

# Massachusetts Grid Modernization Advisory Council

## Equity Working Group Meeting

---

December 6, 2024



# Meeting Agenda



Item	Time
Administrative Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome, Agenda, Roll Call</li><li>• Meeting Minutes Review and Voting</li><li>• EWG Seat Vacancy</li></ul>	11:00 – 11:05
2025 EWG Planning Proposal	11:05 – 11:35
Equity in Long-Term System Planning Process (LTSP)	11:35 – 11:55
Close	11:55 – 12:00

**Roll call alphabetically by voting and then non-voting members**

# Roll Call



## Equity Working Group Voting Councilors

Larry Chretien

Julia Fox

Chris Modlish

Kyle Murray

Mary Wambui

Kathryn Wright, Chair

Green Energy Consumers Alliance

Department of Energy Resources

Attorney General's Office

Acadia Center

Planning Office for Urban Affairs

Barr Foundation

## Non-Voting Councilor

Erin Engstrom (non-voting)

Eversource

## Consultants

Chelsea Mattioda

Synapse

Tim Woolf

Synapse

# Meeting Minutes

---



- Calling for vote to finalize:
  - September 27, 2024, Equity Working Group minutes
- *Motion to approve the September 27<sup>th</sup> minutes [as distributed/as corrected]?*

# Seat Vacancy Update



- The EWG has a vacant seat for a voting member representing an organization that is not represented on the GMAC.
  - **Thank you, Vernon Walker (Clean Water Action), for your time on the GMAC Equity Working Group!**
- Based on previously expressed interest, we have reached out to Jolette Westbrook (Environmental Defense Fund) to fill the vacant seat.
- To fill the vacancy, the full GMAC must vote to appoint a candidate to serve the rest of the unexpired portion of the term.
  - This vote will be on the agenda for the next GMAC meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup> from 1 – 4 PM.

**Do any EWG members have any connections who are interested in serving on the EWG?  
Any nominations must be received by [MA-GMAC@mass.gov](mailto:MA-GMAC@mass.gov) no later than December 12<sup>th</sup>.**

# Review of GMAC 2025 Goals

**In the October GMAC Meeting, the members discussed the following goals:**

Building foundational knowledge on distribution system planning, investments, and activities. This will include:

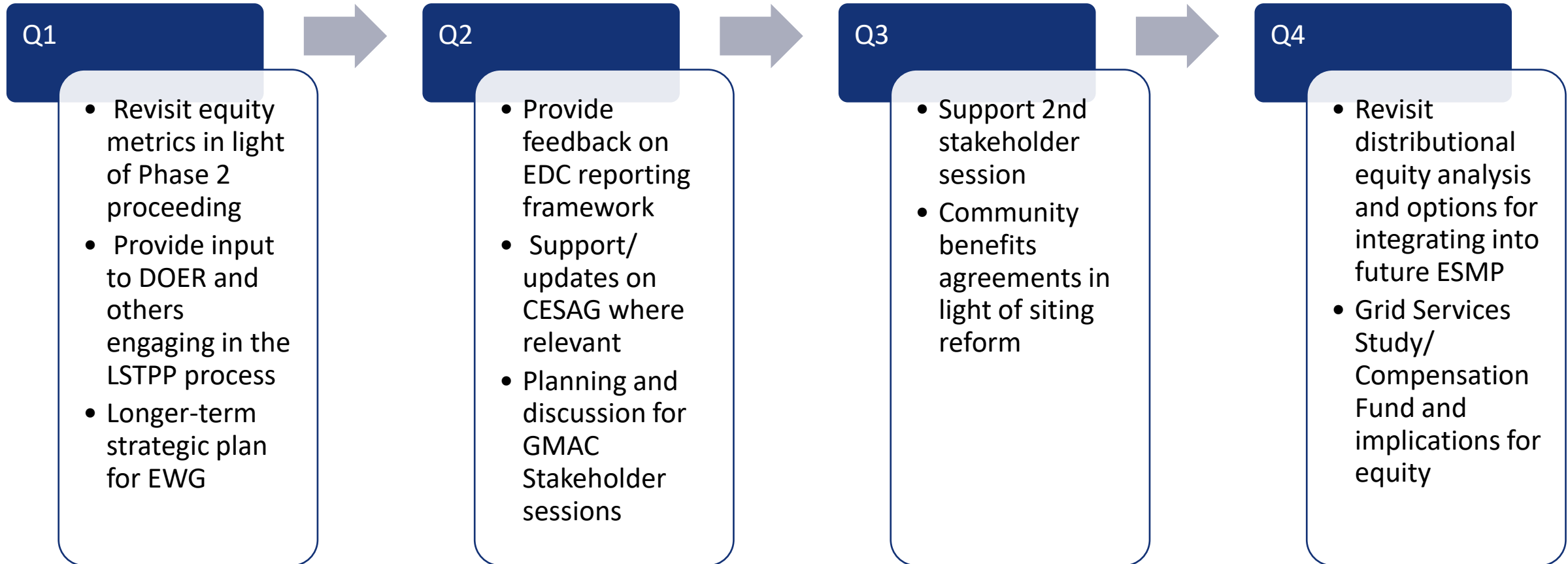
- Continued stakeholder engagement and informational materials.
- Collaboration with the EDCs.
- Ongoing monitoring of ESMP phases at the DPU.
- Ongoing monitoring and updates on related distribution system dockets and working groups (Ex: ARR, Service Quality Reports, EV investment plans, LTSP, CIPs, Joint Working Group, CESAG, Interagency Rates Working Group).
- Development of a work plan beyond 2025 and leading up to the next draft ESMPs.

