

Issue Spotlight: Hydro One Transmission Line Projects

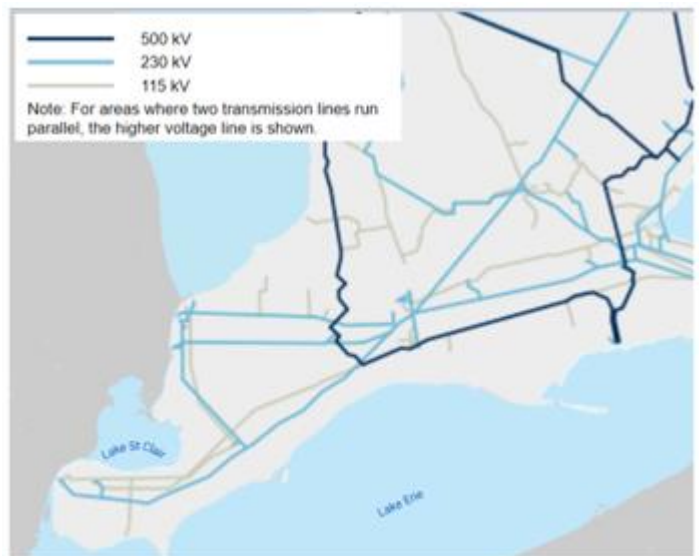
The Independent Electricity System Operation (IESO) maintains Ontario's electricity transmission system. To prepare for higher demand, IESO is planning several new transmission corridor projects, including four in the southwest regions.

Considering the concentration of projects in the southwest, affected farmland owners have raised concerns about route impacts on their lands, warranting a review of project activities.

Why it matters:

The demand for rural and farmlands from industry, infrastructure and housing have major impacts on Ontario farm operations. Electrical infrastructure alone could consume a footprint of 2.18 million acres by 2050 according to the IESO[1]. Most of the new capacity and assets will be decentralized in rural regions.

OFA has worked with Hydro One to develop Compensation Practices for their Land Agents and landowners to ensure farm operation concerns are considered through all stages of a potential project, from planning, through construction, operation and decommissioning.



Southwest Transmission Region

OFA also has developed information for members to understand various types of land access agreements and expropriation processes (see OFA Resource links below).

Who is affected:

The proposed corridor projects impact farmers and rural property owners in southwestern Ontario.

OFA positions – what you need to know:

While land acquisition consultants representing the various public authorities are directed to secure the property rights in a timely manner, they should also ensure that they act within the legislation designed to also protect the landowner and try to avoid expropriation of our valuable farmland resources.

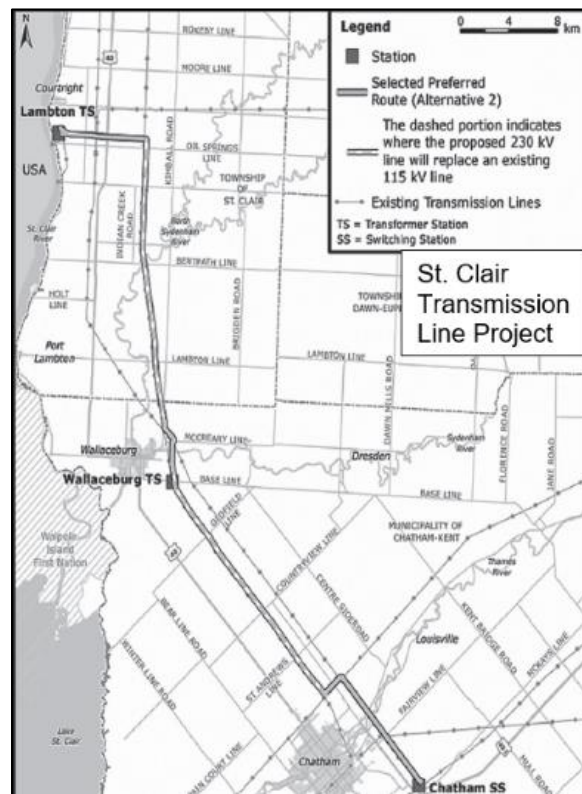
[1] IESO Report to the Minister of Energy <https://www.ieso.ca/-/media/Files/IESO/Document-Library/gas-phase-out/Pathways-to-Decarbonization.pdf>

OFA recommends farmland owners impacted by infrastructure project access thoroughly review materials provided by Land Agents acting on behalf of project proponents and have agreements reviewed by lawyers that have expertise in land issues. If you do not already have a legal advice source, visit the website of The Law Society of Ontario to search a directory of legal services or consider the list provided in the Legal Services section at the end of this document.

