

Long-Term Gas Infrastructure Plan (LTGIP)

Workplan

July 1, 2024



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1. Introduction

Northern Illinois Gas Company d/b/a Nicor Gas Company (“Nicor Gas” or the “Company”) submits this Workplan¹ in response to the Illinois Commerce Commission’s (“Commission”) Order in the Company’s most recent rate case. (Docket No. 23-0066, Nov. 16, 2023 (“Order”))². Specifically, the Commission ordered Nicor Gas to submit a Long-Term Gas Infrastructure Plan (the “LTGIP” or “Plan”) that identifies the Company’s proposed capital investments over a 5-year period on or before July 1, 2025. First, however, the Commission required that the Company submit by July 1, 2024, a Workplan for how the Plan will be developed. According to the Order, the Workplan should outline: “(1) the content of the Long-Term Infrastructure Plan; (2) the method for assessing potential resources; and (3) the timing and extent of public participation.” (Order at 232). Each of these items is addressed below in Sections 3, 4 and 5, respectively.

As demonstrated in the Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”)³ filed in its most recent rate case, Nicor Gas has a track record of engaging with stakeholders regarding its long-term planning and, therefore has been transparent in its investment plans. The Company thus appreciates the opportunity to share its investment plans with the Commission, Staff, and other stakeholders as it seeks to enhance transparency into Nicor Gas’s selection and execution of projects and programs that are designed to benefit our customers and the communities we serve.

Nicor Gas has long-standing, comprehensive processes, and procedures in place to ensure responsible and prudent decision-making regarding investments and expenditures necessary to continue providing safe, reliable and resilient gas service to its customers, while ensuring the ability to meet the peak demand of the gas distribution system.

The Plan will include a description of a series of ongoing and proposed pipeline safety, reliability and growth programs and will describe the need for the programs and the expenditures necessary to implement the same. The Plan will particularly address investment related to compliance with current safety and emissions requirements and regulations. Of course, the need for additional investments will extend beyond the 5-year Long Term Investment Plan horizon.

The majority of Nicor Gas’ annual capital investment is directed to meeting pipeline safety regulations and requirements, replacement of aging infrastructure, ensuring that existing customers continue to receive safe and reliable service, or in response to local governmental entities’ requests

¹ This Workplan identifies in outline form the methods that Nicor Gas intends to utilize to develop its Long-Term Gas Infrastructure Plan (“LTGIP” or “Plan”), along with a preliminary outline of the Plan itself. The Company may alter the organization and content of the Plan based upon stakeholder feedback and other facts or circumstances that arise prior to July 2025.

² Nicor Gas supports the goal of providing transparency as part of its capital investment planning process. However, to the extent the Public Utilities Act does not authorize or is not clear as to how the Commission could regulate long-term gas infrastructure plans, Nicor Gas does not waive any rights to dispute any Commission order that is inconsistent with the law.

³ The MOU was entered into by Nicor Gas, the Environmental Law & Policy Center (“ELPC”), Environmental Defense Fund (“EDF”), Natural Resources Defense Council (“NRDC”) and Illinois State Public Interest Research Group, Inc. (“ILPIRG”) (collectively, “Public Interest Organizations” or “PIO”) in order to narrow the outstanding issues in the Rate Case.

to move facilities. For example, in October 2019, the federal government released its Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (“PHMSA”) rule requiring Operators to reconfirm the Maximum Allowable Operating Pressures (“MAOPs”) of transmission pipelines; other federal programs require significant pipeline investment, such as the Transmission Integrity Management Program (“TIMP”) and the Distribution Integrity Management Program (“DIMP”) and; at the state level, pressure regulation or “Tin Whistle” venting. Along with known requirements, there are multiple proposed requirements under consideration that have not been reflected in this Workplan because the final requirements are not yet known.

Nicor Gas also has a statutory obligation to serve all customers who request gas service, and the Company must make significant investments including system expansions and system reinforcements to ensure that it meets that obligation. Further, the Company maintains eight underground storage fields critical to meeting peak demand supply. The importance of these facilities was demonstrated recently when 40% of the gas needed to supply customers on one of the coldest days of the year came from such fields. Nicor Gas also maintains an underground transmission pipeline system that interconnects with eight interstate gas pipelines. This infrastructure benefits customers by diversifying their gas sources and providing a ready market for competitive capacity prices. The Plan will include an illustration entitled “Gas Distribution System Overview” which will depict the complex gas components that are necessary to meet customer demand. This Workplan identifies the steps that Nicor Gas plans to take to develop the Plan. It also includes a preliminary outline of the proposed contents of the Plan itself. Generally, the Plan will align with the Company’s existing budgeting process, which includes a one-year budget and a 5-year investment plan. The investments will be generally identified according to a specific Program, Project or Budget category.

