



## Staff Report Item 14

**TO:** East Bay Community Energy Board of Directors

**FROM:** Theresa McDermit, Head of Brand

**SUBJECT:** EBCE Brand Evolution and Name Exploration (Informational Item)

**DATE:** April 19, 2023

---

### **Recommendation**

Receive a memo from staff and prepare for upcoming requests to adopt brand identity recommendations.

### **Background and Discussion**

#### ***Brand Identity Evolution***

EBCE has grown and evolved since our founding in 2016. We've expanded both our service territory (Pleasanton, Newark and Tracy 2022; Stockton 2024), and our offerings / programs. This dual expansion is the driver of our brand evolution and is detailed below.

*Strategic Imperative* - EBCE is uniquely positioned to drive adoption of electric consumer products, like EVs and induction cooktops. We have many "carrots" at hand including rebates, incentives, and trial programs. Unfortunately, we also have an uphill battle gaining consumers' attention on topics outside of their energy bill. This makes sense given both the role we've played to date in their lives, and our current brand identity (e.g. logo, name, way of "speaking").

*Our current role in customers' lives* - We know that most of our customers were passively opted-in to our service; we haven't historically asked them to make pro-active decisions. The role we have played until

recently is that of a utility: something in the background that doesn't spark a lot of engagement.

*Our current brand identity* - Our current brand identity is literal and clean; it was carefully crafted to support the education and trust-building needed as the agency was introduced and rolled out. It is reminiscent of other utilities, which helped consumers understand what type of service we are as they were introduced to the concept of a CCA.

We are now entering a phase in our maturation where we're launching more programs and seeking deeper engagement with our customers on topics that are normally the territory of "consumer" brands. We seek to evolve our brand identity to better influence these discretionary choices, like the purchase of an EV or induction cooktop. This includes a name that avoids the "alphabet soup" of acronyms that consumers find confusing, as well as an engaging visual design and communication style.

*Geographic Imperative* - Once fully integrated into our service area, Stockton will be the second largest community in our JPA. In a recent statistically significant survey of San Joaquin County residents (n=400; over 50% sample from Stockton), we learned that a significant portion of residents do not view themselves as part of the East Bay. Many, in fact, actively rejected inclusion in the East Bay because they associate it with high prices or values that don't align with their own. We must evolve our identity - specifically our name - to ensure that all members of our community feel included and served, and to facilitate any future expansion we may wish to pursue.

### ***Naming Process***

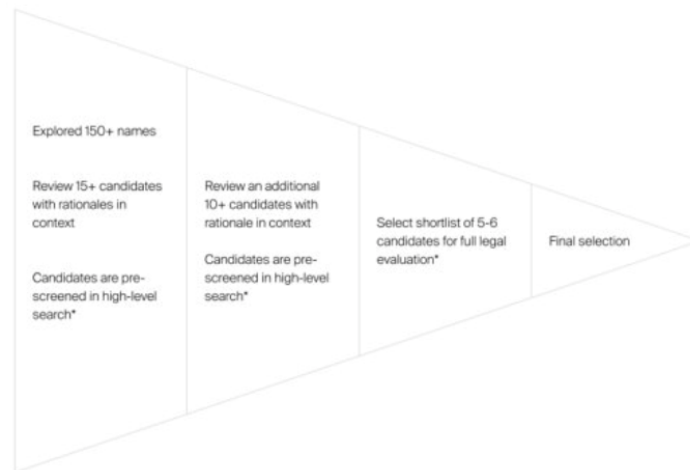
We have begun the process of ideating and evaluating potential new names for the agency. With this process, we seek to ensure that:

- a given name conveys the desired meaning and tone
- appealing url and social handles are available
- the name does not have any unintended or negative connotations in the major languages spoken in our service territory
- the name is free from trademark encumbrances that would prevent us from using it and potentially trademarking it.

If a new name is adopted, it would be a "dba" or doing business as name. We are not seeking to change the name of the JPA.

The naming process (outlined in Image 1) began with a broad consideration of names that met a defined set of criteria. Promising names were then subject to a high-level availability search. Those names that survived the availability search were presented to staff for feedback. The strongest candidates were then shared with ad hoc committees of the Board and CAC. Input from those meetings in being incorporated and will inform the ongoing process.

