

IESO Response to Feedback

Hamilton Area Addendum Study Needs and Options Screening - July 8, 2026

The IESO hosted a public webinar on July 8, 2026, for the Hamilton Area Addendum Study. During the webinar, the IESO provided an overview of the regional electricity planning process, the electricity demand forecast, and shared the needs and screening of potential wire and non-wire options for feedback. The presentation materials and recorded webinar are available on the [engagement webpage](#).

The IESO appreciates the input, which will be considered by the Technical Working Group¹ in the development of the Addendum Study. Feedback was received from the following parties and the full submission can be viewed on the [engagement webpage](#):

- [City of Hamilton](#)

The section below summarizes feedback received related to the screening of potential wire and non-wire alternatives in meeting electricity needs, as well as local issues and concerns that should be considered in the electricity planning for the Hamilton Area.

Feedback theme/topic	IESO response
Hamilton shared that its Community Energy & Emissions Plan includes actions to work with electricity sector partners to support grid modernization, local renewable energy, energy storage, electrification, and the implementation of non-wires solutions. The City emphasized the	Thank you for your feedback. The IESO and Technical Working Group (TWG) recognize that municipalities across the region, including the City of Hamilton, have established ambitious climate, energy, and decarbonization goals through community energy and emissions plans. These plans provide valuable insight into local priorities and are considered important inputs to the regional planning process.

¹ The Technical Working Group is lead by the IESO and consists of the LDCs in the region and the local transmitter (Alectra Utilities Corporation, and Hydro One.)

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importance of ensuring that electricity planning and the assessment of wires and non-wires alternatives align with long-term decarbonization objectives, grid resilience, and future electricity demand associated with a net-zero transition.	The objective of regional electricity planning is to identify solutions that can reliably and cost-effectively meet the region's electricity needs over the near-, medium-, and long-term planning horizons. To do this, the TWG evaluates a broad range of potential solutions, including both wires and non-wires alternatives, and assesses them against several factors, such as their ability to address the identified need, technical feasibility, timing and deliverability, system reliability, cost effectiveness, scalability, and alignment with broader system and policy objectives. Given the scale, location, and timing of projected electricity needs, no single solution type is appropriate in all circumstances. As presented in the Hamilton Area Regional Electricity Planning webinar on July 8, the IESO screened in non-wires alternatives for further consideration for two potential regional electricity needs. The continued assessment of both wires and non-wires options reflects the IESO's commitment to considering a broad range of solutions while ensuring that future electricity needs can be met reliably and cost-effectively over the planning horizon.
Hamilton expressed concern that renewable and non-wires solutions may not be receiving sufficient consideration in the evaluation of options to meet future electricity needs. The City emphasized the importance of assessing the full potential of distributed energy resources, such as rooftop solar and energy storage, and ensuring that planning processes appropriately reflect broader decarbonization and resilience objectives.	Thank you for this feedback. The IESO and Technical Working Group (TWG) recognize the important role that distributed energy resources (DERs) can play in supporting decarbonization, increasing local resilience, and helping to manage electricity demand. These resources are considered as part of the regional planning process and are evaluated alongside traditional wires solutions when assessing options to address identified electricity system needs. The TWG recognizes that DERs, including rooftop solar and energy storage, can make meaningful contributions toward meeting future electricity needs. However, in Hamilton, the electricity needs identified were of a scale and nature that could not be feasibly resolved through DERs alone, in addition to being near-term needs (2026-2030) requiring urgent action. The ability of DERs to address specific regional needs is evaluated based on their expected availability, scale, and capability to resolve the identified need within the required timeframe, often addressing mid-

