



City of Naperville Smart Grid Initiative (NSGI) Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

**Prepared for the City of Naperville
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April 15, 2011**



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

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Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Customer Relations and External Communication Plan represents collaboration among City of Naperville staff, the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative (NSGI) Steering Committee, West Monroe Partners and Jasculca/Terman and Associates.

In developing this plan, media research, case studies (see Appendix 1) and project summaries about smart meter deployments across the country were examined to gain a better understanding of the important components of successful smart grid projects as well as communication challenges that have arisen. The communication team continues to monitor smart grid projects and collaborate with other electric utilities in order to deploy best practices in communication efforts with Naperville utility customers. Please see Appendix 1 for a partial list of works reviewed in the creation of this communication plan.

As with any effective communication strategy, this document should be viewed as a basic roadmap for delivering key messages with impact through specific channels. However, please view this document as a roadmap that may take alternate routes throughout the course of smart grid implementation to respond to new opportunities or challenges along the way.

COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Communication Opportunities

The Naperville Smart Grid Initiative (NSGI) is an investment in the City's \$356 million electric utility asset. This project will modernize the city's aging electric utility and prepare Naperville for an increased demand on the electrical grid and for the future of energy conservation.

The smart grid will empower utility customers in a way that has not been possible until now. The NSGI will provide new tools and options for customers to help them better understand their personal electricity use and, if they choose, the option to participate in voluntary programs that will give them a greater range of choices about how they use and pay for electricity to fit their lifestyle.

Benefits for the utility and its customers will be further enhanced by customer participation in voluntary new programs. While the NSGI allows customers to choose their level of participation in all phases of the program beyond the installation of new meters, higher levels of customer participation will result in the greatest cost savings for both customers and the utility itself. There have been several national public opinion surveys (see Appendix 1) conducted that show that when a smart grid is described to customers, they generally have a positive view of the technology, its purpose and what it can achieve.

Communication Challenges

National public opinion research shows that very few customers are familiar with the concept of a smart grid or what it means for their electric service. In Naperville, there has been no formal public opinion polling to measure overall awareness of the initiative. However, conversations with residents and community partners, including the Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation, Naperville Development Partnership, Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, North Central College, School Districts 203 and 204, large commercial customers and others, suggest that many customers have heard something about the initiative but have not focused on the details nor thought about what it means for their electric service. Naperville residents lead very active, busy lives, and customers will likely focus more intently on the NSGI when it is more tangible to them.



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Historically, electric utility customers tend not to think much about their electric service unless there is a problem or an extraordinarily high bill. Beyond paying their bill each month and hoping that costs remain low, most customers do not consider how their bills are calculated nor do they spend a lot of time analyzing their energy consumption. In this context, it may be difficult to get the attention of customers so they understand that changes and choices for their electric service are coming and to secure their participation in voluntary new programs that may impact the way they choose to use their electric service.

Meanwhile, some utilities that have deployed smart meters in recent years have encountered customer resistance based on purported health, safety, privacy and security concerns as well as unsubstantiated claims that the meters lead to higher bills. In some cases this has been the result of bad planning, with new smart meters being deployed at the same time rates are increased for entirely unrelated reasons. However, most analyses of this backlash generally points to poor customer communication – especially utility-customer dialogue – and inadequate utility response to questions and concerns. The City of Naperville will maintain transparent and responsive two-way communications with customers throughout the smart grid implementation and beyond, as it strives to do in all areas of its municipal operations.

The City currently purchases electricity from J.Aron/Goldman Sachs through a four-year contract worth \$437 million set to expire on May 31, 2011. At that time, the City will enter a new contract to purchase power from the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (IMEA) in June 2011, which will lead to new electric rates for all customers at some point in 2011 or 2012. The introduction of this new rate structure will overlap to some extent with the NSGI, so there is a strong possibility that customers will equate the new rate structure with smart meters or the smart grid initiative even though they are completely unrelated. (Indeed, linking of smart meters with unrelated rate increases has created huge perceptual problems in other communities across the U.S. where smart meters have been deployed. This was due in part to incredibly high temperatures at the time of deployment).

Thus, it is very important that the City aggressively communicate with customers about the new rate structure, why the new rates are being introduced, how the timing was determined, and most importantly, that the new rate structure is necessary since the City is switching energy suppliers. The new rate structure would be introduced even without the NSGI project as it is tied to how the City procures electricity for its customers.

These opportunities and challenges are the guideposts for this Customer Relations and External Communication Plan. There are tremendous customer benefits associated with the NSGI project that must be clearly explained and communicated to customers. Many customers may have limited interest in news about their electric service or new choices and service options available to them, while others may have significant interest in taking advantage of all of the new tools and benefits available to them or even express concerns about the NSGI and might resist a new meter.

This Communication Plan is designed to balance these interests and communicate with customers on their own terms so they are fully informed about the NSGI and what it means for their electric service.



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City, including both the NSGI and the communication teams, will navigate the development and implementation of the NSGI strategy by following a set of guideposts that will lead to an effective, engaging and educational plan for achieving the greatest possible customer empowerment, engagement, understanding and adoption of the NSGI.

The Mission of the City of Naperville

The mission of the government of the City of Naperville is to preserve the quality of life by providing municipal services that are responsive to the needs of the residents and businesses and are reliable, efficient and fiscally responsible.

Values of the City of Naperville

- We value high quality, efficient municipal services and the impact they have on the lives of our residents and businesses.
- We value the working relationship between Council and employees and the contributions each makes to the betterment of the City.
- We value the benefits received from planning ahead and using rational decision-making.
- We value the hard work required to maintain our community at the high standards we have set.
- We value the exceptional level of service residents receive for their tax dollars.

The Mission of the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative

The mission of the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative is to provide Naperville and its utility customers with increased reliability and technology that empowers customers to control energy use. This smart grid will potentially result in significant savings on customers' monthly electric utility bills. Over the next 15 years, there is a potential to save Naperville electric customers more than \$30 million in today's dollars. This initiative serves as a model for upgrading and automating the City's electric distribution system to meet consumer needs, achieve dramatic improvements in reliability and lower operations and maintenance costs.

Customer Focus

The City will focus communication first and foremost on customers: What they need to know to understand the changes brought by NSGI and how to take full advantage of the benefits – delivered in language that is easily understandable, jargon-free and motivational.

Transparency and Accountability

City of Naperville employees hold themselves to the highest standard of transparency and accountability to residents, businesses and other interested parties. All NSGI communications will be guided by the same high standards of transparency and accountability – a key element in building relationships with customers.



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Interactivity and Respect

In all communication activities, ongoing, two-way dialogue will be fostered with customers by listening and responding to their questions and concerns. The City will respect and respond to all questions so that customers are encouraged to ask any and all questions about NSGI.

Partnerships

A successful Customer Relations and External Communication Plan will be substantially enhanced by leveraging the City's strong community partnerships to play an active role in relaying information about NSGI to their own constituents. Some organizations may do this out of a sense of civic duty or goodwill; others because it will help them better serve their constituents. This approach will also build a greater sense of community ownership of and investment in the NSGI.

Realistic Expectations and Candor

The City will be careful not to overpromise and will set realistic expectations. Problems and setbacks will more than likely occur in a program of this magnitude and significance; that must be acknowledged up front. The City will be honest and forthcoming about problems or setbacks when they occur.

Rapid Response

The City will respond as quickly as possible to concerns, problems, perceived problems or inaccurate or misleading information that could inhibit participation in NSGI. The benefits are great for all customers and for the future of the city in a successful deployment of the smart meters and related technology. The best overall outcome for customers only comes with active participation in the NSGI, no matter which level of participation a customer may choose.

Adaptability

The City will adapt as appropriate to changing circumstances or opportunities in its strategies and tactics and be prepared to refine messages and/or methods of communication based on customer feedback.

COMMUNICATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Key goals and objectives of the Customer Relations and External Communication Plan are as follows:

- Communicate the benefits of municipal ownership compared to private utility ownership, namely: increased reliability, lower rates, responsive customer service and shorter outage times.
- Provide information to City utility customers in a clear, easily understandable format to communicate the customer benefits and new tools and options available for them.
- Collaborate with the City's intergovernmental and community partners to share information about the benefits of this project and engage their support in communicating with their constituent groups.
- Support the City's goal of achieving the highest possible level of voluntary participation among electric utility customers to realize the full array of potential benefits of NSGI for residents, businesses and the City.
- Maintain a high level of openness and responsiveness with customers throughout the NSGI implementation.



