



**NEXTGEN
HIGHWAYS**



Reinventing the Right of Way: Casting the Vision and Need

National Academies of Sciences,
Engineering, and Medicine

April 7, 2025





Wisconsin Act 89 (2003)

***The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly,
do enact as follows:***

It is the policy of this state that, to the greatest extent feasible that is consistent with economic and engineering considerations, reliability of the electric system, and protection of the environment, the following corridors should be utilized in the following order of priority:

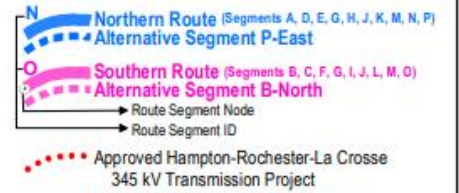
- (a) Existing utility corridors.
- (b) Highway and railroad corridors.
- (c) Recreational trails, to the extent that the facilities may be constructed below ground and that the facilities do not significantly impact environmentally sensitive areas.
- (d) New corridors.

PSC REF#:191823

APPENDIX A FIGURE 1 PROPOSED PROJECT

BADGER COULEE 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
RECEIVED: 10/15/13, 11:40:50 AM



STATE PRIORITY CORRIDORS



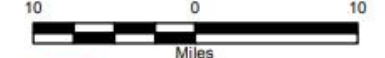
Outside Study Area

Study Area

EXISTING SUBSTATION