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	term needs (2031-2035) to allow time to enable the specific non-wire alternative. As a result, DERs were screened out as standalone alternatives. The IESO acknowledges the value of continued growth in DERs and local renewable resources and recognizes that these resources, where feasible and deployable at sufficient scale, can complement investments in the electricity system and support broader community decarbonization and resilience objectives.
Hamilton shared a desire to better understand how priorities are established at the distribution planning level and whether municipalities can play a greater role in identifying and informing those priorities. The City emphasized the importance of ensuring that local priorities, including community and climate-related objectives, are considered alongside utility-led planning processes.	Distribution system planning is led by the local distribution companies (LDCs), which are Hydro One Inc. and Alectra Utilities in the City of Hamilton and surrounding area, who are responsible for planning and operating their systems in accordance with the regulatory framework established by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB). Within this framework, distributors assess local system needs, forecast demand, and identify investments required to maintain reliable service. Municipalities can play an important role in informing this process by sharing information related to planned growth, intensification, economic development, electrification initiatives, and community energy and climate plans. The IESO encourages municipalities to engage early and regularly with their LDCs to help align local energy priorities and improve coordination between community planning and electricity system planning. Ongoing dialogue can help ensure that utilities have visibility into municipal objectives and emerging electricity needs as they develop their distribution system plans.
Hamilton shared an interest in better understanding how wires and non-wires options are evaluated, including the processes, criteria, and decision-making roles involved. The City expressed a desire for greater transparency in the assessment framework and opportunities for municipalities to provide input on evaluation criteria to help ensure that	Thank you for your feedback. Through the regional planning process, the Technical Working Group (TWG) first identifies and characterizes the electricity needs facing the region, including the magnitude, location, and timing of forecast demand growth and system constraints. Once needs have been identified, the TWG undertakes a detailed assessment of potential solutions that could address those needs. This assessment considers both wires and non-wires alternatives, where applicable, using a consistent set of evaluation criteria. Depending on the nature of the

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local priorities are reflected in the consideration of alternative solutions.	need, these criteria may include factors such as technical feasibility, the ability of an option to address the identified need, land requirements, system cost estimates, overall system net benefits, implementation lead times, and impacts on reliability and operability. The assessment is conducted collaboratively by the TWG, which includes the IESO, transmitters, and local distribution companies, drawing on technical expertise and system planning information from across the electricity sector. The objective is to identify solutions that can reliably and cost-effectively meet regional electricity needs over the planning horizon while considering a broad range of viable alternatives. For more information you can review the IESO's Guide to Assessing Non-Wires Alternatives.
Hamilton shared that its electricity planning priorities are closely tied to its climate goals and long-term net-zero objectives. The City expressed interest in understanding whether and how centralized and decentralized energy solutions are evaluated as part of electricity planning, including how their respective contributions to reliability, resilience, and climate objectives are considered when assessing future options.	Thank you for your feedback. Regional planning is focused on assessing how best to meet forecast electricity demand and maintain system reliability at a regional scale. Community-scale and decentralized energy solutions often depend on broader market participation, customer adoption, local distribution system considerations, and coordination among municipalities, local distribution companies, private sector developers, and other stakeholders. Broader policy objectives and anticipated changes in electricity demand associated with electrification and net-zero initiatives are reflected in the planning assumptions and forecasts used to inform the analysis. The IESO appreciates the City's interest in this topic and will continue to consider municipal plans, electrification strategies, and community energy objectives as valuable inputs to regional electricity planning activities.
Hamilton sought greater clarity on how electricity planning options are assessed and compared. The City	Thank you for your feedback. The IESO's planning processes are designed to evaluate both wire and non-wire

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expressed interest in understanding whether factors such as cost-effectiveness, lifecycle costs and benefits, greenhouse gas emissions, climate resilience, and energy efficiency or demand management measures are considered when evaluating alternatives and planning future system investments.	alternatives, including conservation, energy efficiency, and demand response. A key component of electricity planning is ensuring value to the electricity ratepayers by basing recommendations on forecasts of firm electricity demand. This helps ensure that investments are appropriately sized and timed to maintain reliability while avoiding both overbuilding infrastructure that may not be needed and underbuilding infrastructure that could result in future system constraints or reliability risks. In the next milestone we will provide a detailed options analysis of the screened in options for your feedback.
Hamilton sought greater clarity on how concepts such as “just” and “reasonable” are defined and applied within electricity investment decisions. The City expressed interest in understanding whether municipalities have opportunities to provide input on these definitions and the broader criteria used to evaluate and approve electricity infrastructure investments.	The IESO's planning and procurement activities are guided by legislative and regulatory requirements, including the need to ensure that Ontario's electricity system remains reliable, cost-effective, and responsive to future needs. In this context, decisions are informed by evidence-based assessments of system requirements, available alternatives, expected costs and benefits, and broader policy objectives established by the Province. The IESO's role is to provide independent technical analysis and recommendations that support informed decision-making and help ensure that investments are proportionate to identified system needs and deliver value to electricity consumers. The IESO recognizes the important role municipalities play in the planning process and provides opportunities for municipal and community input through regional planning engagements. Feedback received through this process helps inform the IESO's understanding of local priorities, potential impacts, and considerations that may be relevant to planning and investment decisions.