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- Educate and inform customers about the NSGI, its various components, its benefits and how it will affect them personally; Answer the question, “Why is this good for me?”
- Through direct outreach, media, social media and other forms of communication, encourage customers to participate in the voluntary energy- and money-saving programs for their benefit.
- Increase understanding and acceptance of the smart grid as a new paradigm for electric service - one based on customer choices/participation - that is designed to improve energy management and reduce peak demand.
- In addition to encouraging participation in NSGI, gain the community’s active support for the initiative as a point of civic pride.
- Generate even greater awareness of Naperville among potential residents or businesses considering investing in the City as a forward-thinking community that embraces innovation. The NSGI also makes business sense for potential business customers due to the non-profit operations of a municipal electric utility that passes along cost-savings to its customers rather than as profits to its shareholders.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Our Customer Relations and External Communication Plan will incorporate the following approaches:

Phased Communication

The City will communicate with customers and the public continuously throughout all phases of this project to relay any changes customers may experience relating to their electric service.

Audience Segmentation

The communication team will target messages to various audiences to ensure all customers understand where the project is at any given time. Recognizing that customers will choose different levels of involvement based on their lifestyles, the communication team will develop information that is easily accessible and understandable to different audience segments. Some categories include early adopters and “set and forget” customers. Commercial customers will also be specially targeted with messages catered to their needs.

Leverage Existing Community Relationships and Intergovernmental Partnerships

The City will continue to work closely with Naperville’s intergovernmental and community partners (e.g., local public and parochial schools, the Naperville Public Library, the Naperville Park district, the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, and all others) and enlist their support in disseminating information about the NSGI to reach customers in a variety of different venues and formats.

Address pPublic Concerns and Questions

The communication team will listen to customers and carefully address their concerns and questions related to the NSGI. If concerns are raised repeatedly in a number of different settings and/or from a large number of customers, the team will proactively address those concerns in a public forum, such as an open house, the City website and other formats. This will ensure that customers will be reached who may have similar questions but may not have had an opportunity to raise them.



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Range of Communication Tactics and Channels

Throughout each phase of the project, the communication team will use a variety of communication tactics and channels to reach customers and will also explore and create new opportunities and new channels as needed.

COMMUNICATION TACTICS

In each phase of the project, communication tactics and channels will include the following:

Direct customer communication—The City will directly reach out to customers via utility bill inserts, mailings, phone calls, door-to-door visits by field representatives, door hangers and other collateral.

Community outreach— Smart grid representatives will reach out to Naperville residents in community venues to complement direct customer outreach. This will include open houses, presentations to community groups and intergovernmental partners and one-on-one meetings through a speakers bureau and ambassadors program designed to assist with educating Naperville residents on the NSGI and its benefits. While the speakers bureau will utilize designated experts to speak at community organizations, the ambassadors program will recruit and empower interested residents to attend events and hand out information on the NSGI. The communication team will work with Naperville's community partners to assist with all community relations efforts.

Media relations—The communication team will work through the local news media to communicate NSGI news and progress to customers. These efforts will include news releases, news conferences, bylined articles, editorial board meetings, op-eds, targeted story ideas, photo opportunities and perhaps advertising (subject to available budget).

Electronic communications—The communication team will utilize a variety of electronic communications vehicles to communicate with customers, including the NSGI website and a monthly NSGI e-Newsletter that customers can opt-in to receive via the City's website.

Social media—The communication team will utilize the City of Naperville's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts to engage in interactive communication with customers, media and community partners. Where appropriate and with the participation of residents, the city may also link to blogs and other online communities to spread the word, such as websites and blogs created by Naperville residents and industry experts.

Other City of Naperville communication channels—The communication team will leverage the full range of standard communications vehicles already utilized by the City to communicate with residents, including the City's resident newsletter, Naper Notices, NSGI e-Newsletter and changeable message boards.

Hotline/GovQA/Website—The City has dedicated a hotline number and a portion of the GovQA site for customers to contact the City directly about NSGI questions and concerns. The NSGI webpage on the City's website is also designed as a searchable knowledge base for customers.

Benchmarking and sharing best practices—The City will leverage all of its existing relationships with other municipalities, utilities and professional organizations and publications to share best practices, glean lessons learned and communicate project updates.



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MEASURING PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

Throughout the NSGI project, the communication team will be monitoring customer comments and feedback to learn whether communication activities are succeeding in reaching residents and helping them better understand the initiative. By monitoring customer sentiment, message penetration can be measured and messages and communication methods may be adjusted as needed. The goal is to ensure that the City is providing information in an easily accessible and understandable format. Feedback tracking opportunities include:

- Calls into the NSGI hotline
- Email comments submitted through the NSGI website, GovQA and smart grid email address
- Conversations with customers at community meetings, open houses and through the ambassadors program and speakers bureau
- Public comments at City Council meetings
- Public feedback derived from ambassadors program activities
- Comments made on other community websites and blogs and through letters to the editor of community newspapers

Ultimately, the success of NSGI communication efforts will be measured by evaluating whether customers are informed about the benefits of the program and assessing whether communication objectives and goals have been met. For example:

- Are customers aware of the NSGI, the program benefits and the available tools and options?
- Are customers aware of what the NSGI means for their electric service?
- Do customers have an overall favorable impression of the smart grid?
- Do customers feel their comments and questions about NSGI are being answered satisfactorily and in a timely fashion?
- Are some customers actively engaged in the NSGI? Are they using the ePortal? Are they choosing to participate in voluntary new programs, such as demand response?

Finally, the ultimate measure of success is whether customers are shifting and/or reducing their energy use as a result of the tools and programs NSGI provides and whether the City is reducing its overall load as a result.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

If a crisis or problem occurs, timely communication is critically important to the success of the NSGI.

One of the keys to effective crisis communication is being prepared for a crisis before it occurs by identifying areas of risk and having the crisis communication team and spokespeople identified and ready to step in quickly if a crisis occurs. This communication plan takes potential risks into account and aims to mitigate the identified risks through proactive communication.

Nonetheless, sometimes events and projects do not go according to plan. The City of Naperville has a crisis communication plan that will be the basis for communication activities if the need to quickly and effectively communicate with customers and the public in a critical situation should arise.



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A crisis communication plan should address issues of varying levels of severity. Small problems that are not adequately addressed may develop into bigger communication challenges if not managed properly. Thus, rapid and effective responses to issues are important to the success of the NSGI.

CORE MESSAGES

Clear, concise and compelling messages that engage customers and motivate them to participate as fully as possible in NSGI are a critical, basic component of all communication activities. At the same time, messages need to set realistic expectations and not over-promise the changes that will come with the smart grid.

The following are NSGI key messages that have been reviewed and approved by the NSGI Steering Committee and the Department of Public Utilities-Electric (DPU-E).

What is the NSGI?

- Through its continuous improvement model, the City has been building the infrastructure necessary for the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative (NSGI) for more than 20 years, and a recent federal grant has allowed it to move forward with this project. The NSGI will prepare Naperville for an increased demand on the City's electrical grid and the future of energy conservation. This project involves a combination of utility infrastructure upgrades, operational efficiencies and new tools and programs designed to give customers more options and control over energy use, if they choose to participate.
- The City of Naperville was awarded an \$11 million Department of Energy (DOE) Smart Grid Investment Grant as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The NSGI is a \$22 million infrastructure upgrade to the \$356 million municipal electric utility asset. Naperville is the only municipal utility in the State of Illinois presented with this federal financial endorsement of its continued work in complete automation of the electric grid.
- No taxpayer money will be used to fund the NSGI project. \$11 million has been allocated to this project from the Department of Public Utilities-Electric (DPU-E) enterprise fund, which is solely allocated to the operation, maintenance and construction of the electric utility infrastructure. It is entirely funded through revenue generated from the electric charges paid by customers.
- A municipal utility, in contrast to a for-profit energy company, passes along all cost savings directly to customers. Any operational savings from increasing efficiencies and reducing load and line loss (energy waste resulting when electrical energy is transmitted across power lines), result in greater savings realized by customers.
- The NSGI includes installation of more than 57,000 smart meters in every home and business in the city along with automation and upgrade of the electric grid backbone.
- To encourage community participation and ownership of the NSGI, Naperville initiated a logo contest open to all residents. The winning logo was unveiled and announced at the January 18, 2011, City Council meeting and is used in all NSGI collateral moving forward. The logo is a registered service mark of the City of Naperville as granted by the Illinois Secretary of State.



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More Tools, Choices and Control for Customers

- The NSGI gives residential and business customers more choices about how they use electricity and access to more rate options and programs.
- For Naperville businesses, electricity can be a significant portion of monthly operating expenses. Most businesses and organizations would like to keep these costs to a minimum but may not have the information and tools to help them make significant changes. The NSGI will provide new tools to help commercial customers make more informed choices about their energy use and potentially save money.
- Digital smart meters relay information on energy use. By logging onto a new secure ePortal website, the customer will be able to review and analyze daily energy use and costs. The customer can also install a variety of tools that help automate and manage consumption, such as home energy displays and programmable thermostats. These advanced networks can provide even greater detail on which parts of a customer's business or home are using the most energy and at what time of day.
- With new tools to view and manage their energy use, customers may choose to continue to pay a flat rate for energy as they do now, or choose alternative rates and other voluntary programs that may save their household or business money. It is entirely up to customers to select the rate structure and electricity programs that work best for them. The smart grid offers more options to customers.