2. Overview of Nicor Gas’ Approach to Plan Preparation

2.1 Addressing the Commission’s minimum requirements

The Commission identified 12 specific topics (“Topics”) that the Company should include in the Plan:

1. List of proposed system expenditures and investments, including analysis of infrastructure needs and detailed information on all planned projects within the action plan;
2. Demonstration that each project or program plan complies with all applicable commission rules and jurisdiction requirements, such as safety and reliability, among others;
3. 5-year action plan of investments with a longer-term planning horizon analysis where applicable;
4. Estimated total cost and annual incremental revenue requirement of the proposed action plan;

5. Explanation for the pace of each project or program, including reasoning as to why the project or program cannot be deferred to future years;
6. Comparative evaluations of resource procurements and major capital investments;
7. Distribution mapping that identifies areas of constraint and risk, location of planned projects, pressure districts served by each project, and locations of environmental justice communities;
8. Description of lowest societal cost gas distribution system investments necessary to meet customer demand and comply with public policy objectives;
9. Demonstration that the program or project will minimize rate impacts on customers, particularly low-income and equity investment eligible communities;
10. Scenario and sensitivity analysis to test robustness of utility's portfolio and investments under various parameters;
11. Publicly filed workpaper documenting all inputs and assumptions with limited use of confidentiality; and
12. Summary of stakeholder participation and input and an explanation of how the Company incorporated stakeholder engagement.

In sum, the Topics appear to seek further transparency into: (1) why specific infrastructure investments and expenditures are necessary; (2) where those investments will occur within the Nicor Gas service territory, including mapping that identifies areas of constraint, risk, pressure districts and environmental justice communities; (3) when those investments will occur and explanations as to why they should not be deferred; (4) identification of processes and procedures that the Company has and will deploy to ensure that its costs are reasonable and that rate impacts to customers are minimized, particularly for low-income customers and those in equity investment eligible communities; (5) identification of the specific investments and expenditures by project and program, including the estimated cost and incremental revenue requirement of each; (6) scenario and sensitivity analysis that evaluates Nicor Gas' proposed investments under various scenarios; and (7) the Company's efforts to engage other stakeholders and incorporate their input into the Plan. The Plan will also address the concept of the "lowest societal cost gas distribution system investments necessary to meet customer demand and comply with public policy objectives." (Order at 232).

Nicor Gas utilizes rigorous internal processes to ensure that its investment decisions are prudent and that its costs are reasonable. The Company believes that nearly all of the Topics seek transparency into Nicor Gas' investment decision-making and how such decisions affect its customers through rates. To that end, the Company believes that the most effective way to ensure transparency is to prepare the Plan itself and to separately list the Topics in a

stand-alone document that will list each Topic with an explanation as to the Company's understanding of the information that is sought. Following any such explanation, Nicor Gas will state the place or places within the Plan where the information sought resides.

2.2 Plan Development

The Plan will be developed between now and July 1, 2025 and, at a minimum, will include:

- Production of an initial written Plan.
- A description of meetings to roll-out the initial Plan to all interested stakeholder groups and solicit feedback.
- A description of meetings with the public to explain the LTGIP and solicit feedback.
- Evaluation and incorporation of feedback from stakeholders and the public.
- Submission of a final LTGIP to the ICC by July 1, 2025.

3. Outline of Nicor Gas' LTGIP

As of July 1, 2024, Nicor Gas anticipates that the information outlined under Section 3 of this Workplan (and the associated attachments) will generally constitute the substance of the Plan that the Company submits to the ICC on July 1, 2025. The Company will adjust the Plan as new facts and circumstances arise throughout the year.

3.1 Executive Summary

The Plan will begin with a brief discussion of the nature of the Company's business. It will therefore necessarily include a discussion of the regulatory framework within which it operates, followed by a brief explanation as to how Nicor Gas deploys its capital budget to meet those constraints. It will discuss the processes the Company utilizes to prioritize and select projects and programs and estimates of the investment costs.

