



Association of
Municipalities
of Ontario



Navigating Municipal Relations

A Guide for Energy
Developers Proposing
Projects under Ontario's
Long-Term Procurements

Updated: February 3, 2025



Purpose

Like any development, moving forward with the review and approval of proposed energy projects requires collaboration between municipalities and energy developers. This resource was developed by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) based on feedback from municipal staff, senior leaders and elected officials regarding best practices for energy developers engaging with municipalities on proposed energy projects.

The goal of this guide is to support energy developers in engaging with host municipalities on projects proposed under the Independent Energy System Operator's (IESO's) long-term procurements. Developers may also wish to review AMO's "Municipal Energy Procurement Toolkit" which can provide insight into some of the key areas of interest municipalities may wish to receive information about when reviewing project applications.

Municipalities may wish to share this resource with developers or provide their own guidance that includes information about local processes and expectations.

Understanding Local Expectations

- Every municipality has a unique decision making process which may include steps such as mandatory planning approvals, and discretionary local engagement. Depending on local needs and expectations, the time for approval could be weeks or months for each stage of the procurement process and downstream approvals. Early engagement is essential to understand local timelines and requirements.
 - Municipalities have strict decision-making requirements under provincial legislation and local by-laws.
 - Most municipalities require decision items to go to a committee and/or be subject to a staff report prior to going to Council for decision – build time for these processes into your project planning.
 - The municipal Clerk and/or CAO is the best first point of contact and can connect you with the right staff to clarify local expectations and advise on the local approval process.
- Understand what downstream approvals are required beyond the municipal support confirmation (MSC) and Long-Term 2 procurement (LT2) contract requirements, and how the municipality expects you to work through those approvals.
 - Municipalities may differ in their expectations and requirements.
 - Some municipalities may expect proponents to bring complete proposals, while others may expect to be involved in site selection and consultation.
 - Municipalities are permitted to set conditions for approval that are above and beyond those required by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) LT2 RFP. For example, municipalities may require a community benefit agreement.
 - The Municipal Resolution in Support of Proposal Submission (MRSPS) template issued by the IESO is only a guideline, and municipalities may choose to use their own wording, or include conditions for support so long as the MRSPS includes required information identified by the IESO.

Working with Communities

- Understand what information council, staff, and residents want to inform their decisions.
 - Most municipalities do not have staff with expertise in energy projects, and the average municipality has fewer than six full-time staff. Limited resources and expertise may increase the time needed to prepare staff reports to support council decision making.
 - Energy sector knowledge may be new to municipalities, and municipalities may have different perspectives on what information is needed for decision making.
 - Your representatives attending local community meetings should be prepared to speak to both general and technical questions about projects.
- Consider project siting.
 - Review the local Official Plan and Zoning By-law for land use policies related to energy projects. You may wish to consider retaining a professional planner familiar with Ontario's land-use planning framework.
 - Siting projects away from agricultural, natural heritage, and residential areas and urban growth boundaries minimizes potential issues during downstream approvals, impact to residents and local opposition to projects.
 - Municipalities may have identified preferred areas for industrial or energy projects.
- Early, and regular engagement with municipalities is the best way to ensure the local decision-making process is smooth, and timely.
 - Early engagement provides an opportunity to discuss local expectations and ensure developers are prepared to answer questions during public engagement and Council meetings
 - Regular engagement around next steps, necessary approvals, and required information can avoid delays in local approvals due to missed application deadlines, or delays decision-making

About this Guide

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Disclaimer: Note: This document is provided for guidance purposes only and does not constitute definitive legal advice.



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