



Dear Colleague,

The E3 Local Government and Utilities planning committee has crafted the attached DRAFT E3 Local Government and Utilities (LGU) Sector Strategy based on input gathered at several regional E3 planning meetings and follow-up discussions with local government and utility agencies last year. This draft will be improved and posted to the E3 website after we received broader feedback and guidance from local governments and utilities from across the state of Washington.

The primary document includes a one page program logic model overview, and sketches goals, strategies and actions that show how the local government and utility sector can best contribute to the state E3 plan and education for sustainable communities. As an appendix, the document includes a background assessment of the status of environmental and sustainability education within, and the unique resources and challenges, of our sector.

We're very excited about the E3 process and believe we've gotten a good start on our sector strategy draft, thanks to the contributions made by those of you who attended our brainstorming session in June.

We plan to hold the comment period open until March 15, then integrate suggestions into an updated version that we'll publish on the E3 website by March 30. We know your guidance and suggestions for improvements will make this draft stronger and more useful. Please take some time to review the draft and give us feedback at www.surveymonkey.com/s/VTNC8ML.

The questions on the survey address questions such as:

- Does it make sense to align to five LGU goals the existing five E3 goals?
- Is the breadth of strategy reasonable for what can be accomplished as a coordinated effort among such a broad array of actors?
- Are there missing elements that, if included, could be additional 'quick wins' that could help build momentum?

Also, if you like what you see and would like to express support for the scope and direction proposed in the document, please feel free to simply endorse it so that we know you agree with the basic construct.

Thank you for your support for education linking economy and environment and for helping inform this strategy. We look forward to hearing back from you and working together in the future to bring these recommendations to fruition as E3 launches into full implementation mode in 2010. Look for further updates on that from the E3 office later in March.

Sincerely,

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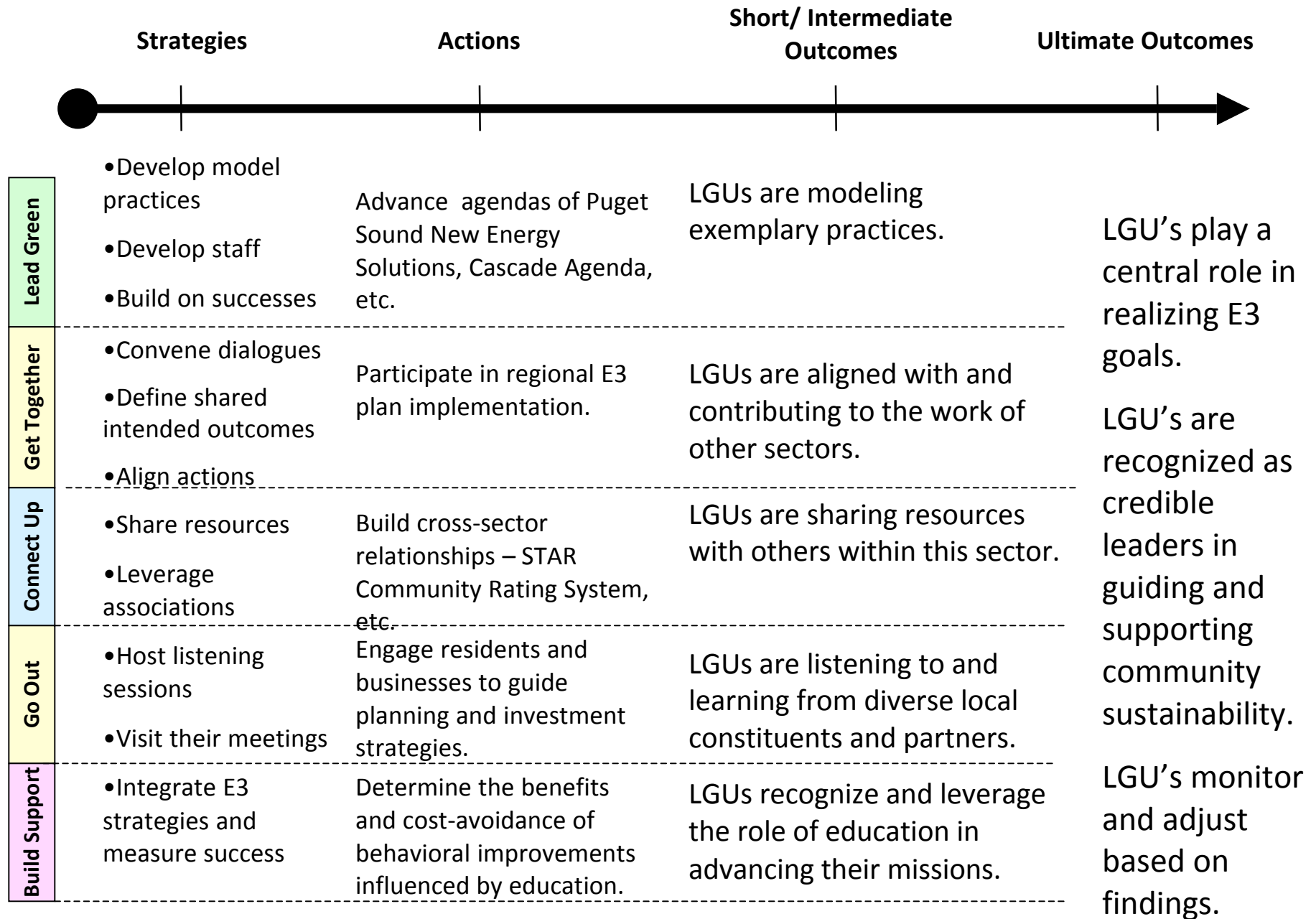
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E3 - Local Gov't and Utilities (LGU) Sector – Program Logic Summary v2-19-10





