

ROLE OF MGE

MGE's role as a "community energy company" received thoughtful consideration and input from Workshop participants. Participants shared a variety of thoughts about what they believe that role entails and considerations for living up to those expectations.

Specifically, many participants acknowledged and complimented MGE's historic activities and investment in the community. They discussed how MGE would take a leadership role in driving actions and activities to deepen their engagement in the community. They talked about the importance of how MGE would manage the transition from where we are today to where we aspire to be in the future. And, they also provided ideas on the areas they considered needed to be addressed in order to achieve the Energy 2030 goals.

Below is an overview of the themes that emerged during the Community Energy Workshop regarding MGE's role in achieving the goals outlined in the Energy 2030 framework.

History of Commitment

Much of the discussion regarding MGE's role as the community energy company of the future began with the recognition that the company has a strong history as a corporate community leader dedicated to enhancing residents' quality of life. They recognized the company's long-time dedication to, generous investment in and regular engagement with the community and described MGE as an important corporate partner. They also expressed appreciation for engaging the community via the Community Energy Conversations and the Community Energy Workshop.

- *"MGE is an excellent corporate citizen."*
- *"MGE has been a role model in community partnerships. [They] are involved in events, educating, fundraisers, etc. [There is] always an MGE rep there. Keep doing what you are doing – you are doing a lot right."*
- *"MGE is doing a good job of engagement."*
- *"MGE does a good job of getting input. [They] have a blank slate and are willing to consider all options, very empowering for the community."*
- *"I want to compliment MGE [on] the workshops/focus groups that I have seen them hold. They bring everyone together (Hmong, Latino, African American and white). They aren't meeting with us separately for these focus groups."*

Community Leadership

MGE is recognized not only as an energy industry leader but also a community leader. The company has a reputation for bringing people together in an inclusive way, and people expect MGE to continue to use that leadership role to bring positive change and improvement into the future. Participants also expect that the company's expertise and experience will be used to forge a path that is bold, creative and collaborative when it comes to meeting the Energy 2030 goals.

In addition to words of praise and gratitude, there were also words of caution. Some participants explained that they expected MGE to take an even bolder leadership role when it comes to protecting the environment. Participants acknowledged that in order for MGE to maintain that leadership role, it would be imperative for the company to continue to act as a supportive, collaborative partner with the community and to continue to work on deepening their engagement.

- *"The community is looking for leadership. [We] need someone or some entity to carry the path forward and MGE is in a great position to walk hand-in-hand with the community and stay ahead of technology. Do more than listen to community. Lead it."*

- *"[I'm] struck by the fact that retrofitting is harder than original construction. It's great to say replace things, but what are we doing to ensure appropriate building is happening in [the] community? Old buildings that can have impact in the future, what can MGE do to enhance good decision-making initially to avoid the need for constant upkeep?"*
- *"Dane County is a unique place, more suspicious of energy companies than other communities. MGE has done a good job, but needs to continue demonstrating and distinguishing itself as different from its competitors."*

Industry Leadership

People are interested in understanding how the energy industry will evolve and look to MGE to help them understand and plan for the future. Some believe MGE may need to help drive some of these discussions on state or national platforms. Some participants suggested that MGE play a more active role in influencing and advocating for energy policy that supports conservation and other clean energy goals. They also recognized that things are changing quickly in the energy industry and it is imperative that MGE stay ahead of the game not only for the company's benefit but also for the good of customers, the economy and the environment.

- *"... to what extent can MGE work with other players?"*
- *"Other cities don't have such a generous utility partner."*
- *"MGE should seek to create buy-in within the industry – lead by example."*

A Trusted Partner

The role MGE can and will play in the future is dependent upon the level of trust and transparency that is perceived by customers and the community. Workshop participants expressed their interest in ensuring MGE does what it needs to do as an energy company, while also keeping in mind the diverse needs and capacities of its customer base. They emphasized that maintaining a solid leadership role in the community would require ongoing management of the relationship. It would also require building or rebuilding, if necessary, the levels of trust and credibility necessary to make the changes for the energy company of the future.

- *"Keep a cultural lens when making new initiatives and plans."*
- *"We want to give credit to MGE for bold and progressive action to help disadvantaged people."*
- *"MGE relationship today is better than it used to be."*
- *"I do think MGE should focus on credibility."*
- *"MGE should use their corporate power to influence people for the right reasons...set up community engagement carefully, authentically interact, come with a sense of humility."*