**Image 1.**



### ***Next Steps***

Pending the outcome of our ongoing stakeholder engagement efforts, we are scheduled to bring a candidate name before the Board for adoption at the May meeting of the board.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Fiscal impact is driven by the need to communicate any changes to our brand identity and the creation / recreation of branded materials. Actual costs will be determined once the full extent and timing of changes are known.

### **Attachments**

- A. Brand Evolution Background - BOD 041923 (PowerPoint presentation)

APRIL 2023

# EBCE Brand Evolution Background & Next Steps



# Agenda

Attachment Staff Report Item 14A

Background & Rationale

Insights

Stakeholder Engagement

What's Next

# Background & Rationale

# In the Beginning...

When we launched EBCE, our primary objective was to educate:

- What is a CCA?
- How does your bill work?
- EBCE is not a scam...

**CLEANER ELECTRICITY. LOWER RATES. LOCAL BENEFITS.**

Residents and businesses in Alameda County and 11 of its cities\* now have a new, greener choice for the electricity that powers our homes and businesses.

East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) is our new local power supplier, committed to providing our community with electricity generated from renewable sources such as solar and wind.

**BENEFITS**

- LOWER RATES**  
EBCE purchases cleaner energy at lower rates for residents and businesses.
- SUSTAINABILITY**  
You will reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, an easy and economical way to reduce your carbon footprint.
- RELIABILITY**  
EBCE procures cleaner electricity for our customers, and PG&E delivers that electricity to your home or business.
- LOCAL INVESTMENT**  
Net revenues will help fund local green energy projects and programs.

\*Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Oakland, Piedmont, San Leandro and Union City

**LAUNCH SCHEDULE**

EBCE began providing service to municipal and business accounts in June 2018. Residential customers will be enrolled in November 2018. Customers with rooftop solar will be enrolled in 2019 around the time of their annual true-up with PG&E.

**CONTACT US**

- ebce.org
- /EastBayCommunityEnergy
- @PoweredbyEBCE
- customer-support@ebce.org
- 1-833-699-EBCE (3223)

**CREATING A BRIGHTER, CLEANER FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES**

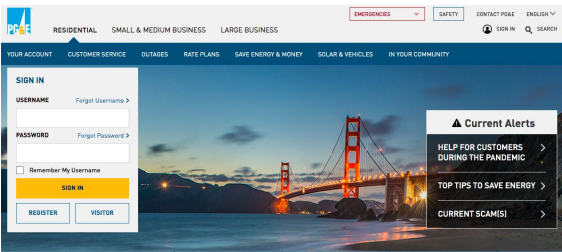
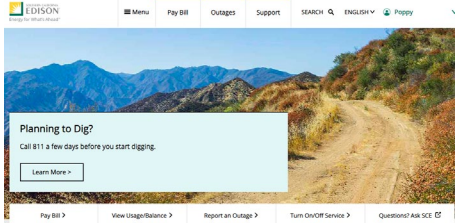
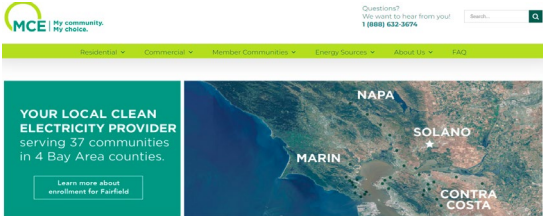
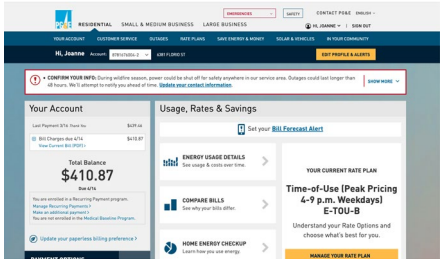
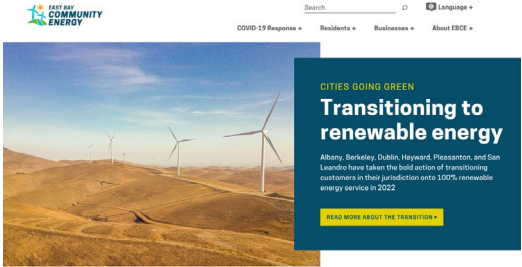
**A BRIGHT CHOICE**