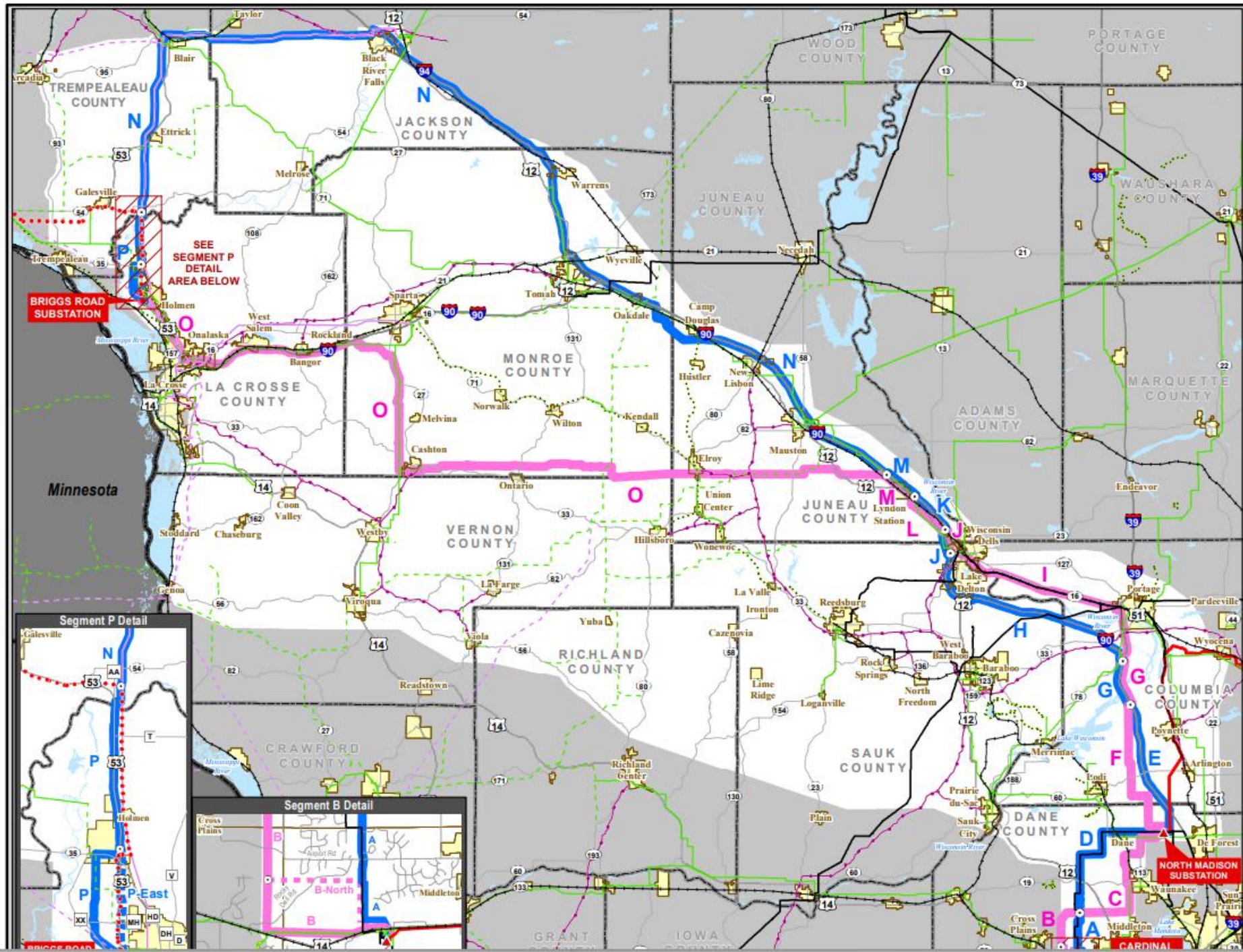
COUNTY BOUNDARY

City/Village



The information presented in this map document is advisory and is intended for reference purposes only. Applicants' owned and operated facility locations are approximate.

Base Map Data Sources: ATC, WDNR, PSCW, NSPW, NNG, DPC, WDOT.



Why NextGen Highways?

- The United States is making a generational investment in its infrastructure.
- The success or failure of this investment will determine whether this country can remain competitive in the global economy over the next few decades.
- Coordinated, proactive, and holistic planning will be key to that success. NextGen Highways supports this coordination by promoting the strategic and safe **co-location** of electric and communications infrastructure in existing highway rights-of-way (ROW).

Preparing for Clean Energy Proliferation

Renewables provided 90% of new US capacity in 2024 – FERC

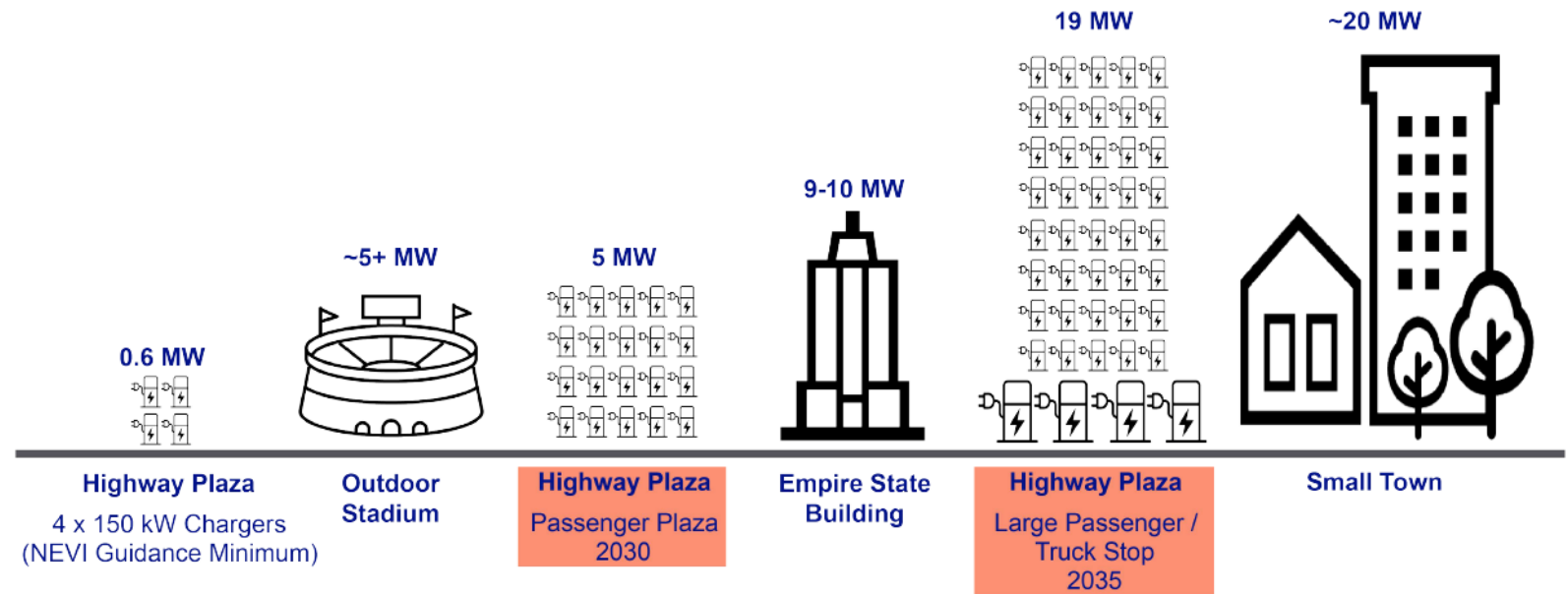
- Despite political headwinds, the reality is that solar and wind are the lowest-cost resources
- We need more transmission to get this generation from where it's produced to where people and businesses will use it