Education • Environment • Economy

Local Government and Utilities Sector- Strategy

November 2009



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E3 Washington Mission Statement

Our Mission is to optimize environmental education for everyone who lives, learns, works, and plays in Washington State—to create thriving environments for schools, communities, and businesses.

E3 Washington Vision Statement

E3 Washington works toward a system of education for sustainable communities by inspiring educational networks, public policies, community behaviors and business practices that support sustainable, healthy and thriving environments and economies for everyone.

Goals- Summary

Goal 1: LGUs serve as models of sustainable practices and sustainability education. (E3 Goal: Lead Green)

Goal 2: Strong networks and partnerships between LGUs and other sectors within geographic regions promote sustainability education and sustainable communities. (E3 Goal: Get Together)

Goal 3: The LGU sector shares common goals, standards, and methods of defining and measuring sustainability and sustainable education. (E3 Goal: Connect Up)

Goal 4: Within their communities, LGUs reach out to their constituencies to listen and learn, and are valued by the public as resources for sustainability expertise and learning opportunities. (E3 Goal: Go Out)

Goal 5: Internally, LGUs have strong institutional, political, and financial support for developing, delivering, and maintaining effective ongoing sustainability policies, programs and projects. (E3 Goal: Build Support)

Goal 1: LGUs serve as models of sustainable practices and sustainability education. (E3 Goal: Lead Green)

Strategy One

Increase the degree of internal rigor in evaluating sustainability programs.

Approach: Identify sustainability contributions of existing programs and build on them, rather than introducing new proposals which get more scrutiny. Make this internal process part of the model of the shift to sustainable organizations and agencies.

Cull out parts of LGU practice that are not sustainable and improve them. Tweak and do things differently. Ask what are the least sustainable practices and what are the best practices.

Strategy Two

Create “sustainability teams” within each agency to promote internal sustainability policies and practices, e.g. WA Dept of Ecology has such a team made up of volunteer staff members.

By greening and becoming more sustainable as institutions, LGUs can serve as models for other institutions.