The infographic features a vertical timeline from 2018 to 2019. Key events include: June 2018 (Municipal & Business Accounts Enrolled), September-December 2018 (Enrollment Notices), November 2018 (Residential Accounts Enrolled), and January-December 2019 (Solar Customer Enrollment). Images of a smiling man in a hard hat and another man on a phone are included, along with solar panels.

# A Brand Expression to Support Education and Trust

Our brand expression is:

- Very literal; we have a highly descriptive name and logo
- Self-referential; our messaging has traditionally focused on what we do (as opposed to what that means for the consumer)
- Familiar; our “look” is similar to many other CCAs or IOUs





# We've Been Successful

On track to implement the strategy for **100% clean by 2030**

**95% average retention rate** across our service area

**Steady expansion** of our service area; Pleasanton, Newark + Tracy 2022; Stockton 2024



2022 National Notable Achievement Award for Land Revitalization Team Excellence

**\$21 million** spent on local programs like battery energy storage, induction cooking, and electric heat pump water heaters

**\$19 million** annual customer savings vs. what would have been paid for PG&E service

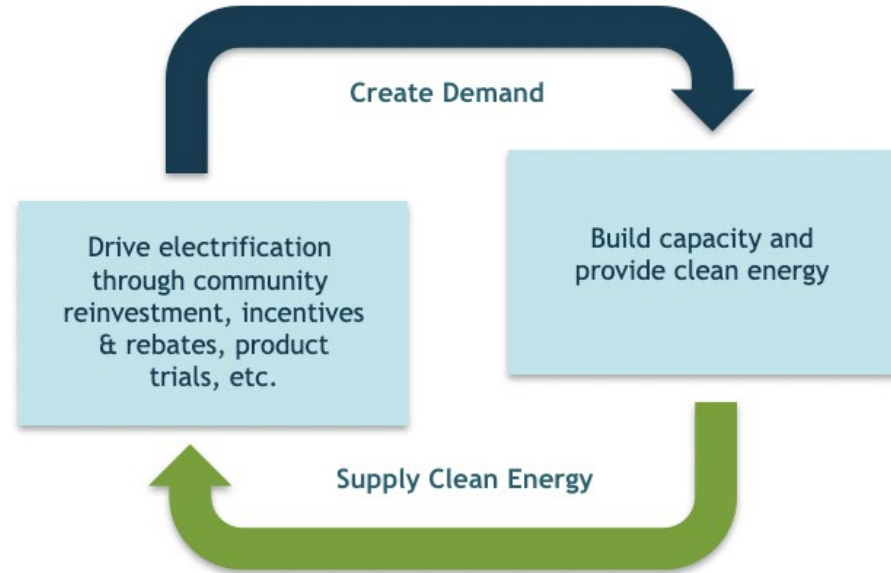
**1,015 megawatts** of new wind, solar, and battery storage, including projects in Alameda County



# We Continue to Mature and Evolve to Better Serve our Communities

Attachment Staff Report Item 14A

- We are moving from simply filling demand to creating it
- Growing capacity and expertise to stand up consumer- and commercial-facing programs that expose customers to electric alternatives and speed their adoption

