

# Massachusetts Grid Modernization Advisory Council

## Equity Working Group Meeting

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July 11, 2025



# Meeting Agenda



Item	Time
<b>Administrative Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Welcome, Agenda, Roll Call</li><li>Meeting Minutes Review and Voting</li></ul>	10:00 – 10:05
<b>Updates</b>	10:05 – 10:10
<b>ESMP Metrics and Reporting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Update on docket process</li><li>EDC responses to EWG recommendations</li><li>Discussion</li></ul>	10:10 – 10:50
<b>CY2026 EWG Strategic Planning</b>	10:50 – 11:25
<b>Close</b>	11:25 – 11:30

**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

Jolette Westbrook

Kathryn Wright, Chair

Green Energy Consumers Alliance

Department of Energy Resources

Attorney General's Office

Acadia Center

Planning Office for Urban Affairs

Environmental Defense Fund

Barr Foundation

## Non-Voting Councilor

Erin Engstrom (non-voting)

Eversource

## Consultants

Kyle Schultz

Synapse

# Meeting Minutes

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- Calling for vote to finalize:
  - March 24, 2025, Equity Working Group minutes
- *Motion to approve the March 24<sup>th</sup> minutes [as distributed/as corrected]?*

- **GMAC Stakeholder Session**

- The in-person GMAC stakeholder session “The Future Grid from a Municipal Lens” is Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup> from 9 – 12:30 PM. [Register here.](#)

- **July 31<sup>st</sup> GMAC Meeting**

- This GMAC will be discussing equity in grid planning.
- Presentations include an overview of energy equity and best practices around the country, an overview of the CESAG process and framework, and a readout of EWG goals for FY2026 to be discussed in this meeting.

- **CESAG Update**

# EDC Presentation on ESMP Metrics and Reporting



- **Brief Overview of the ESMP Phase II Metrics/Reporting Filing**
  - Specific attention to stakeholder engagement metrics, narrative reporting, and equity considerations
- **Response to EWG Recommendations**
  - How was EWG feedback incorporated?
  - How the EDCs determined what feedback was accepted/rejected
- **Next Steps**
  - What is left in the proceeding?
  - How can the EDCs and the EWG continue to collaborate/discuss equity considerations in ESMP reporting?





# **Equity Working Group & Electric Distribution Companies July 11, 2025**

# Biannual Report



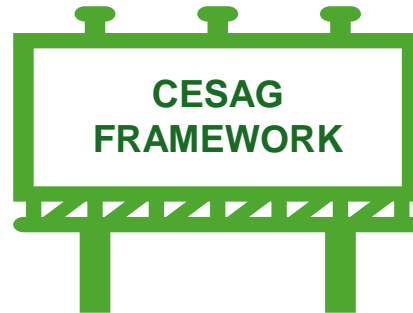
## Biannual Reports

### **September report looks ahead:**

What do we expect to take place in the upcoming year for stakeholder activities?

### **March report is retrospective:**

What occurred in the previous year? Report on CESAG framework implementation, as applicable.



**Final CESAG framework will be presented at the July 31<sup>st</sup> GMAC meeting.**

The Equity Working Group's March 27, 2025 memo recommendations for procedural, distributional and structural equity practices were reviewed and adapted to advance equity policies, practices and the equitable siting of electric distribution system infrastructure.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- The EDCs will provide an update on stakeholder engagement activities in the previous year, including CESAG.
- The EDCs will provide updates on how they are addressing distributional and structural equity in the implementation of their ESMPs, including providing a description of lessons learned that may impact equity framework, as well as updates on training staff on equity matters for ESMP implementation and allocation of staff resources.

Narrative of what is planned for upcoming or previous period

Narrative of what opportunities exist to address structural and distributional equity

An update on stakeholder engagement activities, including engagement with CESAG

Detailing applicable lessons learned

An update on training staff and allocation of resources

# Biannual Report

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- For each 5-Year ESMP term, the number of outreach and involvement meetings about the respective EDC's draft ESMP (e.g., 2030-2034 ESMP) with stakeholders, including EJC's, municipal leaders, community-based organizations and customers (i.e., residential, commercial and industrial, as well as DER customers).
- The number and category of requests made as part of stakeholder feedback on specific ESMP infrastructure projects, classified into visual mitigation, access accommodations, work hours, right-of-way maintenance, informational accommodations, engineering accommodations, and damage prevention, as well as the EDC's response to these requests classified as under consideration, implemented, not accepted with reason, and other.