## **Activities in 2025 will:**

- Feature productive dialogue and collaboration, and develop shared understanding
- Increase transparency and stakeholder engagement in broader grid planning activities
- Prepare the Council for more in-depth collaboration in 2026 and 2027

# 2025 EWG Topic Proposals

- We propose that the EWG holds quarterly 90-minute meetings in 2025.



**Questions for EWG members on following slide.**

# 2025 EWG Planning Proposal - Questions



- Are we missing key themes or topics?
- Are there any changes we would like to make EWG processes, systems or procedures?
  - **Proposal:** Propose having an equity discussion/breakout during the GMAC stakeholder meetings in 2025 so that we can talk directly with parties interested in grid planning and the working group.
- In light of the discussion, does the group want to make any adjustments to the proposed meeting cadence?



# How Could Equity be Incorporated into LTSP?



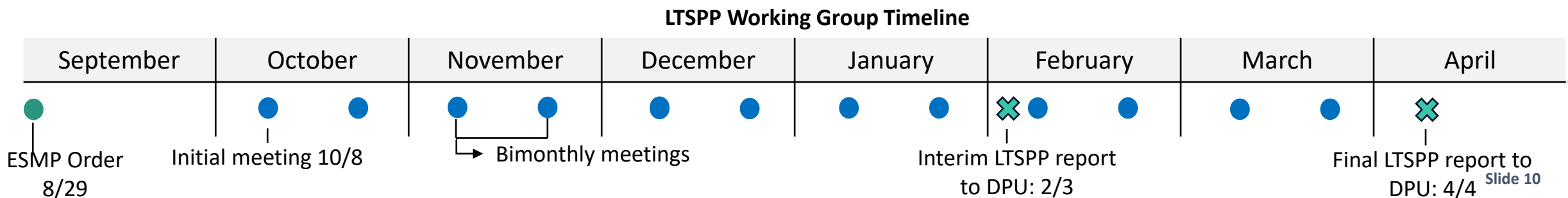
- **Goals for this meeting:**
  - Review purpose, scope, and timeline of Long-Term System Planning Process Working Group
  - Discuss themes from working group discussions
  - Brainstorm initial thoughts on incorporating equity into the LTSP
- Note that we plan to revisit this topic in early 2025.

