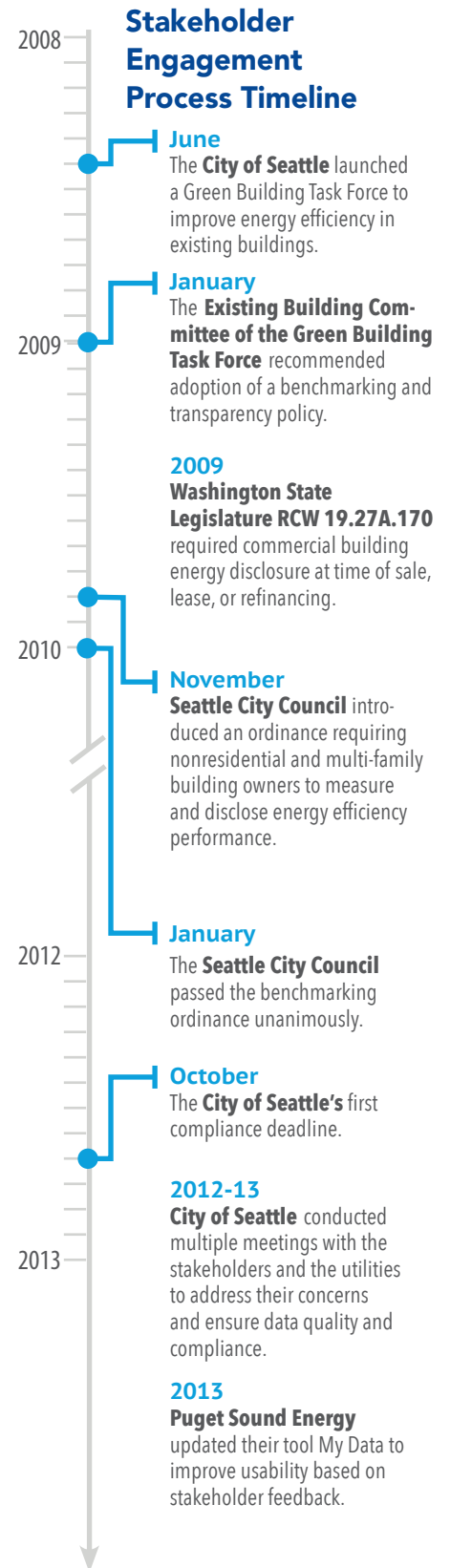
energy conservation ordinance requiring building owners to measure and report energy performance as a component of their Green Building Capital Initiative. In order to enable compliance, local utilities each undertook a separate implementation pathway. PSE provided strong leadership to make aggregated data

“Engaging the stakeholder in public meetings allows the utilities to hear the concerns and develop a data access solution with those in mind.”

—Jayson Antonoff



Institute for Market Transformation (IMT), 2015

available to its customers and also developed a portal for auto-upload via web-services of energy data into ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®, reducing potential entry errors.



Understanding Major Stakeholders and Their Key Concerns

The main stakeholders who were involved in data access in the City of Seattle and their key concerns are listed below:

Stakeholders	Key Issues	Solutions
 <p>Seattle City Lights Puget Sound Energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Utilities lacked an existing framework and example to base their solutions on. ▶ Utilities had a short implementation time frame to meet the needs of the city's first benchmarking timeframe. ▶ Utilities considered whether to create a common portal shared among utilities or individual portals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Utilities internally identified tool design solutions. ▶ Utilities developed individual portals aligned with their existing systems.
 <p>Building Owners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Building owners were concerned about potential additional forms. ▶ Building owners wanted a coordinated approach from the three utilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The authorization process varied by utility, however administrative requirements were reduced by automatically transferring data from year to year.

Determining the Forum for Stakeholder Engagement

The city of the Seattle's main stakeholders, the utility companies, were on board from the beginning. To meet the city's needs, each utility worked internally to create a solution that fit within their existing systems. As a consequence, the process for customers to access data differed between utilities.

Once the data access solutions were developed by the utilities, the City of Seattle engaged extensively with the stakeholders to ensure compliance and high participation. The stakeholder engagement process involved:

- ▶ A series of large stakeholder meetings involving key organizations including U.S. EPA, NEEA, NWECA to discuss data access, benchmarking, and transparency.
- ▶ Meetings for stakeholder to voice their concerns to the utilities .
- ▶ Follow-up meetings were held with city staff and utilities to discuss resolutions to building owner concerns.
- ▶ The city and utility co-ordinated and provided a helpdesk, as a platform to the users for support and feedback in order to improve the participation and quality of data.

As a result of the successful stakeholder engagement, Seattle received valuable feedback which was instrumental in improving and updating the utilities' data access tools. Additionally, the utilities developed similar streamlined authorization processes to facilitate data access and improve customer service.

"Ease of accessing utility data, especially for buildings with multiple tenants, is critical."

—Nicole Ballinger
Outreach Advisor, Energy Benchmarking & Reporting Program, City of Seattle, 2014

"By increasing the amount of information available to building owners and occupants, disclosure of building energy performance would help identify opportunities for energy efficiency gains, encourage voluntary upgrades, and create a mechanism for market differentiation."

—Green Building Task Force
2008

Energy Data Accelerator

Through the Better Buildings Energy Data Accelerator (EDA), local governments and utilities joined forces to make whole-building energy data access easier for building owners to benchmark their buildings. Over the span of two years, the experiences and best practices discussed and deployed by EDA Partners have been distilled into a toolkit of resources designed to guide local governments, utilities, and other stakeholders that may seek to design a whole-building data access solution in their jurisdictions.