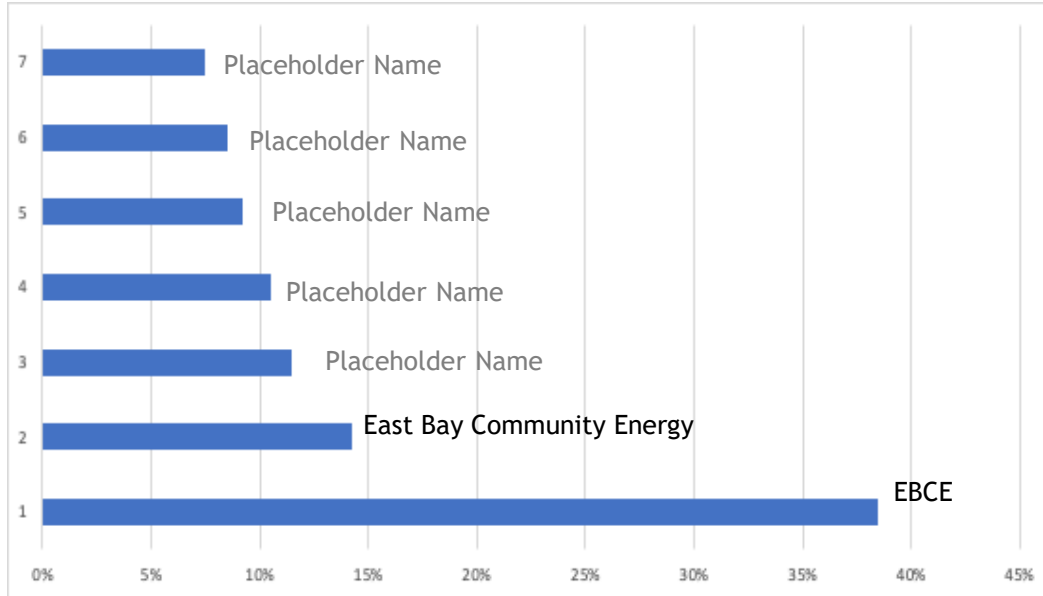


# Insights

# Our Name is a Barrier to Success in San Joaquin County\*

Attachment Staff Report Item #14A

Q12. Which one of these names is your least favorite?



Q13: Why?

EBCE

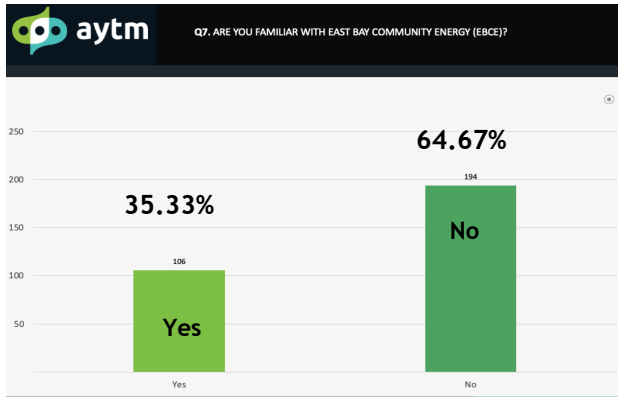
- Acronyms are off-putting; hard to remember

East Bay Community Energy

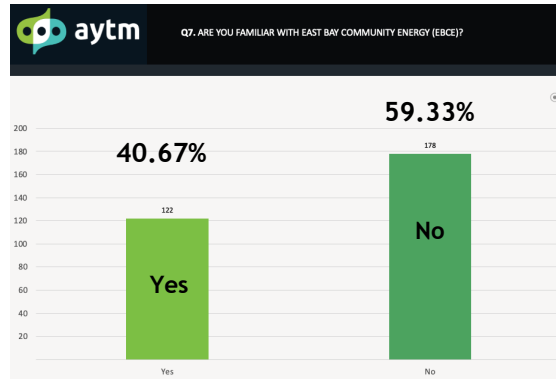
- SJC not part of East Bay; East Bay too expensive / doesn't represent my values

# EBCE Aided Awareness Over Time

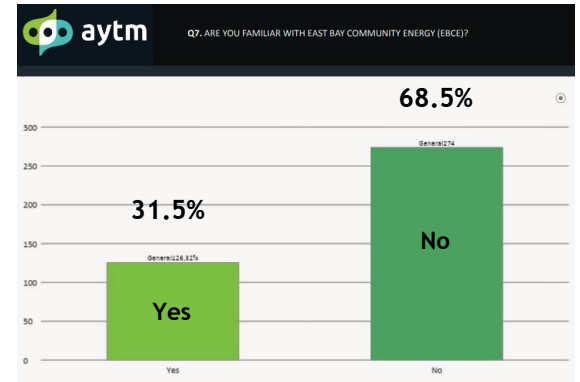
**Q: Are you familiar with East Bay Community Energy (EBCE)?**