Increased Reliability and Efficiency

- The NSGI will further increase Naperville's already high standard for electric reliability, which will lead to higher productivity for Naperville businesses and fewer inconveniences to Naperville homeowners.
- The NSGI creates an automated smart grid that communicates wirelessly with the central control center to diagnose and quickly remedy problems and outages -- without having to wait for a customer to phone in an outage problem. An automated grid is capable of self-healing and restoring power to as many customers as it is safe to do so prior to dispatching crews to identify and repair the problem.
- Automating the electric grid also improves efficiency, reduces wasted electricity and reduces operating costs.

Cost Savings

- The NSGI will save Naperville and its residents a projected \$31.8 million (in today's dollars) over 15 years. The NSGI business case shows a 91 percent internal rate of return. Projected cost savings come from:
 - Lower operational and maintenance costs associated with an automated grid.
 - Because the smart grid operates more efficiently and smart meters provide real-time analysis of customer demand, the utility can reduce the amount of electricity it purchases – especially at the most expensive periods of peak demand. That saves money for all customers, no matter their level of participation in the program.
 - A small percentage of customers initially viewing and managing their electricity use and voluntarily reducing their energy consumption to save money.



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Protecting Customer Privacy

- The City values the privacy rights of its electric customers and has implemented the Smart Grid Customer Bill of Rights, a document that protects customers' rights to be informed, to privacy, to options and to data security. This document was adopted by City Council and incorporated into the Naperville Municipal Code.
- Additionally, the City will be creating a Privacy and Advocacy Handbook that will lay out the City's policies and procedures in place to uphold the Customer Bill of Rights and mediate concerns in this age of digital data sharing.

Creating a More Efficient, Sustainable Community

- The NSGI will make Naperville a more sustainable community by paving the way for adoption of new technologies, such as electric cars and alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal.
- The NSGI allows customers more options and choices to have more control for managing their energy costs in the future. City of Naperville customers have some of the lowest electricity rates in the region, but the U.S. Department of Energy projects energy prices will rise 50 percent over the next 25 years. The NSGI provides tools to help the utility and customers better manage energy use and will help everyone manage higher costs in the future.
- The NSGI will pave the way for greater use of electric cars in the near future. As consumers begin purchasing electric vehicles, the smart grid lays the foundation for the required infrastructure to support the increased demand on the City's electric system.

Reduced Carbon Emissions, Greener Energy Infrastructure

- The NSGI directly addresses areas in which residents have expressed interest. According to the most recent resident survey, more than 80 percent of respondents expressed that it is important for the City of Naperville to invest in initiatives to preserve the environment. Respondents indicated the environmental services that should receive the most emphasis include: providing ways for the community to reduce emissions, reducing the use of energy in City operations and implement environmentally responsible purchasing practices.
- The Naperville community leads the nation in environmental awareness and stewardship: nearly 25 percent of utility customers receive their utility bills electronically; Naperville is ranked No. 5 in the nation in participation in voluntary, renewable energy programs with nearly 10 percent of customers enrolled; and there are estimates that seven percent of cars on Naperville roads are hybrid cars.
- Electricity generation is responsible for about a third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. The NSGI helps both the utility and consumers better manage energy use and reduce consumption, which leads to reduced carbon emissions. It is estimated that the NSGI will reduce carbon emissions by 180,000 tons annually, the equivalent of taking more than 31,000 cars off the road each year.
- The NSGI supports the adoption of greener sources of energy like wind and solar by better managing the overall energy load and reducing consumption at peak times. One of the challenges of renewable energy is meeting high demand at times when the wind is not blowing or the sun is not shining. Reducing peak demand increases the ability of intermittent but renewable sources of energy to be a greater part of Naperville's energy mix.



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Job Creation in Emerging Industries

- The NSGI supports job creation in important industries like clean energy and technology. The three-year project will create an average of 35 jobs in and around Naperville. Only four of these jobs will be with the Naperville DPU-E. The rest will be with vendors who work with the Naperville DPU-E or with other companies that support these vendors and Naperville customers.

The Smart Grid Long-term Vision

- Smart grids use technology to fundamentally shift the way we distribute, use, think about and pay for energy. Smart grids utilize aggregate interval data about overall energy use at various points in time to help customers and utilities reduce consumption specifically at times when the system may be overloaded.
- By moderating energy use at peak times and slowing the rate of energy consumption growth, our nation can increase energy independence, preserve precious natural resources and protect the environment.
- Customers are accustomed to paying a flat rate for all electricity. But the cost of electricity is not always the same. Electricity costs more at peak times—like a hot summer afternoon when many users are running air conditioning units and other appliances—because generators must fire-up auxiliary power stations to meet the excessive demand.
- Smart grids save resources and money by curbing the demand at the peak. Using smart meters, utilities can offer optional programs (known as demand response) that incentivize customers to reduce peak demand use—such as off-peak price discounts and appliance cycling. Demand-response programs let utilities and customers make incremental changes that collectively can have a big impact and will always be strictly voluntary.

What is the IMEA/New Power Purchase Agreement?

- In 2007, the Naperville City Council approved membership in the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (IMEA) as a source of wholesale power starting in June 2011. The decision was made after the expiration of a 20-year power purchase agreement with ComEd and the signing of a \$437 million, four-year power contract with J. Aron and Company/Goldman Sachs. Moving to a long-term relationship with IMEA means greater price stability for Naperville utility customers.
- With the new power purchase agreement, a new rate study must be commissioned and this will mean a new rate structure for all electric utility customers. Recommendations for the new rate structure will be made after a rate study by an outside consultant is completed in the spring of 2011. DPU-E performs such rate studies every three to five years to determine the appropriate electricity rates. Previous rate studies were performed in 2006 and 2003 and are entirely independent of the smart grid project.
- The new rate structure will reflect the cost to purchase power for customers as well as operational and capital costs. Proposed rates must be reviewed and approved by City Council before they can take effect. As a municipally owned rather than an investor-owned utility, DPU-E does not build profits into its rates—which means rates are generally lower than those paid by customers of investor-owned utilities.



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- The Naperville Smart Grid Initiative and new electricity rates are completely independent of one another. DPU-E has been planning and making investments in the electric utility infrastructure for many years with plans for continuous improvement through 2020. Automation efforts were accelerated in 2010 with the awarding of an \$11 million matching grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, conserving money in the utility enterprise fund and accelerating the associated benefits available to customers.
- The U.S. Department of Energy projects energy prices will rise 50 percent over the next 25 years. The NSGI—which creates a more efficient, less wasteful grid and introduces new tools to help reduce energy use—will help customers and the utility better manage future energy costs.

NSGI BENEFITS FOR COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS

More Electric Service Choices Mean Greater Flexibility for Your Business/Organization

- As part of the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative, the municipal utility will be introducing new rate options and programs to offer more choices about electricity service. Every organization has unique needs—new optional programs and rates will allow commercial customers the opportunity to better tailor their electricity service to their business or organization.

A Competitive Edge for Small Businesses

- Large and energy-intensive businesses have been utilizing energy audits and efficiency programs to reduce their expenses for years. The NSGI brings some of the same tools and opportunities to small businesses.
- Each and every competitive edge helps. The NSGI provides small businesses one more way to control costs, forecast and budget for future expenses while remaining competitive in an extremely challenging business climate.

Increased Reliability and Efficiency

- All businesses count on reliable electric service. An outage can mean lost productivity and wasted time.
- Naperville's City-owned utility has set a high standard for reliable electric service. The NSGI will further improve electric reliability. It creates an automated smart grid that communicates wirelessly with a central control center to diagnose and quickly remedy problems and outages - without having to wait for a customer to phone in an outage problem or send linemen out to identify and fix the problem.
- Automating the electric grid also improves efficiency and reduces DPU-E's operating costs - all of which lead to savings that can be passed on to customers.

In addition to these overarching, big-picture messages, specific messages will be developed for the different phases of the project: smart meter pilot, smart meter installation, ePortal introduction and the introduction of new voluntary demand-response and alternative rate programs.

Preliminary messages for each of these project phases are included in the sections below and will be expanded and refined based on lessons learned throughout the implementation of the NSGI.



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NSGI PHASES

NOTE: Initial City of Naperville communication building awareness and educating customers about the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative began in October 2009 and has been ongoing. For purposes of this document, the following four phases of communications correspond to the overall NSGI project phases.

PHASE I: Pilot Program and General Program Communication (Spring-Fall 2011)

In the first phase of the NSGI implementation, a select number of Naperville residences will receive smart meters in advance of the rest of the population. These customers will be asked to provide feedback so that the City can address potential questions and concerns proactively, before the Meter Deployment phase.

