

Ottawa Achievable Potential Study Background and FAQ

Background

To support Ontario's growing electricity demand, the IESO has significantly expanded energy efficiency programming with a budget of up to \$10.9 billion over 12 years that began in 2025. This includes new incentives for solar, solar-plus-storage, and demand-response programs.

The renewed commitment to electricity demand-side management drove the development of a new provincial [Achievable Potential Study \(APS\)](#) in 2026. Results from the APS will directly inform the evaluation of non-wires alternatives in regional and bulk system planning by identifying achievable energy efficiency, demand response, and solar/storage potential.

The provincial APS has strong overlap with the Ottawa Local Achievable Potential Study (L-APS) that was initiated in 2023, including dedicated zoning and scenario analysis for the Ottawa area, with more recent data inputs and clear opportunities for local engagement. Given the significant expansion of energy efficiency across Ontario, stronger partnership between the IESO and local distribution companies to carry out local programs, and the status of the Ottawa L-APS learnings will be carried forward and integrated into the provincial APS to enable a more co-ordinated and efficient approach.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the status of the Ottawa L-APS?

Energy efficiency plays a key role in the power system, achieving energy and peak demand savings and, in turn, reducing energy and capacity needs. Using electricity wisely offers benefits for individuals and businesses, as well as Ontario's electricity system, where energy efficiency typically involves upgrading or replacing existing equipment with higher efficiency alternatives.

To examine the potential for energy efficiency opportunities in Ottawa, the IESO initiated L-APS in 2023 that was guided by the [2021–2024 Conservation and Demand Management Framework](#). Since then, the Government of Ontario announced a [\\$10.9-billion 2025–2036 Electricity Demand-Side Management \(eDSM\) Framework](#) that enables the IESO to better optimize the full value and range of energy efficiency programs for Ottawa and the rest of the province.

The provincial APS is divided into 10 zonal areas, including an Ottawa area zone, that will take into consideration multiple scenarios that provides visibility and pacing of electrification and economic development. Given the current stage of the Ottawa L-APS, the learnings to date will be carried forward and integrated into the provincial APS, supporting a more co-ordinated and efficient approach.

The IESO will continue to collaborate with Hydro Ottawa and engage locally to identify and implement custom energy efficiency measures that support priorities for the Ottawa area.

As a vital component of energy planning, the IESO takes a long-term approach to optimize the full value of energy efficiency. As part of the 2025–2036 eDSM Framework, the IESO will provide sector partners — including Hydro Ottawa, Enbridge, program delivery partners and their contractors —with increased opportunities to collaborate and partner on promoting a greater range of programs and innovative offerings for residents and businesses.

What are the differences between the provincial APS and the Ottawa L-APS?

Rather than commissioning standalone achievable potential studies, the IESO is working with a consultant (Cadmus Group) on integrating an enduring APS modelling capability into its long-term demand forecasting tool (LEAF).

This approach standardizes methodology while allowing key inputs such as demand forecasts, avoided costs, rates and measure assumptions to be updated over time. The APS will leverage demand forecasts from the IESO's next [Annual Planning Outlook](#), ensuring alignment with major recent federal and provincial policy developments since the [2025 Ottawa Area IRRP](#).

The provincial APS has strong overlap with the Ottawa L-APS, including dedicated zoning and scenario analysis for the Ottawa area and clear opportunities for local engagement.

The APS results will directly inform the evaluation of non-wires alternatives in regional and bulk system planning, including future Ottawa studies, by identifying achievable energy efficiency, demand response, and behind-the-meter solar, storage, and solar-plus-storage potential.

Interested parties are encouraged to [subscribe to receive updates](#) from the weekly IESO Bulletin for news, notices, updates; and for regional updates that include [Greater Ottawa](#).

What progress has been made on meeting Ottawa's electricity needs?

The IESO continues to collaborate closely with Hydro Ottawa to understand and meet Ottawa's electricity demand needs. Ongoing initiatives include collaboration on targeted energy efficiency programming such as the [Retrofit](#) (with additional incentives for buildings in Kanata and Stittsville) and the [BizEnergySaver](#) (which included a limited time offer of double the incentive for select areas of Ottawa) programs.

The IESO also frequently engages with Hydro Ottawa on energy efficiency initiatives and the Technical Working Group to implement 2025 Ottawa Area IRRP recommendations. There is also new funding for LDCs, including Hydro Ottawa, to develop and implement local programs addressing distribution system needs that also provide upstream benefits to the IESO-controlled electricity system through the 2025–2036 eDSM Framework.

In parallel, the IESO is finalizing the [Eastern Ontario Bulk Plan](#), which includes a comprehensive assessment of the transmission system’s ability to reliably serve eastern Ontario, support future growth, and enhance long-term system resilience. Informed by previous work, two focus assessments have been developed, including a Supply to Ottawa Study. The Eastern Ontario Bulk Plan is focused on identifying bulk-level transmission needs and is co-ordinated with the 2025 Ottawa Area IRRP to manage interdependencies.

Concurrently, to address projected electricity demand, Hydro Ottawa’s 2026–2030 capital plan accounts for the commissioning of roughly one new substation each year across the service territory. Further, Hydro Ottawa and the IESO continue to pursue collaborative opportunities on local programs, and this includes new Non-Wires Customer Solutions to be initially deployed in the targeted area of Kanata-Stittsville which is an area with both local and bulk system needs. Of note, the [GridFlex](#) program — an example of this collaborative approach — was launched the week of May 4, 2026.