# Long-Term System Planning Process Working Group

- In the ESMP Order, the DPU established a **Long-Term System Planning Process (LTSP) working group**. The purpose of the group is to establish a process for the EDCs to proactively identify infrastructure needs to facilitate DER interconnection.
- The group shall discuss:
  - Factors that drive development of DG (like land availability, cost, proximity to existing infrastructure, etc.)
  - The role of flexible interconnection
  - Cost-allocation methodology
  - Process for updating the LTSP over time
- The working group has been meeting on a bimonthly schedule. [Meeting materials can be accessed here.](#)

The following topics have been discussed:

10/8/24	Procedure, EDC presentations of D.P.U. 20-75 and current proposals
10/22/24	EDC presentation on cost allocation
11/5/24	Stakeholder presentations on LTSP - <i>Process</i>
11/19/24	Stakeholder presentations on LTSP – <i>Cost allocation</i>



# Themes from LTSP Meetings & Next Steps

The working group meetings have included discussion and questions on major themes, including:

- **Scope of LTSP (11/5 + 12/3)**
  - Should LTSP include incremental load growth in addition to distributed generation (DG)?
  - How does the LTSP process fit into the ESMP process?
- **Cost Allocation (11/19)**
  - How are costs shared equitably across interconnecting customers and ratepayers?
  - Methodologies discussed: Beneficiary pays, export tariffs
- **Non-Wires Alternatives (11/5)**
  - How do we balance proactive Dx system build out and cost-effective solutions?
- **Stakeholder Engagement (11/5)**
  - How can stakeholder engagement at system planning stages be standardized across EDCs?
  - Where can stakeholders meaningfully provide feedback?
- **Location of New Infrastructure (TBD)**
  - What factors should the LTSP consider when deciding where to build new infrastructure (e.g. proximity to load, availability of existing network capacity, favorable permitting environment)?

## Next Steps

- A full schedule of topics for the upcoming bimonthly meetings has not been set.
- **1/14/25:** (Tentatively date) EDCs will share a draft LTSP proposal with the working group.
- **2/3/25:** EDCs submit an interim status report.
- **4/4/25:** EDCs submit a final status report describing areas of agreement and disagreement.
- DPU will direct next steps as soon as practical after that.

**Do EWG members have any reactions or questions?**

# How Could Equity be Incorporated into LTSP?



The following items serve as starting points for further brainstorming on equity within LTSP. Questions to consider for these topics are on the following slide.

## 1. Forecasting Inputs → Stakeholder Understanding of Propensity Modeling

- Adoption propensity models are used to inform forecasts and resulting investment proposals.

## 2. EJ Impacts Evaluation → Applying Distributional Equity Analysis

- Minimum requirements for CIPs under the Provisional Program include an explanation of how the CIP will affect low-income residents and EJ Populations. Analysis is conducted on the environmental benefits and burdens to the EJ populations within a CIP area, and the DPU assesses if the burden outweighs the benefits in meeting MA clean energy goals.
- The DPU Order notes that evaluating locational-specific impacts on EJ Populations, such as distributional equity analysis, could be addressed in LTSP investments (*see Appendix for Order reference*).

## 3. Metrics → Measuring Equitable Progress

- A subsequent phase of the ESMPs will focus on metrics. DPU will consider the sufficiency of proposed equity-related metrics and possible metric additions.

**Do EWG have thoughts on how equity could be incorporated into LTSP?**

# How Could Equity be Incorporated into LTSP?

## Forecasting/Modeling:

1. What does it mean to have a neighborhood or circuit be overburdened by infrastructure?
2. What safeguards in modeling and forecasting can ensure EJ communities have adequate electrification infrastructure without being overburdened by energy infrastructure siting?

## Metrics

1. Should there be any specific metrics established to measure progress on the equity issues in the LTSP?

## Infrastructure Siting

1. What factors related to equity should the LTSP consider when deciding where to build infrastructure?
2. What factors should be prioritized? (ex. Proximity to load, availability of existing network capacity, favorable permitting environment, other factors?)

**Do EWG have questions/thoughts on how equity could be incorporated into LTSP?**

# Close and Next Steps

- The next GMAC meeting is December 17<sup>th</sup> from 1 – 4 PM.
- The next EWG meeting is TBD. Please be on the look out for a scheduling email. We will spend some time on the CESAG. Other topics TBD.