PHASE II: Meter Deployment (Fall 2011-Fall 2012)

The second phase of the NSGI implementation is the full installation and deployment of more than 57,000 smart meters for every residential and commercial electric utility customer.

PHASE III: Introduction of ePortal (Late 2011)

In this phase, Naperville electric customers will be introduced to the ePortal, a secure and user-friendly City of Naperville website that will help them better understand, and later manage and control, their energy use, if they choose.

PHASE IV: Introduction of New Programs (Early 2012)

The final phase of the NSGI implementation will be the introduction of new energy programs to all Naperville energy customers. Through the ePortal, customers will have the option to participate in demand-response programs, utilize time-of-use electric rates and select other options to control their energy bills, if they choose.

On the following pages, the strategy for each of the four phases is described and includes the following sections:

- Situation Analysis
- Key Messages
- Communication Strategy
- Tactical Plan and Timeline



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PHASE I: PILOT PROGRAM AND GENERAL PROGRAM COMMUNICATION (Spring-Fall 2011)

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The City of Naperville began communicating about the NSGI in 2009 shortly after the U.S. Department of Energy announced that Naperville been approved for a Smart Grid Investment Grant to accelerate completion of the automation of the electric utility infrastructure and network. The City has been working to build the infrastructure necessary for the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative (NSGI) for more than 20 years through its continuous improvement model, and the federal grant has accelerated the completion of the project. Initial communication efforts addressed City Council discussions and approval of the NSGI, the business case that supports it, building general awareness of the program and providing education about the associated technology.

The first half of 2011 is the ideal time to reengage with more frequent, proactive, customer-focused communication to inform utility customers throughout Naperville of the NSGI program, its benefits, overall timeline and how it will affect their electric service.

Around this time, DPU-E will initiate a controlled pilot program to test the functionality of the new meters. Included in this phase is integration testing and radio frequency (RF) testing to ensure smart meter RF emissions are below Federal Communications Commission (FCC) acceptable levels. The NSGI's four project vendors must meet 700 requirements during this phase in order for this project to continue.

This is an ideal opportunity for the communication team to assess the effectiveness of customer messaging and communication tactics, as the process of informing the greater community about the smart meter deployment planned for later in the year continues. The communication team will use the pilot to test customer communications and in that way adjust the communication program for the eventual city-wide deployment.

KEY MESSAGES

The following are key messages and questions/responses pertaining specifically to the Pilot Program. Many of these messages and questions will be further developed in coordination with the project and installation teams.

Who is in the "pilot program" and why was I selected?

The pilot program gives the City an opportunity to test the meter technology and installation process, gather your feedback and learn if you have any questions or concerns. Staff will work with you throughout the pilot program to incorporate your feedback into the meter deployment phase so that all Naperville energy customers can benefit from your input. *Information about selection process to be developed after discussion with the project team.*

Why are customers getting new meters?

Installation of more than 57,000 smart meters in every home and business in Naperville, along with automation and upgrade of the electric grid backbone, will improve reliability and reduce operating costs. The new meters will also allow the utility to offer a variety of new energy- and money-saving programs in which customers can choose to participate.



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

How will the meters be installed?

Installation experts contracted by the City of Naperville and the Department of Public Utilities-Electric will come to your house to replace your old, analog home electricity meter with a new digital “smart meter.” *Additional information on installation process, schedule and duration of power interruption to be added after further discussion with the project and installation teams.*

How do the smart meters work?

Smart meters communicate wirelessly with the Naperville utility using the same technology used in wireless Internet routers (Wi-Fi). With digital meters, the City utility no longer must send a person to manually read meters every other month. The new meter will also allow staff to diagnose and quickly remedy problems and outages without having to wait for a customer to phone in and report an outage. An automated grid is capable of self-healing and restoring power to many customers prior to dispatching crews to identify and repair the problem.

How will the NSGI affect my electricity bill?

The wireless meters will have no impact on your bill—your electric bill is based solely on your electricity consumption.

Smart meters are the first step in the multi-phased Naperville Smart Grid Initiative (NSGI). Subsequent phases of the NSGI will give customers more tools in managing their electricity consumption and more control of their electric bill by offering alternative billing rates and optional energy- and money-saving programs. The City will inform you when those programs are available for your use.

Who do I contact with questions/comments/complaints?

For questions, concerns or comments about your meter installation, please call the toll-free number of our meter installation experts, UPA, at (800) XXX-XXXX (Exact number TBD). They will be handling all customer service inquiries before, during, and after the NSGI meter deployment. UPA hours of operation are X:XX to X:XX (Exact hours TBD).

The City understands that you may have additional questions and concerns about the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative and other related issues. If you would like to speak to someone at the DPU-E, please call (630) 420-6131 or visit www.naperville.il.us/smartgrid.aspx and fill out our email contact form.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Please also see the corollary Tactical Plan and Timeline chart at the end of this section for a timeline for implementation of communication tactics in this phase.

Direct Customer Communication

Direct customer outreach and communication always presents the greatest likelihood of successfully informing customers about pending changes to their meters. In this pilot phase, direct customer communication will focus on developing and testing the messages and communication vehicles on those involved in the pilot – messages and communications vehicles that will ultimately be used later in the meter deployment. The communication team will develop key messages that provide detailed information on the new technology, its advantages for customers and the installation process. It is also important that the NSGI project team and city staff is prepared to quickly address anticipated customer questions and concerns.



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The communication team will draft the text to be used for customer communications vehicles, which may include utility bill inserts, letters/postcards, door hangers and other methods. Information will include an overview of the initiative, a timeline for installation and where customers can go if they have questions or concerns. These sample communications materials will be shared with pilot program participants, and staff will solicit their feedback in the following areas:

- Are the messages/materials clear and understandable?
- Do they understand why their meter is being changed?
- Do they understand the value and benefits of the smart grid project?
- Did they clearly understand the meter installation process before it occurred?
- Were their questions answered?

At this point, a smart grid hotline has already been created. An email address has been set up as a response mechanism for early questions from the public and especially pilot participants. This is a good opportunity to gauge how customers are choosing to interact with the City regarding NSGI, specifically during the meter installation process. Extensive training of staff monitoring the hotline will occur prior to the full deployment, and the communication team will work closely with them in this phase of the project.

Community Outreach

Beyond communicating with pilot participants about the meter change, communication during this phase will focus broadly on proactive communication with the community at large about NSGI. Community outreach will include proactive efforts to continue introducing NSGI and the new smart meters to the general public and leveraging two-way communications vehicles to provide basic information about the initiative and the timeline of the deployment.

During this phase, NSGI community outreach activities will include:

- **Ambassadors Program Outreach** – In this phase, the focus will be on launching the ambassadors program and recruiting ambassadors. Resident ambassadors will be educated and provided with information about the initiative so they can answer basic questions and/or connect people who have complicated questions with the appropriate City staff members to respond to the inquiry.

The NSGI team will also focus on identifying appropriate venues for ambassador outreach and developing a six-month schedule of ambassador activities (May-October) in advance of the full meter deployment phase.

Toward the end of this phase and especially in the next phase, ambassadors will be an important conduit for sharing information about NSGI broadly within the community.

- **Speakers Bureau Outreach** – As the communication team has done throughout 2010, NSGI spokespeople will continue to respond to requests from community organizations to speak about the NSGI and its benefits, the new smart meters and the timeline for installation. These efforts will be expanded in 2011 as the NSGI enters phases in which customers will experience changes.

In this phase, focus will be on identifying appropriate venues to send speakers and coordinating a calendar of events. The communication team will also develop outreach and scheduling protocols that allow for efficient engagement of organizations about future speaking opportunities. Once the protocols are in place, outreach will begin to target organizations and schedule events throughout the rest of the year.



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

Targeted Groups and Organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Apartment complexes
 - Block clubs, such as the Naperville Garden Club
 - City Boards and Commissions
 - Condominium associations
 - DuPage Children's Museum
 - Faith- and cultural-based organizations, including places of worship, the Polish Club, Italian Club, Xilin Community Center
 - Higher education institutions, such as North Central College and 7 satellite campuses
 - Indian Prairie School District 204
 - Local civic groups, including all Rotary Clubs, Exchange Club, Jaycees, Lions, Kiwanis
 - Local Scouting groups
 - Naper Settlement
 - Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation
 - Naperville Community Unit School District 203
 - Naperville Development Partnership and relevant committees, including Marketing and Technology
 - Naperville Park District
 - Naperville Public Library branches
 - Parent Teacher Associations
 - Residential coffees, including Naperville Newcomers and Neighbors Club
 - Subdivision homeowners associations
- **Information Distribution by Community Partners** – In this phase, the communication team will continue to actively engage its intergovernmental and community partners to share information about the NSGI through their respective communication channels. The communication team will work with them to develop activities and programs that are suitable to their mission and members/constituents throughout all phases of this project. The team will also continue to provide them with updated information as it is created and distributed.