Quantitative data about engagement efforts

A review of outbound communication and engagement efforts

A review of inbound communication and engagement efforts, summarized categorically.

A more robust description would remain in the narrative sections

# Biannual Report

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- For ESMP infrastructure projects, measure engagement opportunities by tracking:
  - Do stakeholders impacted by EMSP infrastructure projects have the necessary information and opportunity to participate in and inform project development and implementation?
- Outreach:
  - In plain language?
  - Available in the appropriate language(s) specific to host communities?
  - Include information about required approvals (e.g., permitting)?
  - Provide appropriate and accessible contacts for feedback?

More focused on procedural equity

Creates an objective measurement of procedural equity; creates consistent guidance that is not community or project specific

Integrated into the CESAG Framework

# Beyond the Biannual Report

**Procedural Equity**

At the close of applicable community engagement activities or events, provide a platform for participants to evaluate their experience to assess the efficacy of engagement activities. Methodologies for feedback and evaluation are expected to vary based on the project, the community, and the engagement activity.

Evaluation should aim to measure

- > participation gaps of the impacted community (see section 2-3 of the CESAG framework)
- > effectiveness of engagement activity (what was the goal of the engagement and was it met?)
- > sentiment of participants (i.e. did they feel 'heard', were concerns addressed? etc.)

Evaluation should aim to measure accessibility:

- > Materials in plain language (when possible use visuals, including figures or dashboards, as a method for communicating with affected communities.)
- > Materials available the appropriate language(s) specific to host communities
- > Materials provides information about required approvals (e.g., permitting)
- > Materials provides appropriate and accessible contacts for feedback
- > Participation process, including venue/time/ADA/etc. is appropriate to the defined community

**DISTRIBUTIONAL EQUITY**

Include information on how Environmental Justice Communities are both positively and adversely impacted by ESMP investments:

Evaluation should aim to document in 4 areas:

1. benefits of the project
2. burdens of project
3. concerns from stakeholders

**Recognition/Structural Equity**

Provide additional clarity to communities by responding substantively to feedback and provides a rationale for what feedback was accepted, modified or rejected; provide public access to a "feedback loop".

Evaluation should aim to measure

- > is there a mechanism for a feedback loop for transparent, two-way communication
- > is there a mechanism to document and respond to the stakeholders' concerns

The EDCs reviewed comments submitted by the EWG in its memo dated, March 27, 2025.

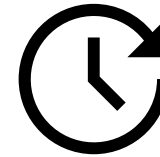
The EDCs introduced this memo to the CESAG during the construction of the engagement framework. As a result, equity measurements have been incorporated as a means for determining the efficacy and effectiveness of engagement efforts that use the CESAG framework.

# Next Steps



## What is left in the proceeding?

- DPU issued its order on Phase II of the ESMP docket on June 13, 2025
- As ordered in the Phase I proceeding, the EDCs have conducted a series of meetings with the CESAG
- The meetings, conducted over the past three months, concluded this week and a community engagement framework has been finalized
- EDCs to provide bi-annual updates on progress and plans



## On the horizon

- Review the ESMP Phase II Order
- Make adjustments to outreach practices based on the CESAG framework and order; begin training staff
- Begin draft of biannual report due in September 2025





Questions?



# CY2026 Strategic Planning – Excerpts from EWG Charter



## I. Overall Role and Responsibilities

The goal of the Equity Working Group is to **provide recommendations on the draft ESMPs for consideration by the GMAC specifically related to equity, with focus on low-income ratepayers and Environmental Justice populations.** It will be the responsibility of the Equity Working Group to provide input and feedback to the GMAC, in carrying out its statutory responsibilities to review and provide recommendations to Electric Distribution Companies as they draft and submit Electric-Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs). **The Equity Working Group will also provide the GMAC with on-going input and recommendations on how to integrate and improve equity through the review and implementation of the ESMPs.**



# CY2026 Strategic Planning – Excerpts from EWG Charter



## II. Responsibilities

The GMAC charges the Equity Working Group with the responsibility to:

- Provide input and feedback to the GMAC on how to consider equity through its review of the ESMPs and their implementation;
- Provide suggestions for addressing specific equity issues in the ESMPs;
- Provide feedback and specific suggestions on how to reduce impacts on low-income ratepayers;
- Provide feedback and recommendations relating to Environmental Justice Populations
- Advise and assist the GMAC on equity matters;
- Solicit meaningful engagement from stakeholders representing underserved populations; and
- Make recommendations and report to the GMAC on actions and activities of the Equity Working Group

