

“The Future Grid from a Municipal Lens”

GMAC Stakeholder Session

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday July 17, 2025, 8:15 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.

100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA

1. Networking

Attendees were invited to network and visit interactive posters around the room to share thoughts on prompts including: What are your top priorities around the grid?; What is your biggest concern around the grid?; What questions do you have about the grid/grid planning?; and How do you feel about your ability to engage with the grid planning process?

2. Welcome, Keynote Address, & Opening Remarks

Commissioner Mahony welcomed the group and gave opening remarks at 9:08 a.m.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC) Chair, gave an overview of the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), and what it does in the state. She discussed Massachusetts climate mandates, including achieving net zero emission by 2050, and discussed the state’s roadmap for achieving them. She discussed the future electric grid, the planning activities and modernization investments that will need to occur. Finally, she introduced the GMAC, the Electric Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs) and gave an overview of the Massachusetts Grid Planning landscape.

3. Panel: How is Massachusetts Planning the Future Grid?

Speakers:

- *Moderator: Sarah Cullinan, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)*
- *Amy McGuire, Highland Electric Fleets*
- *Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance*

Sarah Cullinan gave an overview of the panel objectives, including discussing key considerations in Massachusetts grid planning and what it means for municipal leaders to engage. The panelists introduced themselves and the organizations they represent on the GMAC and provided some comments on their vision for the future grid.

The panelists discussed the importance of grid planning, including ensuring that investments are made at the right place and the right time to ensure the grid is able to accommodate the amount of electrification expected. They emphasized the importance of municipal leaders engaging with their electric distribution company (EDC) account representatives and learning about the investments the EDCs plan to make in their communities. Ensuring equitable cost allocation (*i.e.*, “who pays”) was a common theme.

Sarah Cullinan facilitated a question-and-answer period from the audience. Audience members discussed their own experiences trying to complete decarbonization or electrification projects and challenges they encountered. Additionally, one participant asked if the GMAC has members with resilience expertise.

4. Panel: What is in the ESMPs?

Speakers:

- *Moderator: Joanna Troy, DOER*
- *Lavelle Freeman, Eversource*
- *Andrew Schneller, National Grid*
- *Jake Dusling, Unitil*

The EDC representatives discussed their planning processes for investments. They highlighted that they do forecasting annually and that there is a long lead time for many to come online (5+ years). They discussed the Long-Term System Planning Process (LTSP) for DER interconnection, the Grid Services Compensation Fund, Integrated Energy Planning (IEP), and the Community Engagement Stakeholder Advisory Group (CESAG).

Joanna Troy, DOER facilitated a question-and-answer session from the audience. Audience members asked about networked geothermal and highlighted that it could be both a non-wires and non-pipes alternative. Another audience member discussed the definition of resiliency versus reliability and asked about how actual EDC investments compare to what was planned. The EDCs provided comments on resiliency and grid hardening and the successful roll-out of various distribution system investments.

5. Break 10:50-11:00 a.m.

6. Panel: Navigating Electrification for Municipalities

Speakers:

- *Moderator: Jonathan Stout, PowerOptions*
- *Kate Tohme, New Leaf Energy*
- *Sarah Bresolin Silver, ENGIE North America*
- *Christine Blais, City of Somerville*
- *Erina Keefe, City of Cambridge*

The panelists introduced themselves and discussed how municipal electrification affects their communities and organizations.

Christine Blais and Erina Keefe shared the challenges Somerville and Cambridge are facing with electrifying their buildings, and emphasized the high costs to residents, long timelines, and difficulties of getting cost estimates for necessary upgrades from utilities without solid plans of the upgrades (chicken-egg problem). Kate Tohme and Sarah Bresolin expressed that they face similar challenges in the renewable energy development space - especially cost causality issues.

The panelists shared their thoughts on solutions and their hopes for the future, including additional information transparency and changes to cost causality.

Panelists responded to audience member comments and questions about getting more data about customer energy usage, and challenges with confidentiality.

7. Facilitated Table Discussions

Facilitated by Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation

The audience members broke out into 10 small group discussions facilitated by members of the GMAC. Kathryn Wright shared that the GMAC will send out a summary of takeaways in the coming weeks. Stakeholder session materials will be available on the GMAC website.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Schultz

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