

“With help from Gridworks, our Commission achieved its goal of developing a progressive new approach to grid planning. We used an open and engaging stakeholder process, grounded in experience and lessons learned from Oregon and beyond.”

— MEGAN DECKER, Chair, Oregon Public Utility Commission

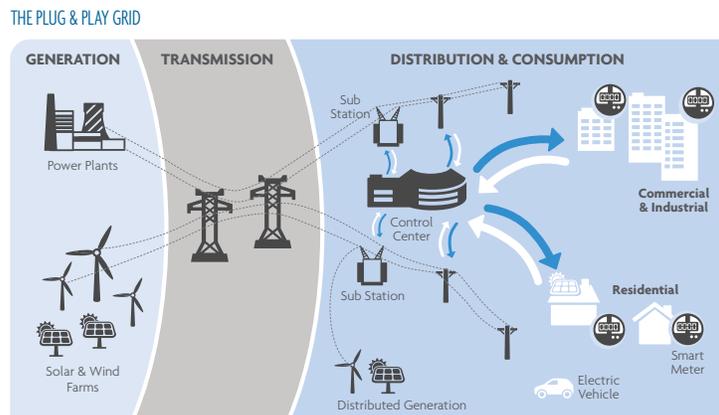
HOW OREGON REFORMED GRID PLANNING

OVERVIEW

In 2020 the Oregon Public Utilities Commission partnered with Gridworks to develop a transparent, robust, and holistic regulatory planning process for electric utility distribution system operations and investments. Under the distribution system planning investigation (docket UM 2005), Commission Staff led an inclusive stakeholder process to foster shared learning on distribution system planning practices and develop a common vision and principles for distribution system planning. Gridworks supported the Commission’s success by designing and facilitating a series of 12 workshops and webinars with robust stakeholder participation, and contributing to the resulting guidelines.

THE CHALLENGE

Historically, utility investments in the distribution system were determined with little public engagement or oversight. Moreover, those investments were typically engineered to support one-directional flow of power and communication, and serve predictable load patterns. Over the past decade, these historic practices have been challenged as customers increasingly adopt technologies like rooftop solar and electric vehicles, while communities demand more choice in their energy future. These trends have called utilities to open their decision-making processes to the public, while challenging regulators to facilitate more transparent, robust and holistic stakeholder processes.



APPROACH

Over nine months, Oregon PUC Staff and Gridworks completed the following process to advance the investigation goals.



OUTCOMES

This initiative led to the following outcomes:

- **Broad stakeholder support for new Commission rules** stemming from 12 engaging webinars
- Comprehensive, staged approach to **Distribution System Planning reform, adopted unanimously** by the Oregon Public Utilities Commission
- **Industry leading Community Engagement Plan**, advancing equity and community needs through a new, open distribution system planning process



The outcomes fulfill the Commission's goal of establishing a transparent, robust and holistic regulatory planning process for electric utility distribution system investment and operations.

ABOUT GRIDWORKS

Gridworks facilitates difficult discussions and collaboration between policymakers, decarbonization advocates, energy providers and utility operators. We work with these groups to determine the best approach to meet decarbonization goals. Our work has eased the shift toward clean energy in the Western U.S. We're expanding to further our mission and invite you to work with us to navigate your clean energy challenges.

Learn more at gridworks.org.