Media Relations

The communication team will reach out to members of the media to assist with the development of positive and educational news stories about the NSGI. There will be several distinct news opportunities in this phase and as the project moves into the full meter deployment phase.

The following are potential NSGI news opportunities in this phase:

- **NSGI pilot announcement press release** – Staff may issue a press release to local media announcing that the Pilot Program has begun and providing information about the smart meter technology, the scope of the pilot and a deployment timeline.
- **First Pilot Meter Installation Photo-op** – Staff may contact local photo desks at newspapers and public access television stations and pitch a photo opportunity to capture images/B-roll of the first pilot smart meter being installed.



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

- **Profiles/user experience testimonials from pilot** –Staff may begin collecting testimonials from pilot participants during the installation process. These testimonials will be useful in both media outreach and materials development in the meter deployment phase.

Social and Electronic Media

The communication team will continue to use the City of Naperville’s Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts to obtain additional followers and friends to provide them with the latest news and updates on the smart meter deployment. The communication team will also encourage followers and friends who are part of the pilot to tweet and post about their smart meter experiences. Additionally, the Smart Grid e-Newsletter and Department of Public Utilities-Electric Director Mark Curran’s monthly “The Electric Current” column published online and in the print edition of the *Naperville Sun* will also be utilized.

Crisis Communication

If a crisis or problem occurs, timely communication is critically important to the success of the NSGI.

One of the keys to effective crisis communication is being prepared for a crisis before it occurs by identifying areas of risk and having the crisis communication team and spokespeople identified and ready to step in quickly if a crisis occurs. This communication plan takes potential risks into account and aims to mitigate the identified risks through proactive communication.

Nonetheless, sometimes events and projects do not go according to plan. The City of Naperville has a crisis communication plan that will be the basis for communication activities if the need to quickly and effectively communicate with customers and the public in a critical situation should arise.

A crisis communication plan should address issues of varying levels of severity. Small problems that are not adequately addressed may develop into bigger communication challenges if not managed properly. Thus, rapid and effective responses to issues are important to the success of the NSGI.

Tactical Plan and Timeline on next page.

NSGI Customer Relations/External Communications Plan

PILOT PROGRAM AND GENERAL PROGRAM COMMUNICATION: TACTICAL PLAN AND TIMELINE

A complete set of Tactical Plans and Timelines can be found in Appendix 2.

MONTH	Direct Customer Communications	Community Outreach	Media Relations	Other Communications Channels	Social Media	Project Milestones
FEB-APR 2011	Develop sample messages/materials Develop rapid response protocol Shared question/response inventory for public consumption Reorganization of NSGI website Developed NSGI utility bill insert	Fact sheet/sample article to community partners Open House Supported utility presentation to homeowners association Ambassadors Program planning Speaking opportunity at Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce	Press release announcing passage of NSGI bill of rights Interview for local news story regarding smart meter radio frequency Press release announcing details of Open House	Overall city-wide messaging, increasing awareness and education, informing customers of tools in place (e-Newsletter, smart grid website, hotline, etc.) e-Newsletter Electric Current State of the City mention		System Development: March – Aug 2011
MAY/JUN 2011		Ambassador training		Overall city-wide messaging, increasing awareness and education, informing customers of tools in place (e-Newsletter, smart grid webpage, hotline, etc.) e-Newsletter Electric Current		System Development: March – Aug 2011 Pilot 1: May-Aug 2011
JUN/JUL 2011		Ambassador events scheduling Speakers bureau outreach/scheduling		e-Newsletter Electric Current		System Development: March – Aug 2011 Pilot 1: May-Aug 2011
AUG/SEP 2011	Customer relations team training Sample materials to pilot participants and feedback Adjust messages/materials based on feedback	Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances	Collect testimonials from pilot participants	e-Newsletter Electric Current	Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements	System Development: March – Aug 2011 Pilot 1: May-Aug 2011 Pilot 2: Aug-Oct 2011



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

PHASE II: METER DEPLOYMENT (Fall 2011 – Fall 2012)

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Following the pilot program, the City of Naperville will enter into the next phase of the Customer Relations and External Communication Plan. The Meter Deployment Phase will include the deployment of smart meters to more than 57,000 customers in Naperville. It represents what may be the most expansive and challenging phase of the project from a communication standpoint.

While some customers will be familiar with the smart meters and smart grid technology resulting from ongoing customer communication and community outreach, it is anticipated that a significant percentage of customers may still have limited knowledge of NSGI. While it is expected that the deployment and installation will be successful and incident-free with the vast majority of customers, the communication team will be prepared to answer questions and address concerns from concerned citizens.

This phase will begin one to two months in advance of the meter deployment phase so customers have knowledge of the process and know what to expect before a utility representative shows up on their property to install the new meter.

Utilizing the messages created for the Pilot Program phase, the team will communicate with customers regularly via direct outreach and through identified communication channels. At this point the customer relations team will be identified and trained on how to interact with customers, equipped with key messages and instructed on whom to direct specific, detailed or escalated customer questions or complaints.

The NSGI team will simultaneously engage in community outreach to provide additional avenues for customers to learn about the NSGI. The activities are further detailed below and include activities such as inviting customers to attend public forums and open houses where information about the NSGI will be available for those interested in learning more. Finally, the communication team will engage local media to educate their readers about the latest news and updates regarding the NSGI.

KEY MESSAGES

The following are key messages and questions/responses pertaining specifically to the Meter Deployment. Many of these messages and questions will be further developed in coordination with the project and installation teams.

Why are customers getting new meters?

Installation of more than 57,000 smart meters in every home and business in the city along with automation and upgrade of the electric grid backbone will improve reliability and reduce operating costs. The new meters will also allow the utility to offer a variety of new energy- and money-saving programs in which customers can choose to participate.

How will the meters be installed?

Starting in November of 2011, meter installation technicians will be visiting every home and business in Naperville to replace the old electric meters with new smart meters. Your meter is likely situated on the exterior of your home or business, so the meter technician will not need to come inside to complete the meter exchange. The technician will knock on your door to attempt to notify you of his or her arrival, but there is no need for you to be present during the installation. The entire process should take no more than 10-15 minutes.



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The meter technician will have to disconnect electric power to your home or business for no more than one minute, and in most cases less than 30 seconds, while your new smart meter is being installed. If you are at home or at your business during this process, the technician will knock on your door to alert you before the brief outage.

How do the smart meters work?

Smart meters communicate wirelessly with the Naperville utility using the same technology used in common household devices and wireless Internet routers (Wi-Fi). With digital meters, the City utility no longer sends a person to your property every other month to read your meter. It can also diagnose and quickly remedy problems and outages -- without having to wait for a customer to phone in an outage problem. An automated grid is capable of self-healing and restoring power to many customers prior to dispatching crews to identify and repair the problem.

How will the NSGI affect my electricity bill?

The meters themselves will have no impact on your bill—your electric bill is based solely on your electricity consumption.

Smart meters are the first step in the multi-phased Naperville Smart Grid Initiative. Later phases of the NSGI will provide customers with more tools in managing their electricity consumption and more control of their electric bill by offering alternative billing rates and optional energy- and money-saving programs. The City will inform you when those programs are available for your voluntary participation.

Why is this an exciting project for customers?

The NSGI will give residential and business customers more choices about how they use electricity and more control over what they pay for it.

Who do I contact with questions/comments/complaints?

For questions, concerns or comments about your meter installation, please call the toll-free number of our meter installation experts, UPA, at (800) XXX-XXXX (Exact number TBD). They will be handling all customer service inquiries before, during, and after the NSGI meter deployment.

If you are interested in learning more about the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative or your smart meter installation, please visit www.naperville.il.us/smartgrid.aspx. You can also fill out the inquiry form on the City's website or call (630) 420-6131.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Please also see the corollary Tactical Plan and Timeline chart at the end of this section for a timeline for implementation of communication tactics in this phase.

Community Outreach

Identifying the customer relations team

One of the top priorities in the Meter Deployment Phase is identifying and training the customer relations team that will have direct interaction with customers. The customer relations team will be tasked with answering customers' questions and correcting any technical problems that come up in a timely manner. The public's perception of the value and



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

effectiveness of the NSGI will be largely shaped by their perceptions of the NSGI customer service experience. If customers feel that their questions and problems are being effectively answered and attended-to, then public perception of the deployment is more likely to be generally positive.

The customer relations team includes, but is not limited to:

- Hotline-number responders
- Website/email responders
- Smart meter installers
- Billing personnel
- Supervisor(s) for escalated calls
- Elected officials
- City dispatch

Each team member will be equipped with the key messages. It will also be important to identify unique questions/problems/messages that each team member may encounter in his or her customer-service capacity, and equip that person with the appropriate information.

It is important that a clearly defined chain-of-command be identified for complex technical questions or escalation of in-person interactions or phone calls, and that all members of the customer relations team know where to direct these questions/complaints and consistently do so.