Four Major Southwest Region Transmission Projects

1. St. Clair Transmission Line:

The St. Clair Line will include approximately 64 km of 230 kV (kilovolt) double-circuit transmission line from the Lambton Transformer Station, connecting to the Wallaceburg Transformer Station and ending at the Chatham Switching Station. The project to replace existing 115 kV lines with 230 kV lines, includes three new sections; a six km section at Lambton TS, a four km section at Wallaceburg TS, and a ten km section at Chatham SS. Projected in-service date in 2028.

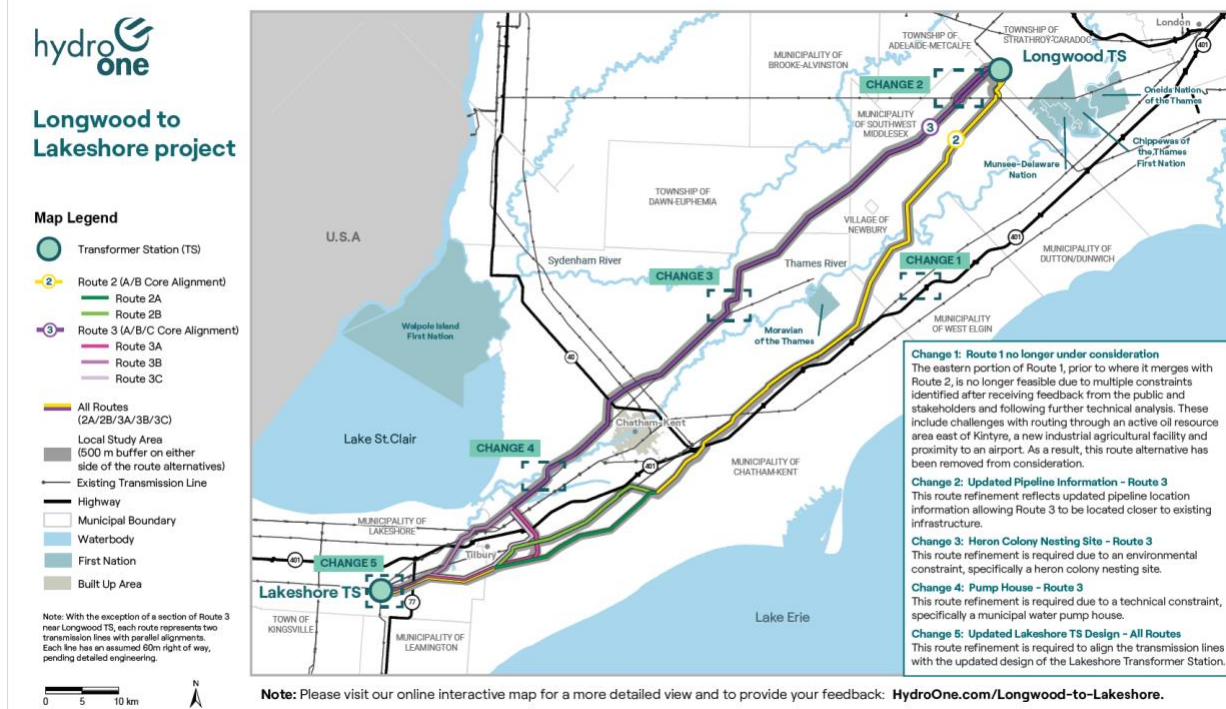


Project Activities

- [Final Environmental Study Report Highlights \(.PDF - .8 MB\)](#)
- [Notice of Preferred Route and Invitation to Community Open Houses - Download the Preferred Route Open House Panels](#)
- Open House [March 9, 2022](#), live discussion
- Open House [March 10, 2022](#), live discussion
- Open House [Virtual open house panels](#)
- [Notice of Commencement](#)
- Open House [October 23, 2022](#) [in-person open house panels](#)
- Open House [October 23, 2022](#), live discussion

2. Longwood to Lakeshore Lines:

Longwood to Lakeshore Lines are approximately 120 km of two 500 kV single-circuit lines. The project is in the planning phase, with expected in-service date of 2030 for Line 1 and Line 2 will be determined upon further planning by the IESO.