# CY 2026 Strategic Planning



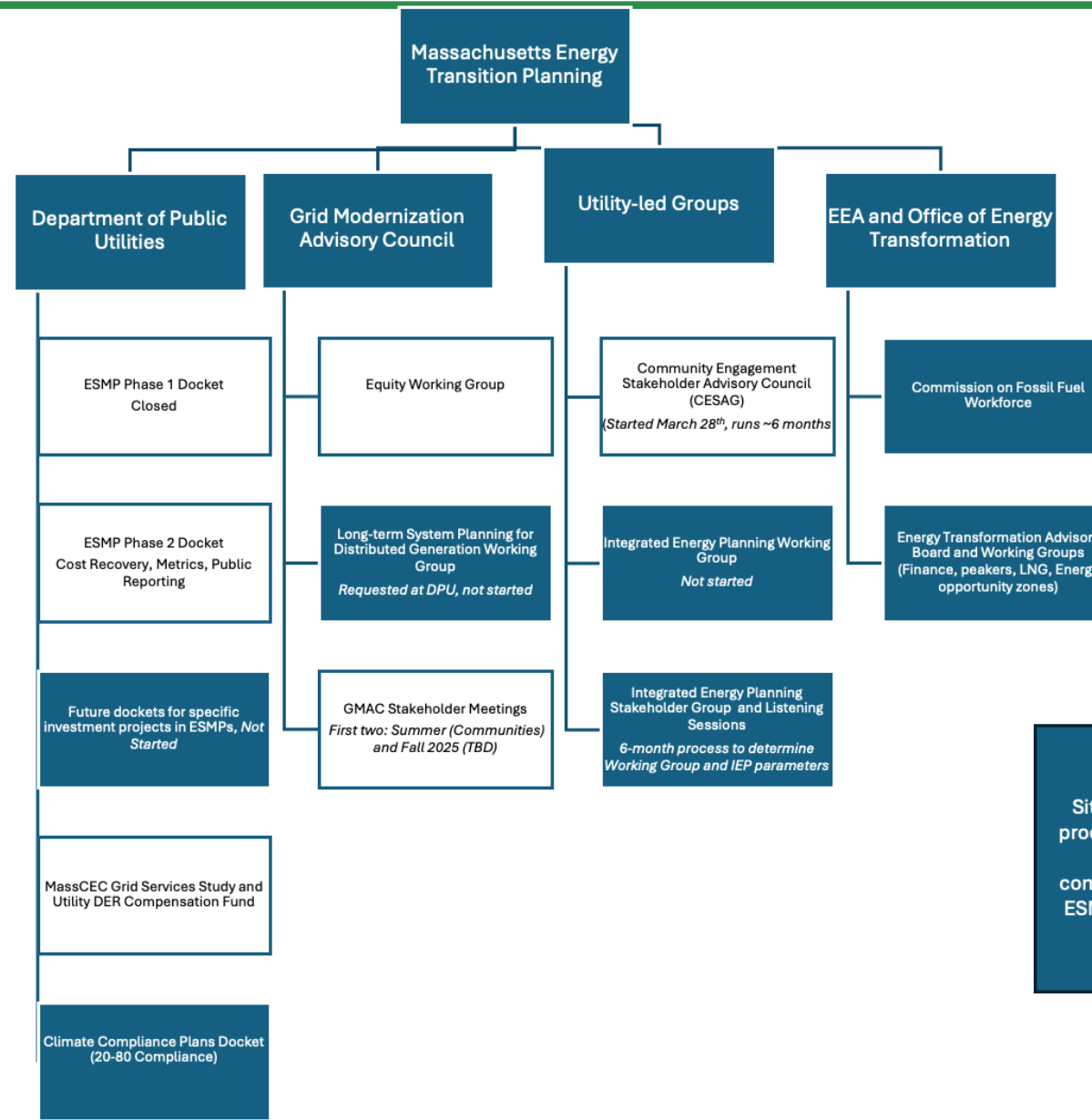
## **Areas EWG has Provided Feedback to Date:**

- Recommendations for the draft ESMPs before the opening of the Phase 1 Docket
- Feedback on metrics and reporting during Phase 2 of the docket
- Recommendations to the EDCs regarding CESAG members and consultants
- Feedback on MassCEC's Grid Services Study

**Given the Phase 2 process is concluding soon, and the next ESMP process is several years in the future, where do we want to focus our time in 2026?**

# CY 2026 – Summary of Ongoing Commonwealth Processes

(White boxes indicate where WG has provided feedback to date)



Siting and Permitting Reform: Not a GMAC process, but related because the community benefits agreements, intervenor compensation and siting decision will govern ESMP projects which meet criteria for EFSB.

