



Summary of Regional Outreach on NEEA's 2020-2024 Strategic and Business Plans

December 4, 2018

More than 20 years ago, utilities and energy efficiency organizations around the region established the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) in a coordinated effort to transform markets for energy efficiency. Working together, the alliance drives market adoption of natural gas and electric energy efficiency products, services and practices throughout the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. Since 1996, the alliance has cost-effectively realized more than 1,400 average Megawatts (aMW) of electric energy savings through market transformation.

NEEA operates on five-year business cycles. In developing its Business Plan for the 2020-2024 cycle, the alliance took a fresh, bottoms up look at its portfolio to develop a plan with the greatest regional value while addressing the diverse regional needs and constraints identified through broad outreach to its funders and stakeholders.

As part of this process, NEEA's Board had to consider difficult tradeoffs to balance emerging technology and energy savings work with the preservation of organizational capacity to deliver this work, including regional collaboration and coordination, market intelligence and core business administration functions. To help inform these decisions, the Board conducted extensive public outreach to gather input for the draft 2020-2024 Strategic and Business Plans throughout 2017 and 2018. The following is a summary of the outreach activities and the associated input.

Summary of 2017 Strategic Plan Outreach Activities

As part of its strategic planning process, NEEA's Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and NEEA staff conducted more than **sixty interviews** with individual stakeholders. The focus of this outreach was to gather perspectives to assist NEEA's understanding of the current and future environment and to identify trends and issues that could potentially impact the alliance. The following groups provided input as part of an in-person interview: Funders (electric and gas), state public utility commissions, state offices, non-governmental organizations, trade associations, manufacturers, retailers and distributors. In addition, an online survey, open to the public, resulted in **41 completed surveys**, with more than **200 views** of situational assessment papers. This input helped inform the development of the Draft Strategic Direction Document in 2017.

In December 2017/January 2018, SPC members and NEEA staff again conducted broad outreach to regional stakeholders. The strategic direction document and related survey hosted on Conduit generated **672 views** and **444 downloads**. Additionally, the Board hosted a webinar for Bonneville Power Administration customers as well as a call with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission staff.

Summary of 2018 Outreach Activities

In 2018, NEEA's Board and staff conducted regional outreach for input on the Draft 2020-2024 Business and Strategic Plans that included email outreach, in-person public meetings and regional webinars. In addition to five public workshops held over the course of the year, the Strategic and Business Plans were shared with the region for public comment via Conduit from June – October 2018.

Respondents were contacted via email, Conduit and NEEA newsletters, to review the Plans and participate in two regional webinars and eleven in-person presentations coordinated by NEEA Board members and staff. Results included:

- The Draft Strategic Plan was posted for a public comment period, running from June 28-August 31, and remained posted through October 19. The Draft Business Plan was posted for public comment from September 25-October 19.
- Approximately **5,600 stakeholders** were directed to the Plans via Conduit, email, and the BPA and NEEA newsletters.
- The Strategic Plan received **613 views, 248 downloads, and four completed feedback forms** from Northwest Requirement Utilities (NRU), the Northwest Public Power Association (NWPPA), the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC), the Idaho Office of Energy and Mineral Resources, and the Northwest Energy Coalition (NVEC) within the comment period.
- The Business Plan received **657 views, 226 downloads, and nine completed feedback forms** within the comment period.

In-person presentations were made to approximately **334 stakeholders**, through meetings held at the Washington Utility and Transportation Commission (WUTC), the Oregon Public Utility Commission (Oregon PUC), the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council), and the Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee (PNUCC), among others.

In creating the final Plan, the Board reviewed and considered the input from all stakeholders who participated in these activities within the outreach period as well as submitted letters to NEEA staff, and those responses are characterized below.

Key Themes of Outreach Feedback

During the regional outreach on the Plans, many questions were raised regarding how core and special projects funding is structured, and the reasons behind discontinuing Conduit (along with feedback both for and against discontinuing the platform). There was support for integrating natural gas and electric work and for getting alignment on downstream marketing. There was some concern expressed about the delayed timing of the stock assessments. The most common concern expressed was whether the proposed 2020-2024 budget was sufficient to attain enough savings through cost-effective energy efficiency for the future of the region.