Route Updates: October 2024

Route 1 no longer under consideration

Route 3 - Updated Pipeline Information

Route 3 - Refinement at Heron Colony Nesting Site

Route 3 - Refinement at Pump House

All Routes - **Updated Lakeshore TS Design**

Project Activities:

- 2023: Open Houses, data collection, route alternatives
- 2024: Terms of Reference approval Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA)
- 2024-2025: Consultation, data collection for EA
- 2025: Route selections, draft EA, Final EA to MECP
- 2026: Decision on EA, Leave to Construct application
- 2027: Line 1 construction (map inset)
- 2030: Line 1 in Service (map inset)
- **2023 Project Update**

- March-April 2024 Open House Panels
- 2023 Open House Panels
- October 2024 project update
- 2024 Open House Panels

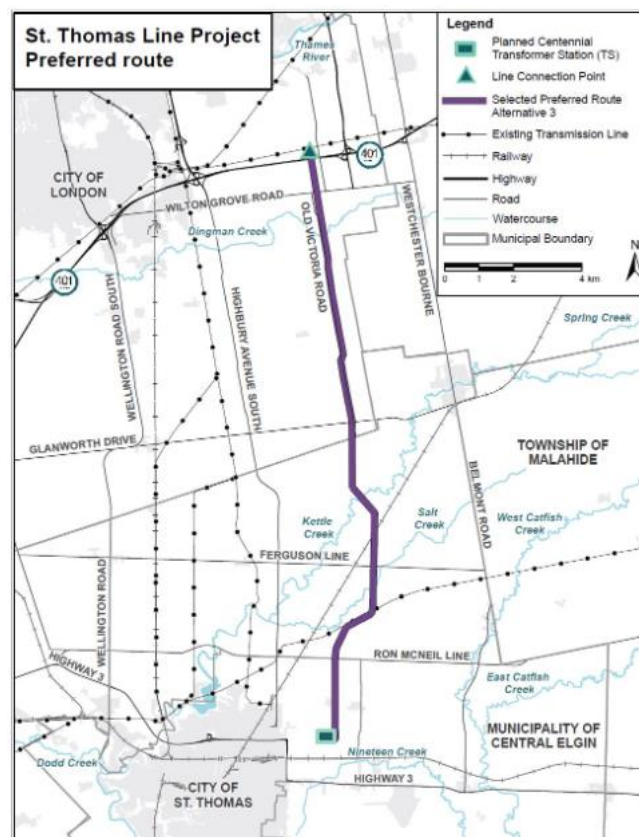
3. St. Thomas Line:

Approximately 20 km of 230-kilovolt double circuit transmission from the hydro corridor north of Highway 401 to the planned **Centennial Transformer Station** in St. Thomas. [Click here to view the St. Thomas Routes Map PDF](#)

The St. Thomas Line is at the planning stage, scheduled for completion in 2027. Community drop-in sessions on proposed route options are held each Tuesday and Wednesday until August 28 at the Holiday Inn in St. Thomas. Contact community.relations@hydroone.com or call 1.877.345.6799.

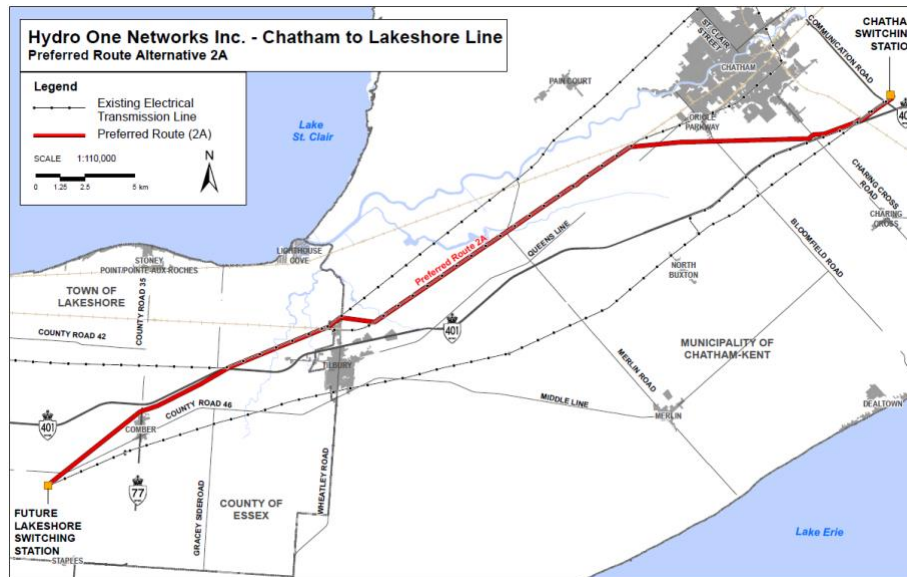
Project Activities

- January 2024 Notice of Commencement
- February 2024 Open House Panels
- November 2024 Open House Panels
- October 2024 Preferred Route selected
- Spring 2025 Draft Environmental Study Report for public review
- Summer 2025 Finalize Class Environmental Assessment
- Late 2025 Construction to follow approvals
- 2027 Proposed Line in-service



4. Chatham to Lakeshore Line:

Approx. 50 km of double-circuit 230 kV transmission line from Chatham Switching Station in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to Lakeshore Switching Station which will be located in the Town of Lakeshore. There were three initial route options with three route variations. The selected route repurposes 16 km of existing line. The project was successfully energized in late 2024. The proposed in service date is in early 2025.