Goal 2: Strong networks and partnerships between LGUs and other sectors within geographic regions promote sustainability education and sustainable communities. (E3 Goal: Get Together)

Strategy One

Work with EEA and other E3 sector representatives to develop a statewide model for literacy and practices in environmental, economic, and equity realms. (See also Strategy 3-1.)

The aim should be that E3 participants have a shared sense of what is meant by environmental, economic and equity literacy, the gap between today’s levels and intended future levels and what practices should be demonstrated in this arena.

There needs to be more focus on all three aspects of sustainability: environment, economy, equity. Include social equity part of the triple bottom line. Tell the story with environment at the center and bring in economic and social aspects.

For example, links to economic sustainability include:

- Water conservation brochure that identifies \$\$ saved through conservation.
- Ag Ed sector – educating people about where food comes from and how it is processed
- King County green schools program helps schools know how to reduce waste and save money.
- *Your Money or Your Life* (personal money/life management) with environmental enrichment is an effective course, and a deeper tool than the typical brochure.
- Neighborhood investment that reduces crime and opens up economic opportunity.

Strategy Two

Create a matrix by region showing environmental sustainability programs and services by all sectors.

Include programs, audiences, and desired behaviors, and then analyze gaps. One value of this would be to avoid duplication of message, or contradictory messages, and generally align messages from all sectors. Core messages can be customized for different regions (e.g. recycling services vary across the state).

Strategy Three

Participate in developing education/training opportunities for green career pathways.

Training should include links among education, economy, and equity. Avenues for doing this include, e.g.: consortia, public/private partnerships, universities, government and professional associations).

Review and implement existing and emerging tool kits to insure equity

Goal 3: The LGU sector shares common goals, standards, and methods of defining and measuring sustainability and sustainable education. (E3 Goal: Connect Up)

Strategy One

Identify and define shared intended outcomes for E3 work related to LGUs. (See also Strategy 2-1.)

This will require clarifying the role(s) and responsibilities of the public sector in achieving these intended outcomes. These would be based on a ‘theory of change’ that describes (1) drivers for,

(2) state of, (3) existing efforts, and (4) priority new actions to achieve improved environmental, economic, and equity outcomes. Participants might ask: What do I want the sector to look like from the point of view of sustainability?

Strategy Two

Develop broader collaboration and partnerships within and across the agencies that deliver related local government and utility services, regionally and statewide.

Strategy Three

Align and coordinate existing and potential public sector and utility resources to more collaboratively achieve the intended outcomes of the E3 process in geographic regions of the state and statewide.

Strategy Four

Develop and implement a shared approach to performance management and evaluation of sustainability education by LGUs.

Common training and shared methods and tools will help to manage performance; and track, report on, and respond to findings regarding the degree that public sector and utility sector contributions are achieving their intended outcomes.

For example, common tools could be used to link an E3 performance system with that of related efforts, such as the Washington GMAP, Puget Sound Partnership, climate protection efforts, and other local and state-wide monitoring/tracking systems.

Strategy Five

Develop cohesive, sophisticated professional development opportunities for agency employees to learn about the environment, sustainability, and public practices.

Strategy Six

Share information about best practices by LGUs in Washington and elsewhere.

Goal 4: Within their communities, LGUs reach out to their constituents to listen and learn, and are valued by the public as resources for sustainability expertise and learning opportunities. (E3 Goal: Go Out)

Strategy One

Provide a variety of opportunities for interaction between policy makers and staff with citizens and stakeholder groups, so there is a flow of information in all directions.

Strategy Two

In cooperation with local schools and colleges, provide learning opportunities such as mentorships, internships, and service learning.

Strategy Three

Ensure equitable access of services and information; for example using different languages and delivery mechanisms for different populations.

Strategy Four

Use mapping resources to provide information and promote programs, leveraging LGU access to information to tell the story about what is going on demographically, environmentally, economically, etc. in local areas.

Goal 5: Internally, LGUs have strong institutional, political, and financial support for developing, delivering, and maintaining effective ongoing sustainability policies, programs, and projects. (E3 Goal: Build Support)

Strategy One

Integrate E3 education into agency mission, planning, and operations budgets.