Feedback Themes	Board Resolution of Feedback
Consider Discontinuing Aspects of Conduit Online Community	During tradeoff discussions related to budget, NEEA’s Board prioritized activities that produced savings and/or concretely moved Market Transformation forward. Some of Conduit’s core functions may be provided in alternate ways. In 2019, NEEA staff will look at ways to support that transition.
Ensure Adequate Budget to Secure Regional Energy Savings	In creating the 2020-2024 budget, the Board started with a fresh, bottoms-up look across the full range of alliance activities, to determine the right mix of activities to balance needs across the region. Due to the long-term nature of the alliance’s work, previous investments are phasing out while new programs are forecasted to phase in, which is resulting in a lowered savings projection for the 2020-2024 Business Plan. The budget is intended to represent the mix of activities that have the majority support of alliance funders; however, it also

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	builds in flexibility for the Board to shift program focus based on market movements and evaluate future opportunities for special projects at any point during the 2020-2024 cycle.
Review Timing and Scope of Regional Stock Assessments	Though originally removed from the 2020-2024 budget, the Commercial Building Stock Assessment was added back in to the Business Plan due to strong funder and stakeholder support, but it is intended to be completed in the 2025-2029 cycle. The Residential Building Stock Assessment will also be conducted in the 2020-2024 Business Plan, but will be streamlined to focus on single-family homes, due to budget limitations. Funders will have the opportunity to participate in a Multi-Family Stock Assessment Special Project for the first time in 2020- 2024. This will also be the first cycle that gas funding supports the stock assessments.
Include Extra-Regional Partnerships and Funding in Alliance Work	The alliance works extra-regionally to leverage its efforts. It has a process in place for NEEA's Board to determine extra-regional funding and participation in special projects on a case-by-case basis. A current example of this type of work is End Use Load Research, which is funded by partners in the region as well as with special funding from Department of Energy. That project is part of NEEA's work, but is not part of the core, regionally funded work outlined in the Business Plan. These additional funding opportunities may emerge at any time. Any special project should fit NEEA's purpose to provide benefits to Northwest customers.
Address Locational and Demand-Based Activities	<p>Many of the technologies that generate energy efficiency—NEEA's first priority—have a secondary ability to control or modify the demand that these devices place on the system. If properly configured and connected, these technologies can provide both energy and capacity in support of the needs of the Northwest electric power system. NEEA will provide additive value to existing energy efficiency-focused market transformation by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with market actors to support making efficient products to be capable of being used as flexible demand resources, and 2. Working with standard setting organizations, utilities and manufacturers to move toward common technical specifications that the industry can adopt. This will result in economies of scale, and further reduce the incremental cost of this added capability.
Explain Role of Boundary Conditions	<p>The Boundary Conditions are intended to reduce confusion by clarifying the roles and responsibilities between alliance staff and funder staff in collaborating on programs. They will help define roles and accountabilities for the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board in strategy and policy; 2. Staff in operational execution; and 3. Advisors in technical and analytic guidance.
Integrate Natural Gas and Electric Market Transformation Activities	Based on funder interest and support, NEEA's Board has integrated both natural gas and electric market transformation activities into a shared Strategic Plan and Business Plan for 2020- 2024. In addition, all natural gas funders now sit on NEEA's Board, and plans are underway to incorporate natural gas funding and activities into the existing Next Step Homes program in 2019.
Align on Downstream Marketing Activities	NEEA's Board asked the Regional Portfolio Advisory Committee and regional marketing experts to create a set of guiding principles on how the alliance will execute downstream marketing activities to end-consumers in 2020-2024. These guiding principles have a dual objective: to address funder concerns around marketing to customers and to support the ongoing effectiveness of regional market transformation work. The principles are included in the Business Plan to ensure transparency.
Account for Regional Equity	The Board uses regional equity as a key criterion for the alliance portfolio, both in its current work and in the 2020 – 2024 Business Plan. The alliance balances its portfolio of work to deliver value equitably across the regional stakeholders in all four states, in rural and urban areas, and in large and small utilities and

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	energy efficiency organizations. The alliance considers the availability of products and the rate of market adoption across the region to assess the progress of market transformation. The Board will continue to discuss the role of equity in the alliance during the 2020-2024 business cycle.

In summary, NEEA’s Board and staff thank all those stakeholders who participated in an event or provided comments over the course of the strategic and business planning process.

For questions or more information on Strategic and Business Planning outreach, please contact Veronica Marzilli at talk@neea.org.