Customer Relations Team Training

A very high priority in this phase of the project will be the appropriate training of the customer relations team, which will be interdependent with other ongoing work. The team should be identified six to eight weeks before installation begins, and specific roles assigned 3-4 weeks before installation. Approximately two weeks before installation, a comprehensive training session should be held for the entire customer relations team. This is an opportunity to review messages and answers to common customer questions, discuss the protocol for complex or technical questions that need to be referred to a supervisor and address other pertinent topics.

Designated members of the customer relations team will meet with the project team and the communication team on a weekly basis in the early phases of meter installation to share information and to determine if there are big-picture/frequent questions or concerns that the communication and project team should address in a systematic way. For example, the communication team can prepare additional customer information or FAQ documents that may be posted on the NSGI website to address recurring questions and create additional talking points for those answering customer phone and email inquiries.



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

Direct Customer Communication

Because every home and business in Naperville will be affected by new meter installation, it is important that several attempts are made to contact customers to inform them of the installation process and what to expect *before* the installer visits their home or business. This will prepare customers for the meter change, answer some of the questions they may have in advance and make the installation process as smooth as possible for the installation team.

Direct outreach to customers presents the greatest likelihood of successfully reaching them and educating them about the impending change. The communication team plans to phase its direct communication with customers, attempting to reach them through tiers of direct channels.

- **Letters/postcards/bill inserts** – *Two to four weeks before installation, on a rolling basis to coincide with deployment schedule* - Direct mail to customers ensures that all customers receiving an energy bill will be provided with introductory information about the NSGI and smart meters. Options for direct mail include an insert in the utility bill and/or text information printed directly onto the envelope or bill itself; and/or a postcard or letter sent separately from the bill. The most cost effective option for the utility is bill inserts, as there are no additional mailing costs. However, sometimes customers may not pay close attention to leaflets inserted in their bill, and postcards or letters may have added impact.
- **Email to customers** - *One month before deployment* – While DPU-E does not have email addresses for all customers; it should develop and send an email to those customers for whom it has email addresses.
- **Informational displays throughout city** – *Ongoing* – In addition to the above direct outreach to customers, informational displays can reinforce information about the NSGI and the meter installation procedures. The NSGI communication team should create a series of displays/billboards/advertisements that could be displayed in high-traffic areas throughout the city – including the Municipal Center, public library branches, shopping centers, billboards and other outlets.
- **Door hangers** – *To coincide with deployment* - Informational door hangers will be left at homes and businesses alerting the owner that an installation expert has visited their building to switch the meter. Door hangers will be marked to show that installation has been completed, or will note that the installation expert will return at a later date. Basic information including the city's website and contact numbers for meter installer UPA will be provided so customers know exactly where to direct questions, comments, concerns or complaints.

Customer Relations

While direct outreach to customers is the most effective way to reach all customers and communicate basic information about the new meter deployment, the communication team will continue to proactively engage customers and Naperville residents through a variety of community relations events and speaking opportunities to reinforce information and provide additional opportunities for two-way communication. In these venues, NSGI spokespersons can engage customers in a dialogue and provide even more information about the project, its benefits, and the meter installation process as well as answer individual questions from customers.



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

Recommended community relations activities include:

- **Open Houses** –*Four to six weeks before and four weeks into the deployment.* The communication team recommends hosting additional open houses so representatives from the utility can discuss the meter installation process, explain how the smart meters work and answer questions from customers. The team recommends two open houses, one before the installation begins and one several weeks after the process has begun—to provide maximum opportunities for residents. Depending on the feedback garnered from the first two open houses, a third open house for customers who may need additional information on the installation process may be considered.
- **Ambassadors program outreach** – *Ongoing.* At this point the NSGI ambassadors program should be actively participating in events and activities listed on the calendar that was developed in the Pilot Program and General Program Communication Phase (with additional events added continuously). These citizen ambassadors can pass out informational flyers at a number of different community settings to share information about the installation process. While ambassadors may not be able to answer difficult questions, they can share basic information and direct people to the website or hotline for more information or to have questions answered. Some potential venues to deploy ambassadors include: parades and festivals, outside the library and post office on busy weekends, and other outlets to be identified.
- **Speakers bureau outreach** – *Ongoing.* At this point, the NSGI speakers bureau should be active, with representatives attending events at community organizations, churches and smaller neighborhood gatherings as described in the Pilot Program and General Program Communications Phase.
- **Presentations and information distribution by community partners** – *Ongoing.* The NSGI team will continue to partner with its intergovernmental and community partners to make smart meter information available to their constituents. The city will continue to encourage and assist in the development of special programming, displays, events and smart meter demonstrations. Smart grid speakers bureau members will participate in events and presentations as needed.

Media Relations

Proactive media relations in all project phases is important to further inform customers about what to expect before and after the smart meter deployment.

Media relations activities for this phase of the initiative include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Editorial Board Meetings** – Approximately four weeks prior to installation commencing, the communication team will contact editorial boards at local newspapers including the *Naperville Sun*, *Daily Herald* and *Chicago Tribune*. NSGI project team representatives can meet with the editorial boards to educate them on smart meter benefits and the deployment, ideally securing an editorial endorsing the NSGI and touting the benefits for the City and its utility customers.
- **Media Availability** – Approximately two weeks before installation, the communication team will host a media availability at the Electric Service Center to describe installation plans and timeline and let media representatives ask in-depth questions about the process.



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- **Reach out to beat reporters** – As the meter installation begins, the communication team will contact city beat reporters from local newspapers and suggest they do a hard news story on the deployment and new smart meters. This can be paired with the photo-op suggestion below.
- **Photo-opportunity** – Shortly before meter installation begins, the team will contact local photo desks at newspapers and television stations and pitch a photo opportunity to capture images/B-roll of the “first” smart meter being installed.
- **Appearances on Naperville Community Television (NCTV17)** – As meter installation begins, NSGI spokespersons/ambassadors can appear on Naperville Community Television (NCTV17) talk shows and news broadcasts to discuss the deployment and smart meter advantages.
- **Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA)** – As the meter installation begins, the communication team will develop an informational public service announcement alerting customers of the deployment and providing basic smart meter information.
- **Testimonials/case studies**—The communication team can develop written testimonials and case studies from residents and businesses that have been using smart meters and related energy saving programs as part of the NSGI pilot. The team will share these materials with the news media to enhance coverage of the smart meter deployment.
- **Newspaper advertisements** – The communication team will explore the possibility of purchasing advertisements in the *Naperville Sun* and other local publications alerting customers of the deployment and providing basic information about the smart meters.
- **Periodic News Releases** – The communication team will draft and distribute periodic news releases to keep local reporters informed on smart meter deployment major developments or timelines. For example, a news release could be distributed letting reporters know when meter installation is halfway complete.

Social Media

The communication team will use the City of Naperville’s Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts to provide followers and friends with the latest news and updates on smart meter deployment. Opportunities for using these social media channels include:

- Posting weekly updates on meter installation schedules to Facebook and Twitter — e.g., updates on which neighborhoods will receive meters that week.
- Encouraging the City’s social media followers and friends to post their questions or feedback on their new meters. This will allow multiple parties to see the responses, potentially proactively answering a large number of questions from the public.
- Sharing information about NSGI community events, ambassador locations and NSGI speakers bureau engagements.



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- The team will tweet and post regular updates on the number of meters installed, so that interested customers can track the progress of the installation.

Customer Relations and Communication Team Meetings

NSGI project team and customer relations representatives should meet regularly to share information on the latest deployment updates/next steps, common questions, problems encountered in the field and best practices with regard to effective messaging.

Rapid Response Protocol

A rapid response protocol will be developed and communicated to all communication team members so that information can be quickly communicated and disseminated during a crisis or as needed. Qualified and knowledgeable spokespersons should be identified and available at all times to answer questions from customers, the media or the general public on smart meters and the NSGI meter deployment phase.

Crisis Communication

If a crisis or problem occurs, timely communication is critically important to the success of the NSGI.

One of the keys to effective crisis communication is being prepared for a crisis before it occurs by identifying areas of risk and having the crisis communication team and spokespersons identified and ready to step in quickly if a crisis occurs. This communication plan takes potential risks into account and aims to mitigate the identified risks through proactive communications.

Nonetheless, sometimes events and projects do not go according to plan. The City of Naperville has a crisis communication plan that will be the basis for communication activities if the need to quickly and effectively communicate with customers and the public in a critical situation should arise.

A crisis communication plan should address issues of varying levels of severity. Small problems that are not adequately addressed may develop into bigger communication challenges if not managed properly. Thus, rapid and effective responses to issues are important to the success of the NSGI.

Tactical Plan and Timeline on next page.



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

METER DEPLOYMENT: TACTICAL PLAN AND TIMELINE

A complete set of Tactical Plans and Timelines can be found in Appendix 2.