The Plan will include a description of the processes that Nicor Gas uses to evaluate costs of specific projects and programs to ensure reasonableness. This will be followed by attachments that identify:

1. the locations within the Plan where each Topic identified by the Commission is addressed;
2. a list of the individual projects and programs in each calendar year, 2026 through 2030, including the estimated cost of each and the incremental revenue requirement resulting from each;
3. an explanation as to why each such program and project is necessary and cannot be deferred;

4. an analysis of rate impacts on customers, including low-income customers and those in equity investment eligible communities;
5. a PDF of a GIS map that identifies the locations of investments and environmental justice communities;
6. a description of stakeholder outreach and input into the Plan
7. “scenario and sensitivity analysis to test the robustness of the utility’s portfolio under various parameters”
8. Nicor Gas’ preliminary discussion of the “lowest societal cost gas distribution system investments necessary to meet customer demand and comply with public policy objectives”. (Order at 232)

3.2 Background

For additional context, the LTGIP will start off with foundational information on key aspects of the Nicor Gas’ Business, its legal and regulatory obligations, key drivers for investment, and the business’ impact on customers.

A. Nicor Gas’ Business and Key Drivers for Investment

To provide background on the Company’s business, the LTGIP will include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map showing service territory • Map depicting pipeline transmission system • Map depicting storage fields | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stats regarding customers served • Total throughput • Peak design day • Discussion of economic development and union jobs impact |
|---|---|

The background section will also discuss the myriad of regulations and legal obligations the Company is required to adhere to. The table below provides some examples of the Company’s legal and regulatory obligations. The table below is not an exhaustive list.

Examples of Nicor Gas' Legal & Regulatory Constraints

- Obligation to Serve [220 ILCS 5/8-101]
- Meet Peak Load of Gas System
- ICC, IDNR, IEPA, IDOT
- USDOT
- PHMSA
- Corrosion Control
- Requirements of 657 Municipalities & associated franchise agreements
- FERC
- State Fire Marshal
- USEPA
- TIMP
- DIMP
- SIMP (Storage Integrity Management Plan)

Table 1: Examples of Nicor Gas' Legal and Regulatory Constraints

These regulatory and legal obligations are the key drivers for Nicor’s investments. As shown in the figure below, in the past five years, 60-70% of capital spend has been used to meet regulatory obligations, including addressing aging infrastructure. Over that same time frame, an additional 11% of budgeted capital dollars have been used to expand the system to meet expressed customer demand for gas service. Nicor Gas expects these trends to continue during the 5-year Plan period.