2020  
n=300



2021 - April  
n=300



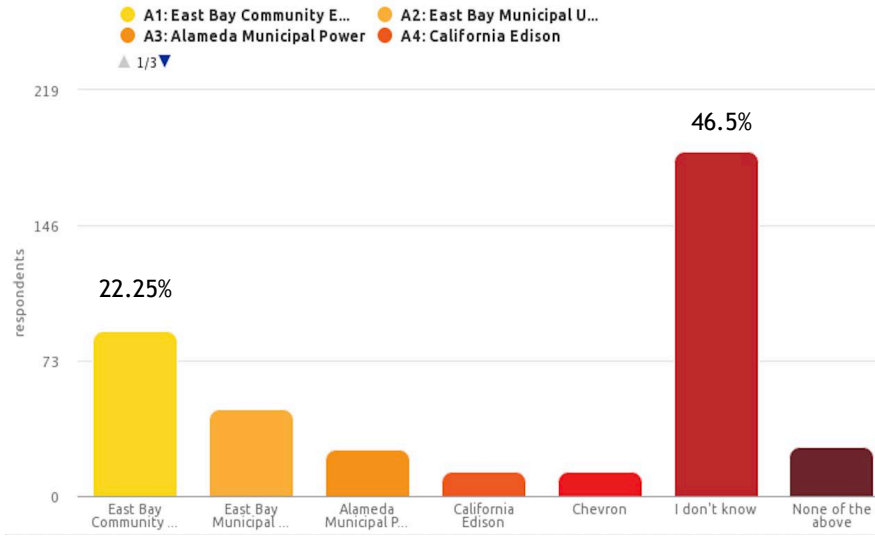
2021 - October  
n=400

*Takeaway: Aided awareness appears to be influenced by advertising (April 2021 survey conducted during time of heavy advertising), but is otherwise flat*

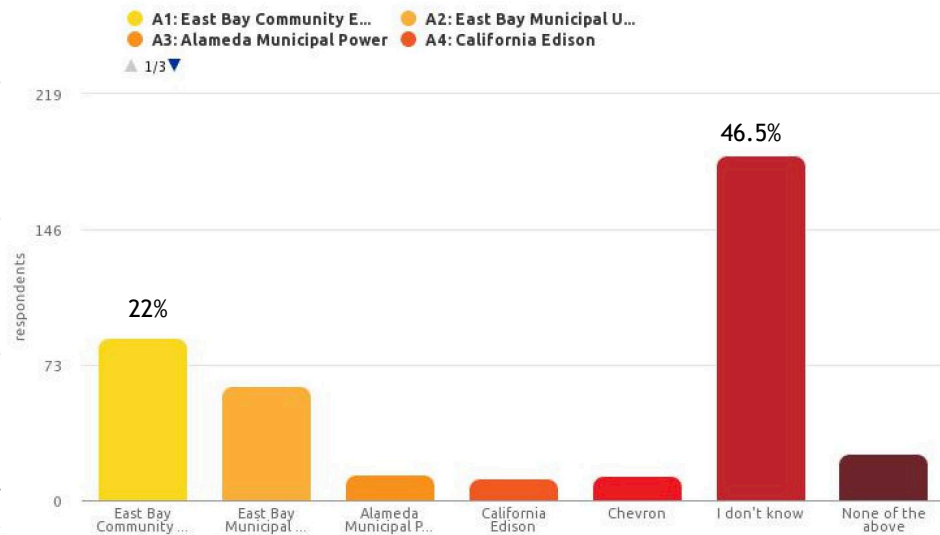
# Unaided Awareness

Question: PG&E manages the electricity system in your area. You also have an option for generation service (power plants). Is that...

