

Land rights acquisition process

Working with landowners



Large transmission line projects like PowerOn Midwest involve multiple phases of land rights acquisition. Utility representatives work directly with landowners throughout all of these phases.

During the early design and permitting phases, utility representatives are available to discuss the project with landowners at open houses or other informational meetings. Landowners will also receive information about PowerOn Midwest through mailings and other communications. As potential routes develop, utility representatives may seek to obtain “rights of entry,” granting permission for utility representatives to complete survey activities, including environmental and land boundary surveys and possibly soil borings. These surveys occur along potential transmission line routes.

As the project route becomes more defined, utility representatives communicate directly with landowners to negotiate the land rights needed to construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line. These rights are typically secured through an “easement.” An easement is a legal agreement that outlines key details such as where the transmission line will be located, temporary access provisions, construction parameters, vegetation management, and any restrictions on land use.

In some cases, utility representatives may negotiate with landowners to first acquire an “option” before acquiring the easement. An option gives the utility the right to acquire an easement at a later date and usually in exchange for a fee.



The PowerOn Midwest utilities are committed to working closely with landowners throughout the survey and easement acquisition process. Impacted landowners can expect personalized outreach and multiple one-on-one meetings to discuss the project, the easement acquisition process, and next steps.

Preliminary schedule

2025-2026 INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

Project representatives will begin reaching out to impacted landowners.

2027-2029 SURVEY/ RIGHTS OF ENTRY

Utility representatives will discuss with landowners regarding survey access.

2028 – 2030 EASEMENT/OPTION NEGOTIATIONS

Utility representatives will contact landowners to present and obtain options and/or easements. Negotiations will take place as part of the route development process, permitting requirements, and engineering design work. Impacted landowners will be given offer packages based on fair market value.

2030 – 2034 CONSTRUCTION

Utility representatives will continue ongoing communication with landowners as construction progresses.

2032 – 2034 RESTORATION

Following construction, utilities will carry out restoration activities. Landowners will receive compensation for damages caused by construction activities.

2035 AND IN THE FUTURE

Utilities will continue restoration activities until completed. After that, entry will be on a more intermittent basis for maintenance, vegetation management, and repair of the transmission line.

Frequently asked questions

Will we be able to help decide where facilities will go on our land?

It is the goal of the PowerOn Midwest utilities to collaborate with landowners to determine the transmission structure locations, to the extent it is practicable. However, not all requests can be accommodated based on final engineering, cost, and other routing factors. We'll take your feedback into consideration as we finalize the location of the transmission line.



What activities are allowed within the easement area?

In general, the land can continue to be used as before, provided that the use does not interfere with constructing, operating, and maintaining the transmission line. So, in most cases, typical agricultural activities may continue within the easement area after the transmission line is operational in a similar fashion as before the transmission line was built (except for around the transmission structures). Landowners can typically place underground utilities and drain tile through the easement area, but it is important that the landowner and utility coordinate with each other to verify those installations are compatible before they are built. We encourage landowners to discuss the activities they plan to conduct within or near the easement area with the utility after the line is constructed.

How close will the transmission line be to homes?

We carefully consider the locations of homes during route development and seek to design a route that minimizes impacts to residences. Due to engineering requirements, no residence will be allowed within the transmission line easement area.

What is "Buy the Farm"?

The project is subject to Minnesota's 'Buy the Farm' law (Minn. Stat. § 216I.21, subd. 4). The Buy the Farm law allows a landowner whose property will be crossed by an easement, in certain circumstances, to elect for the utility to buy their entire property (or some portion of it) rather than grant the utility an easement. Landowners who make a Buy the Farm election may also be entitled to relocation assistance, which can help ease the burden of moving from a home, farm, or business.

Will eminent domain be used for this project?

The PowerOn Midwest utilities will work with landowners to reach voluntary agreements. In the event agreements cannot be reached in a timely fashion, then the utilities may be required to obtain the necessary rights for the project by exercising their right of eminent domain under Minnesota law. Even when a proceeding has begun, utility representatives will continue to negotiate with landowners and will dismiss the proceedings if an agreement is reached.