An effective TE plan is within reach for utilities

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Utilities' transportation electrification (TE) efforts aren't always compiled into a single, strategic plan. TE funding comes from many sources, and multiple levels of policy (or lack thereof) can govern TE. And there are more challenges. The many utility departments involved in TE planning (such as program design, customer service, and distribution planning), aren't always aligned or in sync. Some utilities have filed comprehensive TE plans, while others deliver EV offerings one program or pilot at a time.

The state of transportation electrification planning

Our recent webinar about TE planning is available on demand for members of certain E Source services. If you're not a member but are interested in viewing this webinar, please contact us.

Watch on demand

In mid-December, we held a webinar to dig into what's working, what isn't, and what research can help utilities build a TE plan. We led an insightful discussion with attendees about:

- Why TE planning is important
- The challenging moving parts of TE
- The new E Source TE Insights tool

Here are a few noteworthy takeaways from the event.

Why TE planning is important

For successful TE initiatives, create a TE plan that contains a multiyear strategic vision that crosses all customer sectors. Having a thorough TE plan helps you and your regulators get ahead of the increased load that will hit the grid. And it helps customers navigate the big changes that come with transportation electrification.

Use a TE plan to:

- Stay one step ahead of regulatory requirements and be ready for when inevitable requests come in
- Develop an internal roadmap to facilitate seamless collaboration among utility divisions
- Share information publicly (on the utility website and other public forums) to communicate openly with external stakeholders and customers

Every utility has unique needs, so we're seeing a wide range of planning approaches, as evidenced by the results of the informal poll we conducted during the webinar (**figure 1**). But just like demand-side management (DSM) planning and reporting have standardized over the last few decades, we expect TE planning to become a standard process for utilities. We also expect that comprehensive TE plans will be the clearest way for utilities to organize their TE portfolios.

Figure 1: Where is your utility doing most of its TE planning?

Our webinar poll revealed that utilities are taking varied approaches to TE planning. Some have stand-alone TE plans. Others include TE in a DSM or other plan. And still others plan on a one-off basis.

A TE plan can help you see the full picture of EV-related activities. And developing a forward-looking strategy allows you to be deliberate in your approach instead of reactive to regulatory requests.

TE has a lot of moving parts

One of the biggest challenges with TE planning is deciding how to wrangle the variety of moving parts. This can be especially challenging because some of the concepts are new when compared to the work utilities are doing in DSM. Attendees discussed four main topics.

Equity. How can we collaborate with stakeholders involved in TE—like cities, community groups, and nongovernmental organizations—to make sure our TE efforts benefit everyone? Our white paper The energy equity framework that benefits customers, utilities, and underserved communities can provide inspiration.

Distribution planning. When and where will TE affect our grid? There's no one-size-fits-all answer, but it's important to start with a baseline understanding of your customers, the local EV landscape, and your distribution constraints. For our *PowerTalking* podcast, we talked to Stephanie Leach, principal business analyst at BGE, about the utility's process and how it's mitigating grid impacts with managed charging. Check out Episode 7: EV managed charging.

Manufacturers and dealerships. How are local dealers marketing and selling EVs to consumers? Clearly define your utility's role in EV marketing. Make sure internal teams understand that role and can reflect it to customers. Building partnerships with OEMs and dealerships can make sure your utility is front and center in the EV buying experience instead of an afterthought. In our blog post Utilities have an essential role to play in EV marketing. It's time to step up, we discuss how utilities are uniquely positioned and qualified to be the primary promoter for electric transportation in the early sales stages.

Policy and regulation. How can state policy support (or impede) our EV programs and plans? The

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act provide unprecedented levels of funding for EVs and EV infrastructure. But the execution will come down to individual states in many cases. Coordinating with state energy offices and other agencies will help make sure utilities' needs are a part of implementation decisions. Discover more in our report How utilities can support EV charging infrastructure through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

During the webinar, we asked attendees about their biggest TE planning challenges (**figure 2**).

Figure 2: What's your biggest challenge in TE planning?

Attendees told us that they're struggling with grid constraints, legislation, funding, regulation, and resources.

Because of all the moving parts and varied impacts, your TE may not fit into the traditional mold for utility programs. Having a strategic TE plan will allow you to identify which parts of TE your utility can act on and then work with regulators to measure results and impact. For utilities with state-level decarbonization goals, TE efforts can help meet those targets. In other cases, you may need to work with regulators to set new goals and performance incentives related to EVs.

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Stakeholder engagement is essential for all utility programs, but even more so for transportation electrification because of the intersectional nature of these efforts. You must build relationships and coordinate with dealerships, OEMs, local and state governments, and other agencies to advance your TE offerings.