Please share the GMAC stakeholder engagement materials, including a new landing page and two factsheets! Thank you to those who have already shared. 😊

- [Utilize our Message Testing Toolkit](#)
- Get to know the [Grid Modernization Advisory Council](#)
- *\*NEW GMAC Resource\** [Modernizing Massachusetts's Electric Grid](#)
  - Friendly link: [Mass.gov/GridMod](https://mass.gov/GridMod)
- Grid Modernization 101 [Factsheet](#)
- Grid Modernization 201 [Factsheet](#)

### Your Electric Grid, Your Future: Get Involved

Because your electricity should be clean, affordable, and reliable.

**The Grid Modernization Challenge**

Think of the electric grid as a large network of power lines that carries electricity from power plants to your home so you can use it to turn on your lights. Grid modernization is the process of updating the grid through new technologies, equipment, and controls. The electric grid needs innovative upgrades to better support rising electricity needs and be resilient to climate change.

**1 Clean:** To reduce the harmful impact of fossil fuels on the climate, we need to make our energy use more sustainable and clean. Updating our grid to support electrification for homes, vehicles, and renewable energy projects is essential.

**2 Reliable:** The electric grid powers our homes, transit systems, electronics, and so much more. Just like our roads, we need to update our grid infrastructure (wires, poles, and substations). To meet future demand our grid infrastructure may need to support double the amount of electricity we use now.

**3 Affordable:** To optimize this investment, these upgrades must be both cost-effective and strategic. By carefully planning our future grid, we can address today's high utility bills and create a more affordable energy solution.

### Turning Massachusetts' Challenge into Progress

The electric utility companies have developed strategic plans for modernizing the electric grid and advancing an equitable clean energy future. The plans:

- promote renewable energy and energy storage adoption
- improve the grid's reliability and resiliency to the impacts of climate change
- enable electrified transportation and buildings
- minimize impacts on customers

### Learn More About Your Electric Grid!

Massachusetts has a stakeholder group that provides recommendations on best practices for grid modernization planning. The Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC) represents many interests and organizations, including low-income consumers, environmental advocacy groups, and the renewable energy industry.

Take the next step to learn more about your electric grid by visiting our website! Sign up for the GMAC newsletter at [mass.gov/gmac](mailto:mass.gov/gmac) for regular updates on our activities. Send us questions or public comments at [MA-GMAC@mass.gov](mailto:MA-GMAC@mass.gov).

<https://bit.ly/MA-GMAC>

### Your Electric Grid, Your Community

Have a say in your community's energy infrastructure!

**A Closer Look:** Innovative grid solutions are becoming a reality in Massachusetts. The Hyde Park Battery Project by Eversource is addressing rising energy demand in several Boston neighborhoods whose electrical substations are already at full capacity. Community input will guide plans for siting and paying for this project to support Boston's clean and reliable energy future.

### Why Modernize the Grid?

We need to double our electricity supply by 2050 to meet the Commonwealth's climate goals as more people purchase electric vehicles and switch from fossil fuel burning to electric heating systems. This means that our grid infrastructure needs to be updated to ensure we meet our climate goals.

### The Challenge

Our current grid cannot support the rapid electricity growth needed to meet increasing demand and our climate goals. Traditional utility investments (substations, poles, and wires) are not enough. An expanded, modern grid will also need alternative clean energy technologies based in local homes and businesses. All these new resources need to be developed strategically, cost-effectively, and equitably.

### Your Community's Involvement

Throughout the state, every town has a role to play in contributing to grid modernization discussions, promoting and installing new clean technologies, identifying cost-effective options for expanding the grid, and minimizing siting impacts from new infrastructure installations.

### How Are We Addressing This Challenge?

Massachusetts' electric utility companies have created short- and long-term plans for modernizing the grid that:

- promote an equitable clean energy future that includes renewable energy and energy storage
- improve grid reliability and climate resiliency
- enable electrified transportation and buildings
- maximize net benefits to customers.