Project Activities:

- [Tile Maps Route PDF](#)
- [ArcGIS Interactive Map](#)
- 2020 [Virtual Discussion Presentation](#), [Virtual Open House Panels](#)
- 2021 [Virtual Discussion Presentation](#), [Virtual Open House Panels](#)
- 2023 [Project Update](#), [Construction Update](#), [Panels from April 2023 Community drop-in](#)

Hydro One has selected Route Alternative 2A as the preferred route for the Chatham to Lakeshore Line, subject to the [Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities](#). The Class EA streamlined planning process ensures projects are planned and carried out in a manner that is efficient and environmentally acceptable.

Details of the review process will continue to be communicated through various channels, including [consultation events](#), local newspapers, this [project website](#), and via notifications to project stakeholders. As part of the consultation process, a draft Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be made available for a review period.

Key Regulatory Stakeholder Organizations

- Ministry of the Energy: Oversees the regulatory framework for the electricity system, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), and the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO).
- MECP: Legislative authority for environmental assessments in Ontario.
- Hydro One: Builds, owns, operates and maintains transmission and distribution facilities.
- IESO: Oversees planning to ensure electricity needs are met both now and in the future.
- OEB: Regulates the electricity market in Ontario, including electricity rates.

Actions taken by OFA and timeline of events:

2020

- April – IESO virtual announcement of St. Clair to Chatham line (St. Clair) with route announcement to occur in 2022, another expansion will be coming forward from London to Lakeshore in the future.

2022

- August 9 – Hydro One meeting with OFA regarding update on SW Ontario projects
- December 6 – Hydro One meeting with OFA Group

2023

- February 24 – Longwoods to Lakeshore eblast discussion with OFA Group. Eblast sent to members in Essex, Kent, Lambton, Middlesex, and Elgin informing them of the upcoming Hydro One Longwood to Lakeshore Transmission Line Project open houses.
- March 21 – Open House, Longwood to Lakeshore in Thamesville
- March 22 – Open House, London to Lakeshore in Glencoe
- March 23 – Open House, London to Lakeshore in Mount Brydges
- March 29 – Open House, London to Lakeshore in Comber
- March 30 – Open House, London to Lakeshore in Chatham
- April 13 – London to Lakeshore Hydro One Virtual Call for Study Area
- April 19 – IESO virtual Regional Electricity Planning in Windsor/Essex. Discussion was on transmission lines for the area (Windsor, Lakeshore and Longwood mentioned). Spoke about end of life of lines, various transformer stations are near capacity. Economic Development growth in agriculture sector and Windsor/Essex battery project.
- October 23 – Southwestern Ontario Advocacy Roundtable (SOAR) – Hydro One invitation to attend. Invites to Mayors & Ec. Dev. Dept of municipalities across Essex, Municipality of CK as well as OFA. OFA attended.

2024

- March 1 – Hydro One held a virtual meeting for OFA on Longwood to Lakeshore route corridors notification
- March 5 – Hydro One mailed out Longwood to Lakeshore route corridor announcements to landowners with a potential route going through their property.
- March 26 – Open House, Longwood to Lakeshore in Chatham

- March 27 – Open House, Longwood to Lakeshore in Comber
- April 3 – Open House, Longwood to Lakeshore in Thamesville
- April 4 – Open House, Longwood to Lakeshore in Glencoe
- April 24 – Open House, Longwood to Lakeshore, virtual
- May 5 – Hydro One Technical Advisory Committee meeting #1
- May 28 – Hydro One and OFA virtual meeting. Discussed members' concerns regarding locations of line and the need for fair compensation.
- June – Landowners began receiving paperwork for Early Access permission
- June 4 – Hydro One Technical Advisory Committee meeting #2, Longwood to Lakeshore
- June 13 – Hydro One meeting with OFA regarding Longwood to Lakeshore.
- June 24 – Legal Information Meeting by Quinn Ross from The Ross Firm held in Glencoe
- July 9 – Legal Information Meeting by Paula Lombardi from Siskinds, Glencoe
- July 10 – Legal Information Meeting by Paula Lombardi from Siskinds, Dresden
- July 11 – OFA Group Meeting to discuss next steps for OFA
- November 18 – Hydro One Technical Advisory Committee meeting #3, route updates