Attachment Staff Report Item 14A



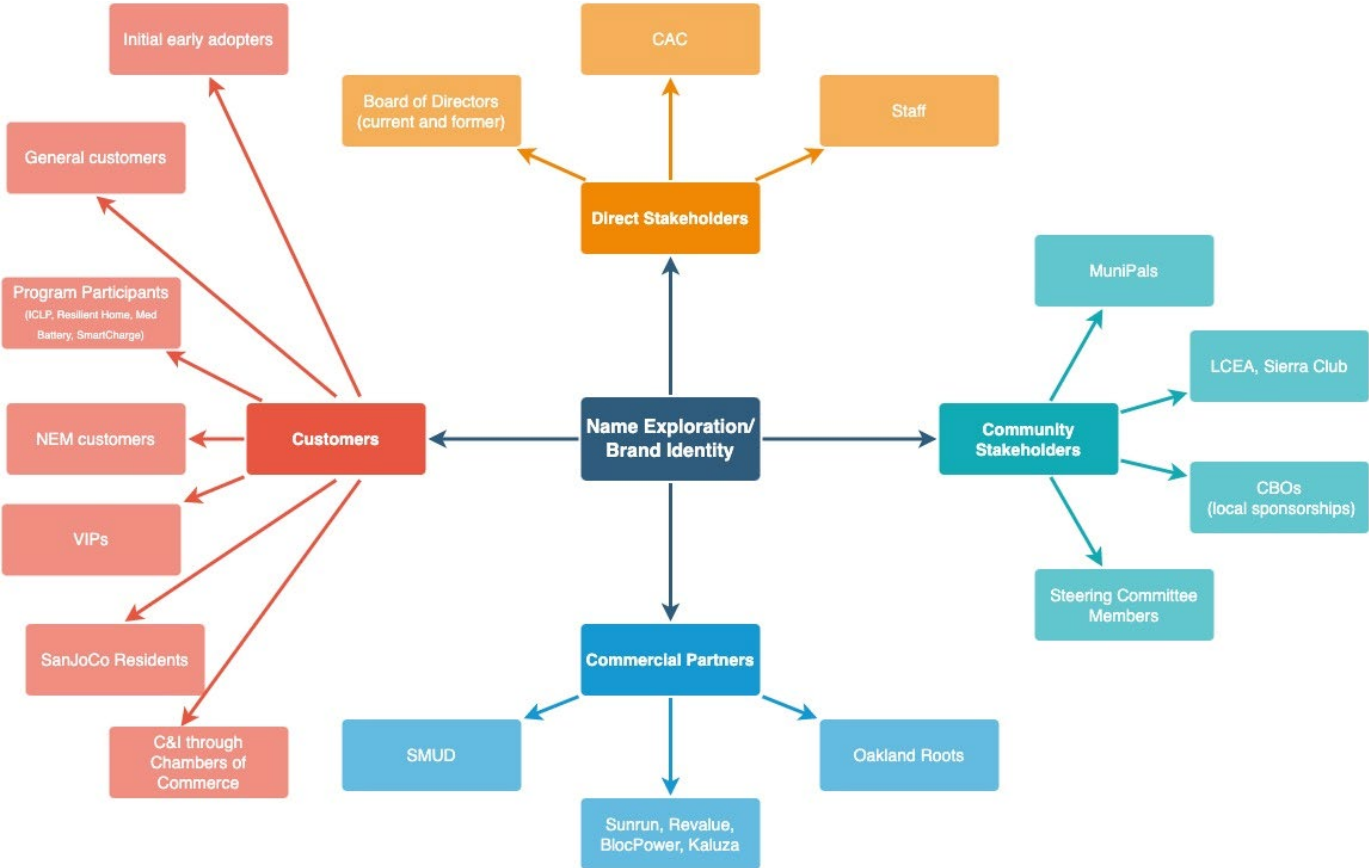
May 2022



October 2022

# Stakeholder Engagement

# Stakeholder Map





# Ad Hoc Committees

Name	EBCE Role	Jurisdiction Role
Elisa Márquez	Current Chair	Supervisor, Alameda County
Dan Kalb	Former Chair	Councilmember, Oakland
Jaime Patiño	Former Chair of MRL Subcommittee	Councilmember, Union City
Matt Bedolla	Director	Councilmember, Tracy
Dan Wright	Director	Councilmember, Stockton
Anne-Olivia Eldred	Chair of CAC	Oakland resident
Ed Hernandez	Vice Chair of CAC	San Leandro resident
Jim Lutz	At-Large Member of CAC	Oakland resident