### What is the GMAC?

The Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC) is a stakeholder group that provides advice and recommendations on best practices for utilities' grid-enhancing Electric Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs). The GMAC represents many interests and organizations, including low-income consumers, municipal planners, and the renewable energy industry.

### How Can I Represent My Community?

- Attend a public meeting, share your thoughts, and sign up for the GMAC newsletters on our website.
- Send us questions or public comments at [MA-GMAC@mass.gov](mailto:MA-GMAC@mass.gov).

<https://bit.ly/MA-GMAC>

# Appendix

# ESMP Order Reference on Equity in LTSP



- The DPU ruled that the ESMP investments net benefits analysis does not need to account for locational-specific impacts, distributional equity analyses, or EJ benefits. DPU did require that the EDCs describe equity benefits in greater detail in the next ESMPs.
  - “Further, for major infrastructure projects (e.g., CIPs and new substations) in particular, a distributional equity analysis and impacts to specific EJ populations would be better addressed in the **extended Provisional Program filings or the forthcoming LTSP**, similar to the requirements already applied to Provisional Program projects and projects submitted to the EFSB for review” p. 419.
  - Footnote 132: A distributional equity analysis could be presented in the form of a **cumulative impacts analysis**. The Legislature is considering language that could require an electric distribution company to conduct a cumulative impacts analysis as part of future EFSB proceedings. “An Act Upgrading the Grid and Protecting Ratepayers,” 2024 S.2838, §§ 73, 82, 88, 94; “An Act Accelerating a Responsible, Innovative and Equitable Clean Energy Transition, 2024 H.4884, §§ 30, 39, 42, 51. The Department may find EFSB discussions relating to cumulative impacts analysis to be informative for matters within our jurisdiction.



# Additional Questions: How Could Equity be Incorporated into LTSP?



## Forecasting/Modeling:

1. How do the EDCs determine whether a neighborhood or a circuit has adequate electrification infrastructure?
2. Do the EDCs use heat maps to indicate circuit loading and hosting capacity?
3. How do we ensure that adoption of beneficial electrification is modeled accurately and without causing additional inequities?
4. Are there things not included in the propensity model that should be considered in combination with the propensity model?

## CIPs/DEA:

1. Do the EDCs intend to apply the minimal requirements of CIPs under the Provisional Program to the LTSP?
2. How do the EDCs plan to address the DPU order regarding locational-specific impacts on EJ communities?
3. How do areas of high load, EJ communities, and EDC planned investments overlap?
4. Are we seeing current or future high loads in EJ communities?
5. Are the equity impacts from infrastructure investments that address load growth needs or areas where engineering violations occur?

**Do EWG have questions/thoughts on how equity could be incorporated into LTSP?**

# 2025 GMAC Meeting Topics and Learning Goals (Jan-July)



Month	Topic	Learning Goals	Reason for Timing
Jan	Cost Recovery	How are grid investments paid for? What is a rate case? What costs are recovered outside of rate cases and why?	Ongoing DPU Docket Phase II (ESMP cost recovery) IRWG Recommendations
Feb	Reporting: existing reports, ESMP metrics	What is the goal of utility reporting? How well do existing utility reports cover ESMP issues? What are the goals of ESMP metrics? How is reporting distinct from metrics?	Ongoing DPU Docket Phase II (biannual reports)
Mar	Reporting: ESMP metrics, biannual report content	What metrics should be used to measure progress towards ESMP goals? What should be in the ESMP biannual reports?	Ongoing DPU Docket Phase II (metrics)
Apr	System Reliability and Resilience	What information is included in the annual reliability reports (ARRs)? How do utilities plan and measure grid reliability? How does climate change impact this?	ARR filed 3/31; Service Quality filed 3/1 Climate vulnerability assessments & ResilientMass Implementation
May	Proactive Grid Planning (LTSP Updates)	What was the outcome and the recommendations the LTSP discussions? What are the implications for ESMPs?	LTSP WG report due to DPU 4/4
June	Integrated Energy Planning	What the implications of the Climate Compliance Plans for ESMPs? How are EDCs and LDCs following up on the Future of Gas Order (DPU 20-80)?	Climate Compliance Plans filed 4/1 Joint Working Group Everett Marine Terminal WG
July	Equity in Grid Planning	How should equity be incorporated into ESMPs? How can the GMAC facilitate community engagement for improved grid planning? What is distributional equity analysis?	On-going CESAG Meetings

# Stakeholder Sessions



- We propose that the GMAC hosts two in-person half-day events in 2025 (June/July & November/December).
- Three potential options are outlined below.