Future Activities:**2025-26**

- Chatham to Lakeshore: Line in service
- Longwood to Lakeshore: Hydro expected to announce the preferred route
- St. Thomas: Release draft Environmental Study Report for review and comment
- St. Thomas: Begin land access negotiations and construction
- St. Clair: Line Completion of detailed design and other permits and approvals, including Section 92 approval from the Ontario Energy Board
- Longwood to Lakeshore: Line Completion of detailed design and other permits and approvals, including Section 92 approval from the Ontario Energy Board

2027

- St. Thomas: Line In-service
- Longwood to Lakeshore: Construction of the line begins

2028

- St. Clair: Line In-service

2030

- Longwood to Lakeshore: Line in service

Next Steps:

OFA continues to engage with our members, local federations, the IESO, the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks, and Hydro One to ensure the next steps are transparent, fair and ensure the viability and success of our members' farm businesses.

OFA resources

OFA's [Resource Library](#) has issues-based fact sheets, submissions and correspondence, webinars, resolutions, archives and additional information.

- OFA Information on Easement and Right-of-Way Arrangements, and Expropriation
- Feb 23, 2022 – [OFA Factsheet Land Easements and Acquisitions Under Infrastructure Projects](#) (rev. June 17, 2024)
- May 9, 2024 - [OFA Factsheet Cropland out of production in a right-of-way, lease or easement agreement](#)
- April 4, 2024 - [OFA Webinar – Easements on Farm Properties](#)
- June 17, 2024 - [OFA Letter to Attorney General Downey re Expropriation Concerns](#)

OFA Correspondence

- May 10, 2024 - [OFA submission to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the proposed policies for a new provincial planning policy instrument](#)
- January 17, 2024 - [OFA submission to the Independent Electricity System Operator \(IESO\) regarding the long-term procurement plan to acquire energy and capacity to meet electricity needs](#)
- January 12, 2024 - [OFA submission to the Ministry of Energy regarding Pathways to Decarbonization Study](#)
- January 11, 2024 - [OFA submission regarding the evaluation of municipal class environmental assessment requirements for infrastructure projects](#)
- January 11, 2024 – [OFA submission regarding project list approach under the Environmental Assessment Act](#)
- May 11, 2023 – [OFA submission to the Standing Committee regarding proposed Planning Act changes as specified in schedule 6 of Bill 97](#)
- May 5, 2023 – [OFA submission regarding proposed Planning Act changes as specified in schedule 6 of Bill 97 \(ERO 019-6821\)](#)
- July 31, 2023 – [OFA submission to Minister Clark regarding the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's proposed policies for an integrated province-wide land use Provincial Planning Statement \(ERO 019-6813\)](#)
- March 7, 2022 - [OFA submission to the Ministry of Energy regarding critical transmission infrastructure in Southwestern Ontario](#)
- August 18, 2021 [OFA letter to Hydro One Networks Inc. regarding the Draft Environmental Study Report](#)
- September 1, 2021 – [OFA submission to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding transmission lines \(ERO # 019-3917\)](#)
- September 7, 2021 - [OFA submission to MECP regarding transmission lines](#)
- May 4, 2020 - [OFA submission regarding earlier access to land to conduct preliminary environmental studies for electricity transmission projects](#)

- May 4, 2020 - OFA submission regarding electricity transmission corridor for Halton, Peel, York regions
- August 14, 2020 – OFA submission regarding proposed Environmental Assessment exemptions for GTA West Transportation Corridor project (ERO # 019-1882)

Legal Services

Please research these options to see who best suits your specific needs.

The Law Society of Ontario (LSO) <https://lso.ca/home>

LSO Legal And Paralegal Directory <https://lso.ca/public-resources/finding-a-lawyer-or-paralegal/lawyer-and-paralegal-directory>

The Ontario Bar Association Find-A-Lawyer Search <https://oba.org/public/legal-resources/>

Hydro One Contacts:

Hydro One Community Relations Telephone: 1-877-345-6799

Email: Community.Relations@HydroOne.com

Sara Barss, Senior Environmental Planner

Paul Dalmazzi, Senior Environmental Specialist

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For more information:

OFA's Southwestern Region local Member Service Representatives:

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