# Planning – For Discussion

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- Going forward, what is your vision for the role of the equity working group?
- Are there other areas of the ongoing energy transition planning processes of interest to the Equity working group members that we should prioritize engaging with in 2026?
- Is there proactive planning or analysis this group is interested in pursuing ahead of the next ESMP?

(We discussed distributional equity analysis during the recommendations process, but this recommendation was not pursued for the current ESMP.)

# Operations – For Discussion

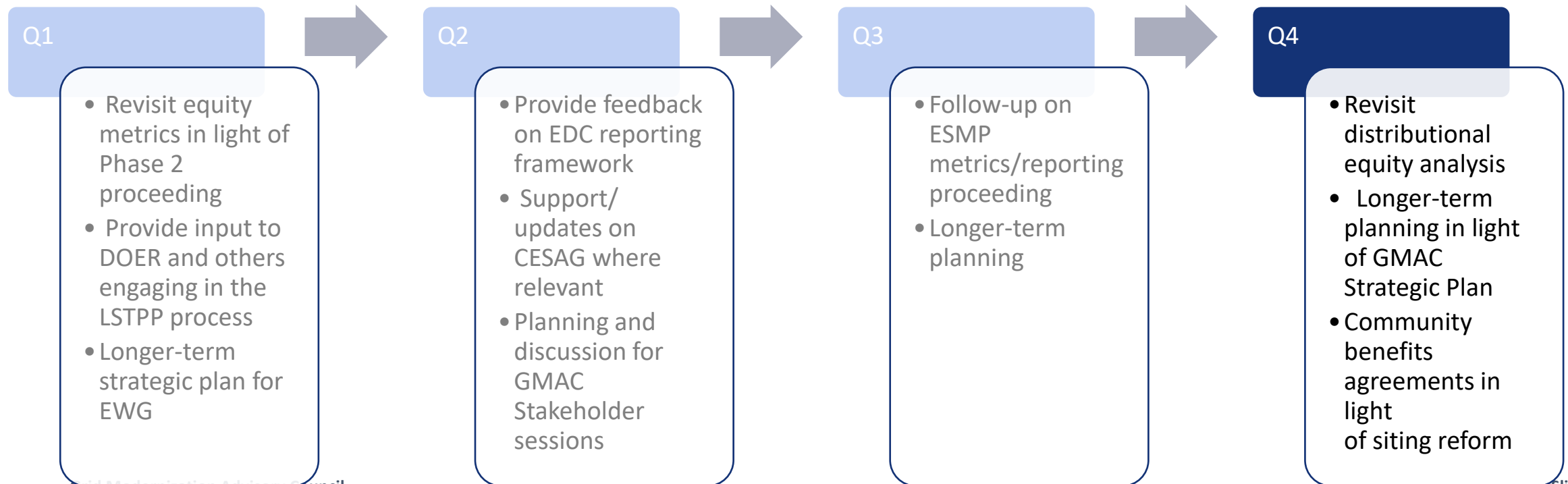


- We shifted our meeting cadence at the beginning of this year. Is this still working or are adjustments needed?
- We are all slated to serve two-year terms. With the exception of one member, terms will expire in December unless members are reappointed. Do we want to recruit or add members?
- Given the volume of ongoing grid planning work in the Commonwealth, how should we approach coordination with other related working groups?
- Are there new ways we could work with DOER, GMAC, and Synapse to engage the public in our work?

# Close and Next Steps

- The 1<sup>st</sup> GMAC Stakeholder Session is July 17, 2025 from 9 – 12 PM.
- The next GMAC meeting is July 31, 2025 from 1 – 3 PM.
- The next EWG meeting is October 10, 2025 from 10 – 11:30 AM.

