Land rights acquisition process
- working with landowners

PowerOn Midwest™
Big Stone South to Brookings

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY Xcel Energy®

Large transmission line projects like PowerOn Midwest involve multiple phases of route development before land rights acquisition begins. 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 - South Dakota through mailings and other communications. As potential routes are identified, utility representatives may seek to obtain "rights of entry," granting permission for utility representatives to conduct 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 easement options needed to construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line. 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.

If a Facility Permit is approved, land 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.



The PowerOn Midwest utilities are committed to working closely with landowners throughout the route development, 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
Easement option negotiations begin.

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.

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Frequently asked questions

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

We will work closely with landowners throughout the route development process, and it is the goal of the PowerOn Midwest utilities to collaborate with landowners to determine the transmission structure locations, to the extent possible. 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. 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 ensure 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 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.

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. Even when a proceeding has begun, utility representatives will continue to negotiate with landowners and will dismiss the proceedings if an agreement is reached.

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