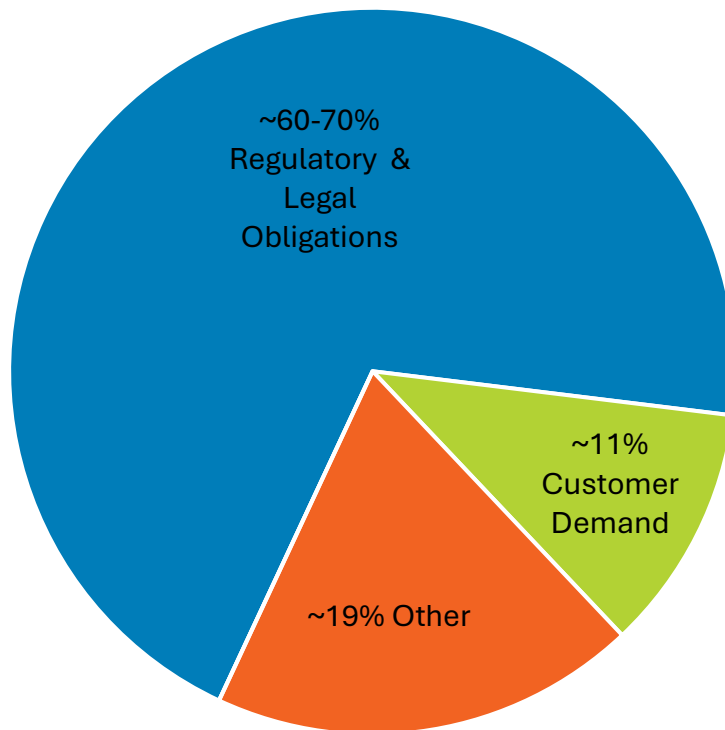


Figure 1: Key Drivers for Nicor Gas' Investments

B. The Company's Effective Deployment of Capital Dollars

The LTGIP will discuss how the Nicor Gas system is designed to meet customer demand when it is needed most. This consistently occurs on the coldest days of the year when gas-supplied heat is critical to the health and safety of customers. The current trend is that extreme weather has caused record-breaking demand on the system. In the last 10 years, including as recently as January 2024, Nicor Gas has experienced seven of its top demand days of all time. In fact, Nicor Gas reached its all-time peak on January 30, 2019. During that decade, on those peak days, no customer experienced an outage due to a failure of the delivery system. A residential customer who loses his or her heating source during such extreme weather presents a near immediate health and safety risk.

In some states, natural gas distribution systems are not necessarily designed or maintained to fully meet peak load. Instead, regulators allow the distribution companies to cut off supply to certain customers during high demand situations. Those states typically have “interruptible gas rates” meaning the regulatory construct expressly provides for such cutoffs. Not only does this create an inconvenience for customers but also has the potential to undermine economic development. Nicor Gas’s system is different. It is designed for “all gas – all the time” meaning there is no designated “slack” in the system, and therefore Nicor Gas does not have a rate structure for interruptible service. The Company’s obligation to serve is absolute, and it must expand and maintain the system to accommodate peak customer demand.

3.3 The Five-Year Gas Infrastructure Plan: 2026-2030

The Company will explain Nicor Gas’ robust planning processes as a core foundation of the Plan and will include the additional considerations requested by the Commission in the Order. Typically, investments scheduled for the near term will be more defined than those planned in the later years of the planning horizon. As such, Nicor Gas will provide as much detail as is available and will use budgetary placeholders only where necessary based upon budget categories or programs and the level of detail available. Where placeholders are used, the assumptions and calculations used to derive estimated investment amounts will be explained.

Some budget categories will include discrete projects that have been identified years before construction, such as compression projects associated with storage fields. Other budget categories will be comprised of specific projects in the near term with placeholders for continued investment in later years based upon historical run-rate experience (i.e., Distribution Integrity Management Program “DIMP”). Still other budget categories will be comprised entirely by placeholders based upon historical run-rate experience (i.e., Illinois Dept. of Transportation requests and New Business). Consistent with Nicor Gas’ existing planning processes, individual projects/programs will have varying levels of definition when the LTGIP is submitted. The LTGIP must necessarily be flexible enough to accommodate new

developments and refinement, i.e., cost estimates and schedule will be refined as projects/programs move closer to execution.

There are other factors beyond the Company's control that could impact the cost and timing over a five-year planning horizon. For example, inflation has been increasing in recent years and supply chain disruptions resulting from the recent pandemic still persist. There are also factors specific to the utility industry such as land acquisition, local permitting, rule changes, equipment failures, government requests (IDOT) and new business requests. In addition, the outcome of rate cases and QIP reconciliation cases will be reflected in updates to the LTGIP. The substance of the LTGIP could also be affected by Commission initiatives, such as the Future of Gas proceeding or new legislation at the state or federal level.

The Plan will generally include the following information at the appropriate project, program, or budget category/ sub-category levels:

- Description - A description of the project, program, or budget category/sub-category.
- Justification - The reason for the investment will be explained, including the potential impact if it is deferred.
- Alternatives - Where appropriate, the Plan will identify alternatives that were considered along with an explanation for the recommended option.
- Cost Estimates - Estimates will be provided in the level of detail commensurate with the project, program, or budget category/sub-category.
- Maps depicting locations of constraints, risks, pressure districts and environmental justice communities.

Project, program, and budget category/ sub-category will be defined as follows:

- Budget Categories and Sub-Categories - Generally, this includes the budget categories used for external financial reporting. This may include budgets for projects, programs or placeholders based upon historical run-rates.
- Programs – A group of related projects managed in a coordinated manner to ensure control and other benefits not available if managed individually. A Program may include multiple projects managed over multiple years. For long-term Programs, individual projects may not be known at the time of budgeting, so placeholders with estimated costs may be utilized based upon historical run-rates.
- Projects - An endeavor with a unique work scope to create a specific asset or facility with defined start and finish dates. Some Projects are independently planned while others are part of a larger Program or Budget category.