*Reminder of our quarterly meeting goals:*



# Appendix



# ESMP Phase II Initial Filing Overview

# ESMP Biannual Reports: Summary

*"[T]he Department established the first five-year ESMP term as beginning on July 1, 2025 and concluding on June 30, 2030. As such, the Companies first ESMP biannual report shall be filed on September 30, 2025... and the second biannual report will be due on March 31, 2026."*

## September Report (mostly prospective)

- 2025 and 2026 planned expenditure tables by investment
- Summary of planned investments by category for upcoming year
- Changes to forecasting methodology for baseload, solar, EVs, heating, and storage
- Upcoming stakeholder engagement activities and update on stakeholder framework from CESAG

Both Reports will include updates on:

- Integrated energy planning
- Climate vulnerability assessments
- Outside funding

## March Report (mostly retrospective)

- 2025 actual expenditure from prior year by investment
- High-level summary of ongoing investments by category
- ESMP metrics provided in excel tables
  - With a cross reference to existing metrics
- Most recent Annual Reliability Report and most recently recorded annual peak
- Update on stakeholder engagement activities in prior year (including CESAG) and how EDCs are addressing distributional and structural equity in ESMP implementation
- High-level data on non-ESMP investments and summary list of relevant docketed proceedings in prior year

# ESMP Biannual Reports: Stakeholder Engagement



## September Report

- Updates on upcoming stakeholder planned activities for the next year
- An update on development of stakeholder framework from CESAG (first bi-annual report only)

## March Report

- Updates on stakeholder engagement activities in the prior year, including CESAG
- Updates on how the EDCs are addressing distributional and structural equity in the implementation of their ESMPs, including:
  - A description of lessons learned that may impact equity framework
  - Updates on training staff on equity matters for ESMP implementation and allocation of staff resources

# EDC Proposed ESMP Metrics: Stakeholder Metrics



Jointly proposed by all EDCs

1. Number of stakeholder\* outreach and involvement meetings about draft ESMP filings for the next term (2030-2034).
2. For specific ESMP infrastructure projects, do impacted stakeholders have sufficient opportunity to participate in and inform project development and implementation. Is the outreach:
  1. In plain language?
  2. Available in the appropriate language(s) specific to host communities?
  3. Provide information about required approvals (e.g., permitting)?
  4. Provide appropriate and accessible contacts for feedback?
3. The number and category of stakeholder requests related to ESMP infrastructure projects and the EDC's response (i.e. under consideration, implemented, not accepted with reason).

\* Stakeholders include: EJC's, municipal leaders, community- based organizations and residential, commercial and industrial customers, and DER customers

# EDC Proposed ESMP Metrics: Investment Metrics



Jointly proposed by all EDCs

1. Achievement dates of “ready for load” for major ESMP infrastructure projects.
2. The number of customers benefiting from incremental ESMP resiliency investments.
3. Increase in (a) DER hosting capacity, and (b) load serving capacity by substation.
  - Will also report percentage of benefits located in an EJC.
4. GHG reductions enabled by investments, in alignment with state GHG targets.
5. For the distributed energy resources management system (DERMs) a) number of participating sites, b) amount in kW of non-company owned dispatchable assets the utility can control, c) number of instances sites are dispatched.
6. For conservation voltage reduction (CVR) and volt amps reactive optimization (VVO) investments, measures of circuit-level energy savings, peak savings, and reactive power savings.

# Summary of GMAC Comments on Original EDC Metrics



The GMAC provided comments and recommendations on ESMP metrics in the 2023 GMAC ESMP Report. A selection of key comments are summarized below. The full text of the comments is provided in the appendix.

- The proposed metrics lack detail about how they directly relate to ESMP investments
  - EDCs should include additional reporting metrics that are tied to the ESMP proposals, e.g.,
    - increase in DER hosting capacity
    - power quality improvements
    - reliability improvements
    - GHG reductions
    - Use of distributed energy resources management systems
  - EDCs should include specific metrics and quantification methods for determining the incremental impact of proposed ESMP investments.
- The EDCs should develop goals and metrics to measure the efficacy of proposed stakeholder engagements
  - Metrics, baselines, and targets should be used to document 5- and 10-year planning solutions
  - EDCs should include reporting metrics related to workforce development training programs, ideally aligned with those produced by the Equity Working Group

# High Level Themes from Original EWG Feedback

- The EWG recommended that the utilities adopt a uniform definition of equity aligned with definitions used by practitioners / *This was adopted in the drafts and the DPU approved the equity definition.*
- The EWG flagged that the stakeholder engagement metrics were insufficient and did not focus on distributional or structural aspects of equity / *Metrics were not addressed in Phase 1.*
- The EWG requested an improvement in the legibility of public facing documents to (e.g., plain language, multiple language support, following best practices for outreach identified through other projects such as the AGO's stakeholder working group) / *The DPU deferred many of the concerns about outreach to the CESAG.*
- The EWG provided sample metrics in many different categories which would provide transparency on how the EDCs are addressing benefits and burdens as they relate to affordability, resilience, workforce, and several other factors / *Metrics were not addressed in Phase 1.*