MONTH	Direct Customer Communications	Community Outreach	Media Relations	Other Communications Channels	Social Media	Project Milestones
SEP-OCT 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Email announcement Customer relations team training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Open House Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances New sample article on deployment to community partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorial board meetings Meter deployment press release Media day Develop PSA script Deployment photo-op Pitch beat reporters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City newsletter column on deployment "On the Mayor's Mind" column e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements Announce prelim. installation schedule/ locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot 2: Aug-Oct 2011 Pilot Testing & Acceptance
NOV 2011-FEB 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Door hangers Customer relations team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newspaper ads (TBD) Public access TV and radio appearances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated installation schedule/locations Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meter Deployment Nov 2011 – Nov 2012
MAR-MAY 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Door hangers Customer relations team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd open house Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment update news release Newspaper ads (TBD) Collect testimonials/ distribute as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated installation schedule/locations Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meter Deployment Nov 2011 – Nov 2012
JUN-AUG 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Door hangers Customer relations team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment update news release Collect testimonials/ distribute as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated installation schedule/locations Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meter Deployment Nov 2011 – Nov 2012



Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Relations/External Communication Plan

PHASE III: INTRODUCTION OF ePORTAL (Late 2011)

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The next phase of the NSGI will be the introduction of the new ePortal, a secure, user-friendly website where customers can view their energy use, learn about voluntary new energy programs and make utility account choices, if they so desire. The ePortal will be branded with a customer-friendly name before introduction to the public.

The ePortal will make a wider range of energy information and utility programs available to customers for the first time and represents the first step in the new choices enabled by the NSGI. The communication team will proactively engage customers by introducing the ePortal and educating them about the personal account information they can access using the site.

The communication team will utilize direct customer communication, community outreach and media relations to reach the entire customer population while placing special emphasis on connecting with target audiences – those most interested in fully utilizing the smart grid benefits and willing to proactively seek out information on the topic.

KEY MESSAGES

The following are key messages pertaining to ePortal introduction. Additional messages will be developed after more details about the ePortal and customer access are available from the project team.

What is the ePortal?

The ePortal is a new DPU-E website where customers can view their personal energy use. Information accessed via the ePortal will provide up-to-date readings of energy consumption for homes and businesses.

Soon, via the ePortal, you will be able to take more control over how much energy you use and when you use it by voluntarily choosing to participate in alternative pricing and/or voluntary “demand-response” programs.

What are the benefits of the ePortal?

The ePortal provides a safe and secure website for customers who want to better understand their energy use.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Direct Customer Communication

The communication team will continue to utilize direct outreach to customers to educate them about the ePortal. While communications sent directly to customers continues to be the most likely channel of successfully delivering information, the ePortal requires customers to proactively visit the website to learn more. Therefore, the communication strategy in this phase should combine direct outreach with an aggressive community and media relations component to maximize message delivery to target audiences, namely those customers who are engaged with the NSGI and are more likely to take proactive steps to view their energy use.



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Suggested direct customer communication activities in this phase include:

- **Letters, postcards and/or bill inserts** – Direct mail is the most effective way to contact the largest percentage of customers. The city can include a utility bill insert or other print collateral directly into customers' utility bill mailings or on the utility bill itself announcing smart meter deployment completion, introducing the new ePortal and encouraging customers to visit the website. The city could also send a postcard or letter independent of the utility bill mailing with more detailed information about the ePortal and its advantages for customers.
- **Email**- Customers who already receive information from the city electronically may be among those most likely to use the ePortal; therefore, the communication team will develop and send an email announcement with a direct ePortal link. This announcement will be distributed to customers who participate in the city's e-Bill program as well as those who receive the NSGI e-Newsletter.
- **Targeted outreach** – The communication team will develop a targeted outreach to customers who participate in the Naperville Renewable Energy Program, since these individuals are energy and environmentally conscious customers who may be more apt to participate in voluntary NSGI programs. The communication team will discuss the best method to reach these customers in a targeted way.
- **Informational displays throughout the city** – The team should continue to update and display a series of NSGI flyers/billboards/advertisements that could be featured in high-traffic areas throughout the city, such as the Municipal Center, public library branches, shopping centers, billboards and other outlets.

Community Outreach

Community outreach will be essential to connecting with and engaging those utility customers most inclined to visit the ePortal and sign up for demand-response programs. These programs are voluntary and require customers to opt-in; therefore, it is essential to proactively engage those customers willing to take the time to learn more about the ePortal and its advantages. Community outreach provides an opportunity to engage in one-on-one or group dialogue to answer questions from the public and provides important basic information about how to access the ePortal.

Recommended community outreach activities include:

- **Software demonstrations at public venues** – NSGI project team members can host ePortal demonstrations at city, intergovernmental and community partners' public venues to demonstrate how the ePortal works. Additionally, software demonstrations should be incorporated into official speakers bureau and community-partner presentations.
- **Public Workshops** – NSGI project team members can set up software workshops for the public at municipal buildings or intergovernmental and community partners' venues. Customers will get hands-on experience operating the new ePortal software, see firsthand the functionality of the website and can experience how easy it is to monitor energy use and participate in voluntary new energy programs.
- **Ambassadors program outreach** – NSGI ambassadors will distribute information about the ePortal at different community settings and events.
- **Speakers bureau outreach** –The NSGI speakers bureau engagements will feature a software demonstration or interactive component to demonstrate ePortal use.



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- **Presentations and information distribution by community partners** – The NSGI team will continue to partner with its intergovernmental and community partners to make smart meter and ePortal information available to their constituents. The City will continue to encourage and assist in the development of special ePortal software demonstrations, programming, displays, and events.

Media Relations

Proactive media relations in the ePortal introductory phase will keep reporters and the general public informed about NSGI progress as well as introduce the ePortal.

Media relations activities for this phase of the initiative include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Reach out to beat reporters** – The communication team will contact local beat reporters and pitch a story announcing the ePortal introduction and how it will give customers a tool to better understand and manage their energy use and electricity bill.
- **Appearances on Naperville Community Television (NCTV17)** – NSGI spokespersons/ambassadors can appear on Naperville Community Television (NCTV17) talk shows and news broadcasts to discuss the ePortal and provide a software demonstration.
- **Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA)** – The communication team can develop an informational public service announcement announcing ePortal introduction.
- **Testimonials/case studies** –The team can begin to collect testimonials/case studies of satisfied ePortal users for use in future media and promotional materials.
- **Newspaper advertisements** – The communication team will explore the possibility of purchasing advertisements in the *Naperville Sun* and other local publications announcing ePortal introduction.

Social Media

The communication team will continue to use the City of Naperville's Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts in this phase of the project to promote the ePortal launch. Electronically savvy and engaged social media users may be some of the customers most likely to utilize the ePortal, so the communication team will use these tools to actively reach out to those who follow or are friends of the City.

Opportunities for using these social media channels include:

- Posting a message each day describing different features of the ePortal.
- Posting regular updates on Facebook and Twitter highlighting the number of customers who have registered for the ePortal. If the city can highlight a large number of its customers electing to use the ePortal, other customers may be curious to learn about the ePortal.



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- Encouraging followers and friends to post their questions or feedback about the ePortal on Facebook and Twitter.
- Posting information about ePortal software demonstrations and workshops in the community as well as community events and ambassador activities.

Crisis Communication

If a crisis or problem occurs, timely communication is critically important to the success of the NSGI.

One of the keys to effective crisis communication is being prepared for a crisis before it occurs by identifying areas of risk and having the crisis communication team and spokespeople identified and ready to step in quickly if a crisis occurs. This communication plan takes potential risks into account and aims to mitigate the identified risks through proactive communications.

Nonetheless, sometimes events and projects do not go according to plan. The City of Naperville has a crisis communication plan that will be the basis for communication activities if the need to quickly and effectively communicate with customers and the public in a critical situation should arise.

A crisis communication plan should address issues of varying levels of severity. Small problems that are not adequately addressed may develop into bigger communication challenges if not managed properly. Thus, rapid and effective responses to issues are important to the success of the NSGI.

The communication team will develop a tactical plan and timeline prior to this phase of the project.



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PHASE IV: INTRODUCTION OF NEW PROGRAMS (Early 2012)

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The next NSGI phase features the implementation of new demand-response programs and alternative rate options for customers. These programs require customers to voluntarily opt-in and customize a program that fits their energy-use needs; therefore, it is critical to inform and educate all utility customers about their availability, while also targeting and engaging those customers who are most likely to choose to participate. This phase lays the groundwork for future energy programs' success.

KEY MESSAGES

The communication team will develop key messages pertaining to the introduction of demand-response and new alternative rate options. The focus of messages in this phase will educate customers on the advantages of these voluntary programs and how opting-in can help customers curb their energy consumption and positively impact electric bills. The messages will be developed with input from the NSGI project team after the programs have been finalized.

What are demand-response programs?