A list of projects will be included as an attachment to the Plan. This is a preliminary Plan and Nicor Gas expressly reserves the right to make changes as new facts and circumstances emerge. Rationale for each project or program in excess of \$2 Million will be included as an Attachment.

3.4 Nicor System Planning

Nicor plans and designs for infrastructure investments for the peak day scenario. As mentioned above, most investment categories are to meet or comply with regulatory or legal obligations and to deliver safe, reliable, and resilient gas service to its customers. The table below provides the investment categories with its definitions:

Nicor Gas Investment Categories		
	Investment Category	Definition
Investments to meet Legal & Regulatory Requirements	TIMP (Transmission Integrity Management Program)	Refers to the work to ensure that transmission assets are maintained according to the specific Nicor Gas’ TIMP. This includes the utilization of smart tools, direct assessments and hydrotests.
	DIMP (Distribution Integrity Management Program)	Refers to the work to ensure that distribution assets are maintained according to Nicor Gas’ specific DIMP.
	Corrosion Control	Refers to work to ensure that metallic assets are maintained and compliant with the regulations.
	Distribution Regulating Facilities (Tin Whistle Venting)	Refers to work to modify existing gas pressure regulation facilities to provide venting capabilities. This program was mandated by the ICC’s Pipeline Safety staff, with a 2029 completion deadline.
	MAOP Validation (Maximum Allowable Operating Pressures)	Refers to efforts to ensure that records establishing such pressure are traceable, verifiable and complete. This includes records research, verification digs and field work such as hydrotests and replacements.
	New Business	Refers to work to add new residential, commercial, and industrial customers.
	DOT / Public Works	Refers to work to evaluate and modify assets based upon requirements from outside agencies such as the federal or state DOTs, the Illinois Tollway Authority or other agencies.
	System Improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency District Program: Emergency Districts are areas of connected gas main that can be isolated to minimize the area of impact and stop the flow of gas in the event of an emergency. The ICC Pipeline Safety staff mandated this program. 2. Remote Monitoring: Modernization of regulation facility paper chart recorders by replacing the same with electronic devices. 3. Pressure Regulation Protection: Installation of distribution regulating strainers, which minimizes the impact of debris and fire valves, which allows for quick shutdown in the event of an emergency

Nicor Gas Investment Categories		
Investments to deliver safe, reliable, resilient service	Investment Category	Definition
	Distribution Main Replacement	Elimination of higher risk vintage material known within the industry to be prone to leaks or failure. This includes bare steel, vintage plastic, vintage steel, mechanically coupled pipe, exposed mains and corrosion or cathodic protection materials.
	Distribution Regulating Facilities	Replacement of higher risk distribution regulating facilities based upon health score, condition or criticality.
	Inside Meter Move Outs	Relocation of gas meters from locations inside to outside of a home/building. This includes service replacement when necessary.
	Transmission Main	Elimination of higher risk material based upon TIMP-driven risks.
	Underground Storage and Compression	Replacement of aging, higher risk components and equipment based upon criticality, increased maintenance costs, or difficulty of sourcing parts.
	Transmission Regulating Stations	Replacement of critical components or transmission stations based upon risk, condition or criticality.
	Pressure Improvements	System improvements including pipelines and pressure regulating facilities identified during annual hydraulic system reviews designed to provide safe and reliable service on the coldest days of the year.
	Emergent Work	Refers to work that was not originally anticipated when budgets were established, but which takes priority due to risk, criticality or other requirements.
	Equipment Failures	Refers to unplanned work stemming from critical equipment failures.
	General Plant Investments	Refers to investments in facilities not directly related to the delivery of gas. This includes buildings, vehicle fleets and information technology investments, to name a few.

Table 2: Nicor Gas Investment Categories

3.5 Additional Required Analysis

The Plan will include analysis of the following topics as required by the Order:

1. “Description of lowest societal cost gas distribution system investments necessary to meet customer demand and comply with public policy objectives”
2. “Demonstration that the program or project will minimize rate impacts on customers, particularly low-income and equity investment eligible communities”

3. “Scenario and sensitivity analysis to test robustness of utility’s portfolio and investments under various parameters” (Order at 232)

3.6 Project Execution

To demonstrate prudence and reasonable costs, the Company will use its capital planning and prioritization process to select and prioritize capital investments incorporating a risk-based evaluation, along with investment justification and cost analysis.