Promote the idea that a central function of government is building sustainable communities. Policy makers should understand the importance of their educational role in transitioning to equitable and just communities that are environmentally and economically sustainable and in

improving quality of life for all residents. This can capture the attention of leaders, especially if cost savings can be identified. For example, conserving water and energy limits the need for new supply by finding new ways of addressing demand.

Strategy Two

Identify how education for sustainable communities advances LGU goals and supports basic LGU functions.

To do this, it is important to demonstrate effectiveness in meeting objectives and target audiences. If education can be shown to contribute to LGU goals and mandates, it is more likely to be funded. For example, creek education is less likely to be funded if it is not connected to mandated water quality targets.

Appendix 1



Lay of the Land Concept Paper-

Local Government & Utilities Sector



Local Government and Utilities Sector

Lay of the Land

Programs offered through non-formal institutions foster caring attitudes toward wildlife and respect for our environment; develop critical thinking skills; and nurture the development of ecologically literate citizens.

I. What is the current “lay of the land”? That is, what is the current status of environmental education in this sector? What are the challenges and potential opportunities?

Lay of the Land

State, regional, and local government entities and public and private utilities typically have many ways of advancing and supporting more sustainable communities in Washington state. The sector has broad and deep interfaces with residents, businesses, and non-profit and community-based organizations. Many of these have a direct bearing on land use, transportation, energy, water and solid waste management, law enforcement, public health, and human services.

- Local Governments and Utilities (LGUs) underpin sustainable communities, by providing and regulating services which address basic needs.
 - LGUs have “touch points” on citizens’ lives including water, waste, energy, transportation, recreation, health and safety.
 - LGU services are real in people’s lives: services are geared to protecting resources, improving lives and saving money.
 - LGUs vary in their understanding of and support for educational partnerships.
- **LGUs and their activities vary widely in a number of ways.**
- Activities vary within the sector. Each has a unique scope, authority, services, facilities, resources, and responsibilities which often overlap with those of other LGUs.
 - Populations demographics, in terms of numbers, income, race, commuters, etc. vary greatly (e.g. from King County with 1.9 million nighttime residents to cities with just a few hundred people).
 - Utility providers vary in public and private ownership, and in size. They range from large private regional providers with millions of customers, such as Puget Sound Energy, to small water and sewer districts of a few dozen homes).

- Along with this broad variation in size, scope, and resource-base in the sector comes extreme variation in the scope, intent, and methods for carrying out any type of education activities.
- Common approaches to education, outreach, and social marketing may include: PSAs/media sound bites, bill stuffers, newsletters, school visits, speakers' bureau, grants, field trips, summer programs, events, media campaigns.

➤ **Government and utility functions can play an important role in helping communities transition to sustainability.**

- LGUs often have multiple roles with the public: as service provider, educator, enforcer, tax collector, and/or partner.
- LGUs vary widely in the level of effort and approaches to contributing to and/or leading sustainability education effort.

Following are a few examples of how LGU activities may or may not support sustainability; other examples will be added:

- **Plans and policies**

LGUs may simply aim to satisfy state/federal requirements, or act more aggressively to prioritize sustainable policies and programs. For example, zoning/land use development regulations are constrained by the GMA and state regulations, but cities and counties have some leeway; e.g. they can choose to designate low-impact development areas to protect natural resources.

- **Infrastructure (capital facilities and operations/maintenance)**

Infrastructure can support continued reliance on cars, or can provide alternatives such as facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit.

Stormwater infrastructure can be entirely pipe-based, or can rely on natural systems such as developed wetlands, swales, etc. (“green infrastructure”); treatment can go beyond standards.

Parks may or may not use toxic chemicals weed control.

- **Programs and services**

Agencies can choose to develop innovative services such as food and yard waste collection to reduce waste.