# Outreach Plan

January	February	March	April	May	June
<p><b>Research (San Joaquin Co):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- N = 400</li> <li>- Awareness, priorities, reaction to name</li> </ul>	<p><b>Foundation sessions:</b> BOD Ad Hoc committee: 1-hr meeting, bring up to speed-ask to be champions</p> <p>1:1 with CAC Chair + Vice Chair, introduce the concept of the ad hoc committee; provide background and rationale</p>	<p><b>Research (Name):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing customers</li> <li>- Stakeholders</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation of process:</b> MuniPals</p> <p><b>Foundation session:</b> Additional CAC ad hoc committee member</p>	<p><b>Presentation of process:</b> Full Staff (4/3)</p> <p><b>Exec Comm Review (4/5)</b> Exec Comm review of name/identity process (standard meeting)</p> <p><b>Input sessions (w/o 4/10):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BOD Ad Hoc Review of names</li> <li>- CAC Ad Hoc Review of names</li> </ul> <p><b>CAC review of BOD info item</b> via standard meeting and regular agenda review process</p> <p><b>Board Meeting (4/19):</b> Info on Name Process</p>	<p><b>Exec Comm Review (5/3)</b> Exec Comm review of name/identity progress to date without sharing names (standard meeting)</p> <p><b>Board Meeting (5/17):</b> Approval of name</p>	<p><b>Input sessions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BOD Ad Hoc Review of identity</li> <li>- CAC Ad hoc Review of identity</li> </ul> <p><b>CAC review of BOD item</b> via standard meeting and regular agenda review process</p> <p><b>Board Meeting (6/21):</b> approval of identity via standard mtg</p>

# Next Steps

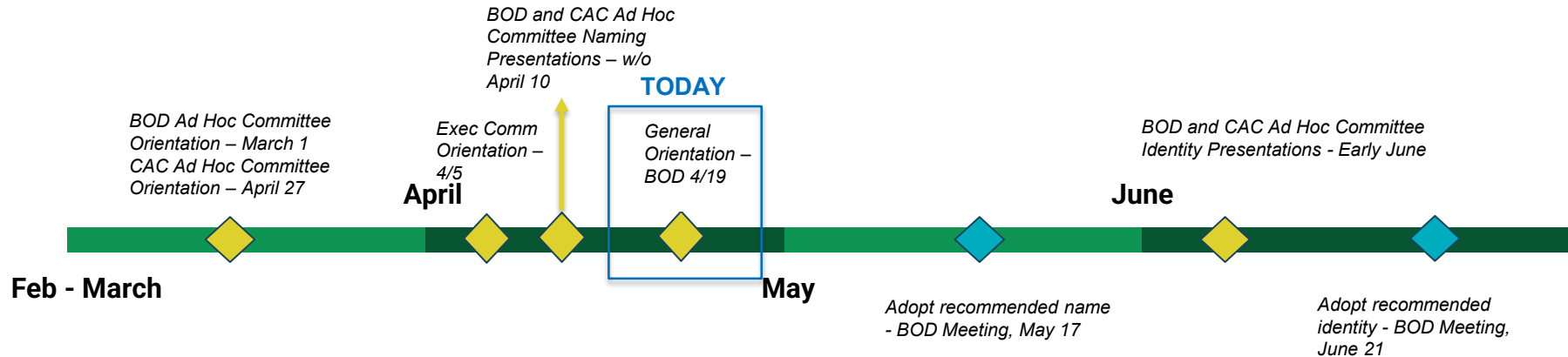
# Brand Evolution Timeline

## Naming Exploration

Together with our partner, Landscape, develop a shortlist of name options for feedback

## Identity Exploration

Together with Landscape, develop candidate brand identity options.



## Finalize & Approve Name

Present short list of name for feedback; refine list with feedback. Perform legal and linguistic checks; present final selection to BOD for approval

## Finalize & Approve Identity

Refine preferred identity direction. Present final identity to BOD for awareness.

Thank You!