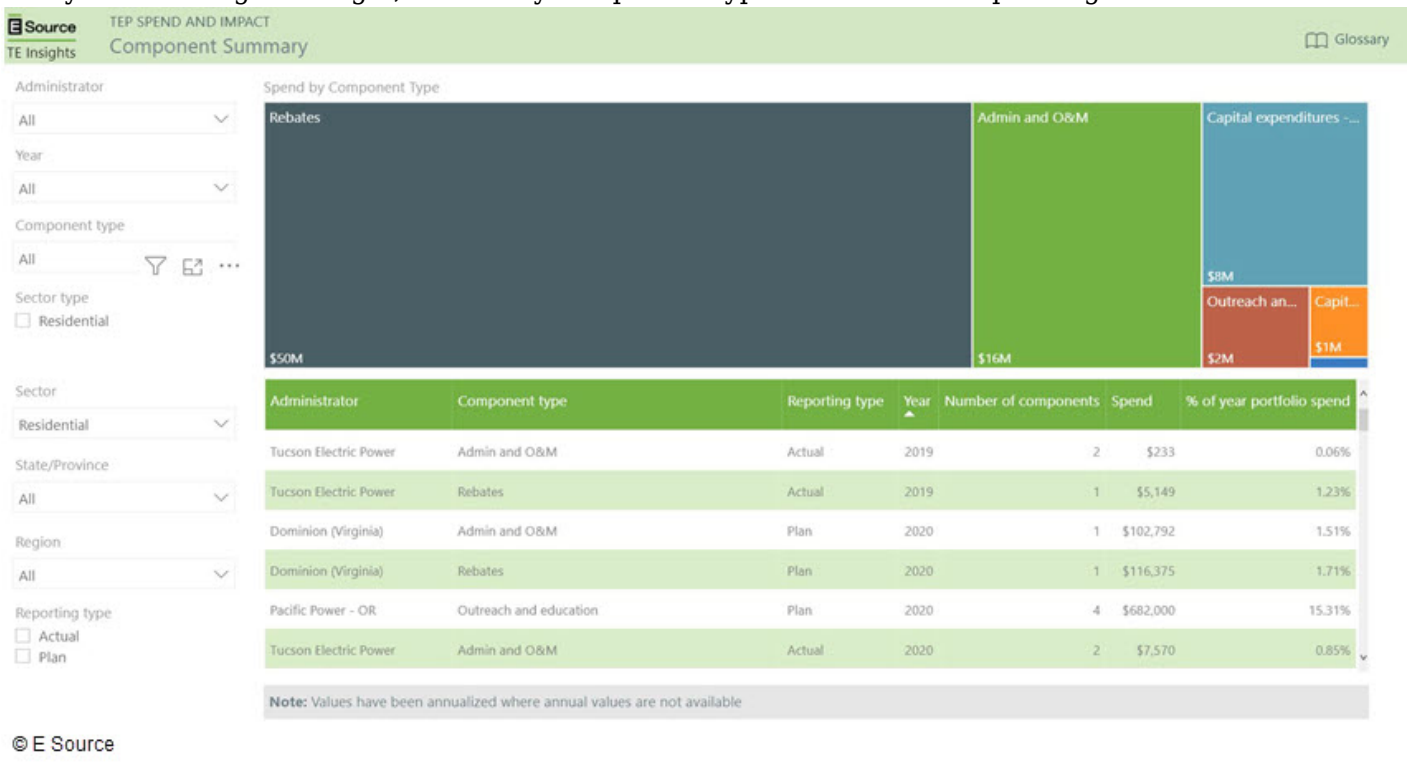
E Source TE Insights can help you track TE plans, programs, and spending

During the webinar, we explained how we created the TE Insights tool to help utilities easily pull information from TE filings and program websites—sources that are usually time-consuming to dig through. TE Insights organizes data from TE plans, EV-specific rates, and customer rebates into one easy-to-navigate platform for a wide range of users.

TE Insights can help you understand utilities' TE portfolios and find strategies to respond to regulators. For example, you can quickly see how utilities are allocating TE plan budgets between rebates, capital investments, outreach and education, and more with the tool's dynamic visuals (**figure 3**). Learn about even more features of TE Insights in our blog post TE Insights: A new tool for tracking transportation electrification plans, programs, and spending.

Figure 3: TE Insights spend summary dashboard

At the top of the dashboard, a data visualization makes it easy to see how the industry or a specific utility is allocating its budget, filtered by component type for residential spending.



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