- **Regulations and incentives**

Regulations and incentives can be designed to favor sustainable practices, e.g. water and solid waste utility rates may encourage conservation and discourage waste. Other regulations may impede sustainable practices, like those that subsidize or promote free parking, thus supporting automobile dependency; or single use zoning, which discourages walkability.

- **Public involvement and education**

Agencies can choose to emphasize public education or not. They can focus on simply making citizens/customers aware of services, or they can make more deliberate attempts to influence behavior.

- **Technical assistance**

Technical assistance may or may not be offered for commercial and/or residential customers to support more sustainable practices.

- **Outreach partnerships and collaboration**

LGUs may or may not choose to consolidate efforts or collaborate with other LGUs to maximize their impact. For example, the Cascade Water Alliance Cascade is a non-profit corporation comprised of eight municipalities (five cities and three water and sewer districts) in the Puget Sound region that joined together “to provide safe, clean, reliable water supply in a cost-effective and environmentally responsible manner to its 370,000 residents and 22,000 businesses.”

Public private partnerships may be formed, e.g. fire and police departments collaborating with neighborhood groups on disaster preparation and crime prevention.

- **Research and evaluation**

LGUs may or may not choose to devote resources to research into innovative and best practices, program evaluation and adaptive management. For example, they can proactively research potential impact of sea level rise on shoreline areas; or the impact of climate change on water, food and forest resources and public health.

- **Internal operations**

LGUs may or may not model sustainable practices through their employee incentives and policies supporting energy and water conservation, use of alternate fuels, building design, purchase of recycled materials and energy-efficient vehicles, appliances and fixtures, waste reduction efforts, etc.

Challenges and barriers: What inhibits people in this sector from helping move towards the E3 mission and vision?

- **Swimming against the tide**

- The consumer economy runs counter to sustainability; people are constantly barraged with messages encouraging more and bigger, use it once and throw it away. The current recession may be a big factor in shifting this trend; more people may understand the need to be more frugal and attentive to future impacts of current behavior.

- **Variety**

- The broad diversity of organizations within the sector makes it difficult to come up with a unified approach.

- Variation in the scope of services impedes cross-departmental and cross-jurisdictional partnerships
- Having some private providers and some public agencies makes collaboration more difficult; for example because of differing expectations, charters, regulations, and political will.

➤ **Lack of a common framework to coordinate within and among organizations in the sector**

- There is not agreement on the role of education within the sector.
- Commitment to and vision for the sector’s role in sustainability education is lacking or poorly developed
- Environmental education service levels can be cyclical, based in part of the philosophy and mindset of the administrative leaders.
- Education is looked down on; LGU educators are not respected in the way formal educators are.
- There is a contradiction between voiced support for education and allocation of resources.
- Education is a long-term investment that political leaders may be unwilling to make since results are unlikely to be seen within their time in office.
- There is not an explicit and/or shared agreement within the sector as to what individual, household, and organizational practices could be described as ‘more sustainable’ — what practices might result from a more economic, environmental and equity literate citizenry.
- There is not a common definition or a shared framework for delivering education that seeks to enhance environmental literacy, equity literacy, or economic literacy.
- Economic and equity aspects of sustainability are often neglected in sustainability education.
- There is not a common set of baseline indicators, data, targets for behaviors to be changed and actions to achieve them.
- A definition of desired outcomes, shared within the public sector and across sectors, is lacking.

➤ **Legal and resource limitations**

- Lack of resources
- Laws that restrict the use of many public funds, forcing ‘silo-ization’ of education efforts.
- Lack of expertise in carrying out social marketing and education.
- Budgets seldom allocate funds specifically for education and stewardship.

Opportunities: conditions, model programs, initiatives, etc. to build from.

➤ Going with the tide

- Global issues like climate change, food shortages, poverty, and terrorism, threaten the well-being of prosperous nations. Education can help society grapple with the bigger issues, thinking globally, acting locally.