Demand-response programs are optional programs that allow customers and the utility to automatically reduce electricity consumption when overall demand for energy is high. For example, customers who opt-in can have select appliances (such as air-conditioning units or pool pumps) automatically cycled off during periods of high-energy demand and usage (like hot summer afternoons). Energy prices are at their highest when demand is highest. Customers can choose to participate in optional programs to reduce the amount of electricity used and positively impact their electricity bills.

What are time-of-use electric rates?

With the NSGI, customers can choose to continue to pay a flat rate for all energy consumption or opt-in to time-of-use pricing and pay rates that vary according to electricity supply and demand.

Electricity is cheaper at off-peak times when there is less demand for power. An example would be in the evenings when a majority of businesses are closed, the weather is cooler and fewer people are running their air conditioning. Time-of-use pricing means customers are charged different rates for electricity used at peak and off-peak times, allowing customers who have flexibility in when they use power to save money if they select this option. Different plans will accommodate the lifestyles and preferences of different users. Participation in optional programs and time-of-use pricing is strictly voluntary. Customers will be able to choose the rate program that best meets their lifestyle and needs.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Direct outreach will continue to be one of the primary ways to communicate with all utility customers to present information on the new programs. Community and media relations will also be essential in connecting with customers and encouraging them to learn more about the optional new programs available to them. Media relations will focus on announcements of new programs and related publication opportunities.



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Community Outreach

Community outreach will continue to be important in this phase of the project as it provides opportunities for two-way dialogue and answering questions from the public. Alternative rates and demand-response programs will be a new concept for utility customers; therefore, customers will most likely have questions about how the programs work.

Recommended community outreach activities in this phase include:

- **Public Workshops** – NSGI project team members can set up workshops to discuss new energy programs at city, intergovernmental and community partners’ public venues.
- **Speakers bureau outreach** – The NSGI speakers bureau engagements will feature presentations about new program options, how they operate and how they could impact customers’ bills. Speakers bureau representatives will continue to speak frequently at community meetings and at other Naperville events.
- **Presentations and Information distribution by community partners** – The NSGI team will continue to partner with its intergovernmental and community partners to make information about new energy programs available to their constituents.

Media Relations

The communication team will continue to proactively engage reporters on NSGI progress, the benefits of demand response and the new rate programs through press releases, direct pitches to reporters and social media. Additionally, there are a number of editorial options the communication team should initiate to educate the public about the new pricing programs and encourage them to consider participation.

- **Press release announcing new programs** – The team will draft and distribute a press release announcing the new demand response programs and alternative rate programs.
- **Op/Ed Piece** – The team will draft an op/ed piece from an NSGI spokesperson or the Mayor updating the public on the smart grid program, explaining demand-response and the new rate programs available to customers.
- **Editorial board meetings regarding demand response benefits** – The NSGI team will schedule meetings with local newspapers’ editorial boards to offer information about the benefits of demand response technology, alternative rates and customer choices.

Social Media

The communication team will continue to use the City of Naperville’s Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts in this phase of the project to promote new programs and rates. Electronically savvy and engaged social media users may be some of the customers most likely to opt into new programs, so the communication team will use these tools to actively reach out to those who follow or are friends of the City. Opportunities for using these social media channels include:

- **Tweeting/Facebook posting** – The communication team will use Twitter and Facebook to provide periodic updates on the number of customers who have registered for demand-response or alternative rate programs. If the City can demonstrate a large number of customers taking advantage of these programs, others may be encouraged to also take advantage.



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Crisis Communication

If a crisis or problem occurs, timely communication is critically important to the success of the NSGI.

One of the keys to effective crisis communication is being prepared for a crisis before it occurs by identifying areas of risk and having the crisis communication team and spokespeople identified and ready to step in quickly if a crisis occurs. This communication plan takes potential risks into account and aims to mitigate the identified risks through proactive communications.

Nonetheless, sometimes events and projects do not go according to plan. The City of Naperville has a crisis communication plan that will be the basis for communication activities if the need to quickly and effectively communicate with customers and the public in a critical situation should arise.

A crisis communication plan should address issues of varying levels of severity. Small problems that are not adequately addressed may develop into bigger communication challenges if not managed properly. Thus, rapid and effective responses to issues are important to the success of the NSGI.

The communication team will develop a tactical plan and timeline prior to this phase of the project.

MOVING FORWARD

The final phase of the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative will also be a transition to Naperville's energy management future. During this transition, utility employees will be trained and highlighted as 'trusted energy advisors' capable of guiding Naperville residents and business owners in their future energy decisions. Energy experts in the City's utility should be well prepared for interaction with the public well beyond the duration of this initiative, as questions and concerns regarding best practices for personal energy consumption will arise in the future.

Ongoing education, training and engagement will empower Naperville residents and businesses to make choices that best fit their lifestyles and unique needs as the energy landscape continues to evolve.



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APPENDIX 1: Works Reviewed

Case Studies/Best Practices

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NSGI Customer Relations/External Communications Plan
APPENDIX 2: Complete Tactical Plans and Timelines

PILOT PROGRAM AND GENERAL PROGRAM COMMUNICATIONS: TACTICAL PLAN AND TIMELINE

MONTH	Direct Customer Communications	Community Outreach	Media Relations	Other Communications Channels	Social Media	Project Milestones
FEB-APR 2011	<p>Develop sample messages/materials</p> <p>Develop rapid response protocol</p> <p>Shared question/response inventory for public consumption</p> <p>Reorganization of NSGI website</p> <p>Developed NSGI utility bill insert</p>	<p>Fact sheet/sample article to community partners</p> <p>Open House</p> <p>Supported utility presentation to homeowners association</p> <p>Ambassadors Program planning</p> <p>Speaking opportunity at Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Press release announcing passage of NSGI bill of rights</p> <p>Interview for local news story regarding smart meter radio frequency</p> <p>Press release announcing details of Open House</p>	<p>Overall city-wide messaging, increasing awareness and education, informing customers of tools in place (e-Newsletter, smart grid website, hotline, etc.)</p> <p>e-Newsletter</p> <p>Electric Current</p> <p>State of the City mention</p>		<p>System Development: March – Aug 2011</p>
MAY/JUN 2011		<p>Ambassador training</p>		<p>Overall city-wide messaging, increasing awareness and education, informing customers of tools in place (e-Newsletter, smart grid webpage, hotline, etc.)</p> <p>e-Newsletter</p> <p>Electric Current</p>		<p>System Development: March – Aug 2011</p> <p>Pilot 1: May-Aug 2011</p>
JUN/JUL 2011		<p>Ambassador events scheduling</p> <p>Speakers bureau outreach/scheduling</p>		<p>e-Newsletter</p> <p>Electric Current</p>		<p>System Development: March – Aug 2011</p> <p>Pilot 1: May-Aug 2011</p>
AUG/SEP 2011	<p>Customer relations team training</p> <p>Sample materials to pilot participants and feedback</p> <p>Adjust messages/materials based on feedback</p>	<p>Ambassador events</p> <p>Speakers bureau appearances</p>	<p>Collect testimonials from pilot participants</p>	<p>e-Newsletter</p> <p>Electric Current</p>	<p>Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements</p>	<p>System Development: March – Aug 2011</p> <p>Pilot 1: May-Aug 2011</p> <p>Pilot 2: Aug-Oct 2011</p>

METER DEPLOYMENT: TACTICAL PLAN AND TIMELINE

MONTH	Direct Customer Communications	Community Outreach	Media Relations	Other Communications Channels	Social Media	Project Milestones
SEP-OCT 2011	Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Email announcement Customer relations team training	2 nd Open House Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances New sample article on deployment to community partners	Editorial board meetings Meter deployment press release Media day Develop PSA script Deployment photo-op Pitch beat reporters	City newsletter column on deployment "On the Mayor's Mind" column e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city	Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements Announce prelim. installation schedule/ locations	Pilot 2: Aug-Oct 2011 Pilot Testing & Acceptance
NOV 2011-FEB 2012	Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Door hangers Customer relations team meetings	Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances	Newspaper ads (TBD) Public access TV and radio appearances	e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city	Updated installation schedule/locations Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements	Meter Deployment Nov 2011 – Nov 2012
MAR-MAY 2012	Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Door hangers Customer relations team meetings	3 rd open house Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances	Deployment update news release Newspaper ads (TBD) Collect testimonials/ distribute as appropriate	e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city	Updated installation schedule/locations Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements	Meter Deployment Nov 2011 – Nov 2012
JUN-AUG 2012	Direct mail (letters, postcards, bill inserts) Door hangers Customer relations team meetings	Ambassador events Speakers bureau appearances	Deployment update news release Collect testimonials/ distribute as appropriate	e-Newsletter Electric Current Informational displays throughout city	Updated installation schedule/locations Post community & ambassadors events, speaking engagements	Meter Deployment Nov 2011 – Nov 2012