The Company will use its Asset Development Process (“ADP”) for project planning and execution⁴. ADP is a 5-step process used for projects and programs with an estimated cost of \$10M or more to select, manage and execute the same. Smaller projects follow a simplified version of ADP.



Figure 2: Asset Development Process (ADP)

In addition, other project/program reviews are undertaken through other processes to ensure ongoing monitoring and control during execution. Processes that ensure that costs are reasonable are embedded in the aforementioned processes. In addition, the Company uses other processes to control costs, such as the following:

- Competitive bid evaluations with defined selection criteria designed to award contracts to qualified contractors at a reasonable cost.
- Use of well-qualified contractors through Alliance Agreements which include pre-determined, unitized pricing rate structures that enhances predictability and increases the accuracy of estimates.
- Blanket Contracts are used for routine, repetitive work within competitive markets and that have lower risk profiles. After a competitive bid process, these projects are awarded and usually have a 3-to-5 year contract term that allows for consistency of work product.
- Change management processes intended to evaluate project scope changes for reasonableness.

⁴ Not all projects formally go through all of the stages. The process is designed to allow unique application to each unique project.

- Use of internal construction labor to augment project work volume in order to maintain skills and equipment and to control costs.

4. The Method for Assessing Potential Resources

Nicor Gas will assess the need for resources associated with preparation and execution of the Plan. Some categories include, but are not limited to the following:

- Labor
 1. Hiring practices to ensure that employees are qualified
 2. Procedures for determining when to use internal or external resources
 3. Processes for hiring contractors to ensure reasonable costs for projects and programs.
 - Bids/Requests for Proposal process
 - Alliance, System- Trained Contractors
 - Blanket Contractors
 - Pre-arranged Fixed Fee Contracts
 - Supplier Diversity
- Material Procurement Practices
- Budgeting Practices

5. Timing and Extent of Public Participation

As required by the Order, Nicor gas will request feedback in the form of meetings with its customers and various stakeholders to ensure that the investments in the Plan are prudent and to ensure that Nicor Gas continues to provide efficient and cost-effective energy solutions for its customers. Meeting methodology, target audiences, and the preliminary schedule are outlined in the subsections below.

5.1 Overall Methodology

Nicor Gas is planning to host four (4) public meetings to engage stakeholders in the investment planning process. These meetings will be held in person but will also have a virtual option for those who cannot attend in person. Meeting schedule, location details and virtual sign-on information will be available to all stakeholders in advance. Furthermore, the meetings will be recorded and posted on the Nicor Gas Website for interested parties to view after the events. All meeting materials will also be posted for future reference. Nicor Gas will provide participants with an opportunity to provide input and feedback following each meeting in the form of written comments which can be submitted within two weeks through the Nicor Gas Website.

Nicor Gas will also schedule one-on-one meetings and other stakeholder group-specific forums throughout its service territory. The opportunity to provide input and feedback following each meeting in the form of written comments will be made available.

5.2 Participation Groups

Key stakeholder groups that Nicor Gas plans to engage are outlined in the table below.

Stakeholder Group	Examples
Governmental Agencies	Office of the Attorney General, ICC personnel, municipal, city, county, and state government representatives
Public Interest Organizations	Advocacy groups representing consumer, environmental, and community interests
Customers	All customers – residential, commercial and industrial
Commercial Organizations	Organizations that represent groups of commercial/industrial customers
Labor	Unions and coalitions in the energy, construction, agricultural, manufacturing sectors, etc.
Economic and Workforce Development	Economic development organizations and local workforce development partners.
Other Utilities	Other utilities in the area – gas, water, electric, etc.

Table 3: Key Anticipated Stakeholders for Nicor Gas’ Long-Term Gas Infrastructure Plan

The table above contains examples and is not an all-inclusive list.

5.3 Meeting Themes & Schedule

As mentioned above, Nicor Gas plans to host 4 public meetings, one-on-one meetings, and stakeholder specific forums to solicit feedback from stakeholders. A preliminary timeline for the proposed meetings is shown below:

Meetings	Topic	Timeline
1	Overview of LT Plan and Process	3 rd Quarter 2024
2	Additional Required Analysis Methodology	4 th Quarter 2024
3	Preliminary Review of Projects	1 st Quarter 2025
4	Review of Near Final Plan	2 nd Quarter 2025

Table 4: Preliminary Stakeholder Outreach Meeting Schedule