➤ Model programs

- The most ‘mature’ programs and demonstrable successes may be utility energy and water conservation efforts because of the savings associated with avoiding the development of more supply (of energy or drinking water). These efforts may be taken primarily to stabilize rates through incentives, or to address a critical issue such as drought.
- Innovative utility programs (e.g. water and energy conservation, water quality protection, creek restoration, habitat enhancement).
- Innovative park and recreation-based programs (e.g. conservation, land management).
- Public tours of environmental/industrial facilities (e.g. water and wastewater treatment plants, landfills, bus/transit bases).
- Programs that develop a sense of place (e.g. historical markers, celebrations of community traditions, volunteer cleanup and restoration projects).
- Innovative conservation district and other special purpose district programs.

➤ Opportunities to build on existing programs

- Weaving common threads into model programs: social marketing, tailored, place-based, volunteer training, service-learning, business partnerships, and links to WA State Essential Academic Learning Requirements.
- Building from equity initiatives for full participation, distribution, accessibility of programs and projects.
- Building programs to assist in fulfilling regulatory requirements (e.g. the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program (NPDES), as well as other government, utility goals, target, outcomes)
- Prioritizing public education with staff and budget, e.g. Pierce County solid waste plan recognizes the role of education, two new staff hired; all City of Olympia utility plans emphasize public education and have staff designated.

➤ Financial

- More financial resources may be available if cost/benefit tools better included co-benefits of demand management, conservation, and ecological services.

- Shortcomings in accounting methods compromise the perceived value of education and behavior change as avenues for accomplishing the goals of local governments and utilities.
- More robust ways of quantifying progress in environmental and sustainability behavior change (e.g: King County’s environmental behavior survey) may help make financial resources available.

II. How are decisions made within this sector? Who are the decision makers and who influences them? Where do or could financial resource come from to support environmental education in this sector?

➤ Authority and rule-making

The roles and responsibilities of local governments (counties, cities, special districts) and utilities are determined by the state constitution, federal and state statutes and regulations. Generally:

- Counties may provide local or regional services. Statutes or local charters may restrict their scope of activity.
- Cities may offer a wide variety of services, while others focus primarily on public safety and roads. Statutes or local charters may restrict their scope of activity.
- Special districts (conservation, fire, school, sewer) typically have a narrow scope of responsibility.
- Public utilities have specific scopes of responsibility such as energy, drinking water, sewer, or solid waste. They may only be able to allocate resources to activities clearly within their scope of responsibility, and may be constrained by regulatory requirements. For example, the state Department of Health regulates drinking water utilities and solid waste utilities; the state Department of Ecology regulates sewer utilities.
- Private utilities are regulated by the state Utility and Transportation Commission (UTC). They may have more flexibility depending on the business model they’re working with.

➤ Organizations and individuals influencing LGUs

LGUs are influenced by a wide range of organizations and individuals: taxpayers, ratepayers, neighborhood organizations, business and professional associations, public employee unions, other labor unions, large corporations, media; the list goes on.

➤ Decision making

LGUs make decisions in the context of legal mandates, state and federal regulations, and feedback from stakeholder groups and individual citizens.

Counties may be governed by elected commissioners or council members. City mayors may play a strong role or serve more as a council chair. Public utilities may be more or less autonomous. Utility boards and commissions may be elected or appointed.

Governing bodies may or may not work with citizen advisory groups and may be more or less influenced by public involvement processes.

➤ **Financial resources**

Primary revenue sources are:

- Counties – property taxes, sales taxes, program fees; county utilities – utility rates, grants, and bonds.
- Cities – property taxes, sales taxes, program fees; city utilities – utility rates, grants, and bonds.
- Special districts – property owner assessments, fees, grants and loans.
- Public utilities – rates and fees, grants, bonds.
- Private utilities – rates and fees, grants, bonds.

Appendix 2

Contributors to the Local Government and Utilities Sector Strategy and Lay of the Land Paper

E3 Washington is grateful to the following sector conveners and participants for their passion, expertise, inspiration and time to complete this sector's goals/strategy/outcomes and Lay of the Land concept paper.

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