	<u>Option #1: Distribution 101</u>	<u>Option #2: GMAC Conference</u>	<u>Option #3: Technical Deep Dive</u>
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMAC members and other technical stakeholders (e.g., municipalities, developers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical stakeholders (e.g., municipalities, developers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMAC members and other technical stakeholders (e.g., municipalities, developers)</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate stakeholders about key elements of the ESMP</li> <li>• Solicit comments and recommendations from technical stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host GMAC member panel to educate stakeholders on the GMAC and ESMP processes</li> <li>• Solicit comments and recommendations from technical stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate stakeholders on the load forecasting process and its inputs.</li> <li>• Solicit comments and recommendations from technical stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution system elements and planning (for technical stakeholders)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations on the GMAC process</li> <li>• Presentations from GMAC members on their areas of expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep dives forecasting models, inputs, and assumptions</li> <li>• Interconnection and siting (for municipalities)</li> </ul>

**The ExCom preferred Option #2 for the first session.**

# GMAC Activity Tracker



- The consultants developed an Excel workbook to serve as a central location for tracking GMAC and ESMP related activities.
- This tracker will contain the master list of dates, key events, and links to relevant materials. It will be updated regularly and informed by GMAC member report outs.
- The tracker will be posted on the GMAC website to be accessible for GMAC members and the public.

	START DATE	END DATE	Description	2024												2025						
				Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4						
				Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025				
<b>GMAC</b>	10/22/24	12/20/25		[Blue bar spanning all months]																		
2025 planning	10/22/24	01/10/25		[Blue bar from Oct 2024 to Jan 2025]																		
Excom meeting	11/21/24	11/21/24			◆																	
EWG Dec. Meeting	12/14/24	12/14/24	Equity Working Group December meeting			◆																
Placeholder																						
Placeholder																						
GMAC Meetings	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly GMAC meetings	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Placeholder																						
GMAC Technical Sessions	06/01/25	11/01/25	GMAC technical sessions											◆								◆
<b>CESAG</b>	11/01/24	01/01/30	Community Engagement Stakeholder Advisory Group																			
Placeholder	11/01/24	01/01/30	Placeholders																			
Placeholder																						
Placeholder																						
<b>LTSP</b>	10/08/24	04/04/25	Long-Term System Planning Program																			
LTSP Process	10/01/24	03/01/25	DPU ordered EDCs to organize a 6-month process starting																			
October meeting 1	10/08/24	10/08/24			◆																	
October meeting 2	10/22/24	10/22/24			◆																	
Placeholder																						
Placeholder																						
Placeholder																						
WG Report due to DPU	04/04/25	04/04/25																				
<b>Current ESMPs</b>	10/22/24	03/31/26	D.P.U. 24-10/D.P.U. 24-11/D.P.U. 24-12																			
ESMP Term	07/01/25	06/30/30	First 5-year ESMP term																			
ESMP Phase II	10/22/24	01/31/25	Dates TBD. Cost recovery, reporting, metrics																			
Biannual ESMP report due	09/30/25	09/30/25	First EDC biannual report due to DPU																			◆
Biannual ESMP report due	03/31/26	03/31/26	Second EDC biannual report due to DPU																			
Placeholder																						
<b>Next ESMPs</b>	07/14/28	02/12/29	Five-year term starting July 1, 2030																			
Draft plans submitted to GMAC	02/12/29	02/12/29																				
GMAC develops recommendation	02/12/29	02/12/29																				
Final plans filed with DPU	07/14/28	07/14/28																				
Placeholder																						