Preparing for the Future of Transportation

EV charging loads will become quite large

Plan for transmission-connected charging

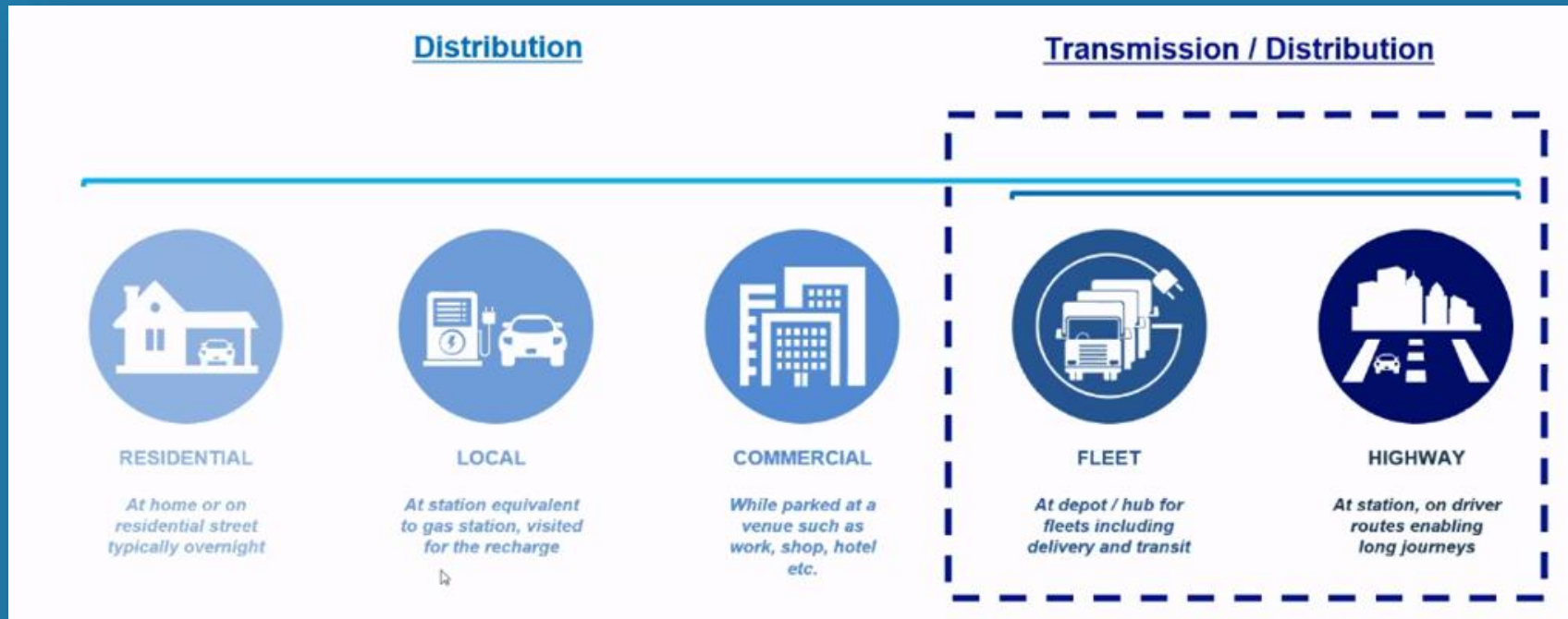
Figure 21. Comparative Peak Loads for Illustrative Sites and Other Major Users³⁵



Source: National Grid, 'Electric Highways – White Paper.' November 2022.

New Transmission is Needed to Support Fleet & Highway Electrification

Why fleets and highways: The scope and scale of fleet & highway charging loads will require both T&D solutions



Source: National Grid. 'Full Speed Ahead: Enabling Future Fleet and Highway Electrification.' D-TECH + Series, July 22, 2021

Preparing for AI Demand

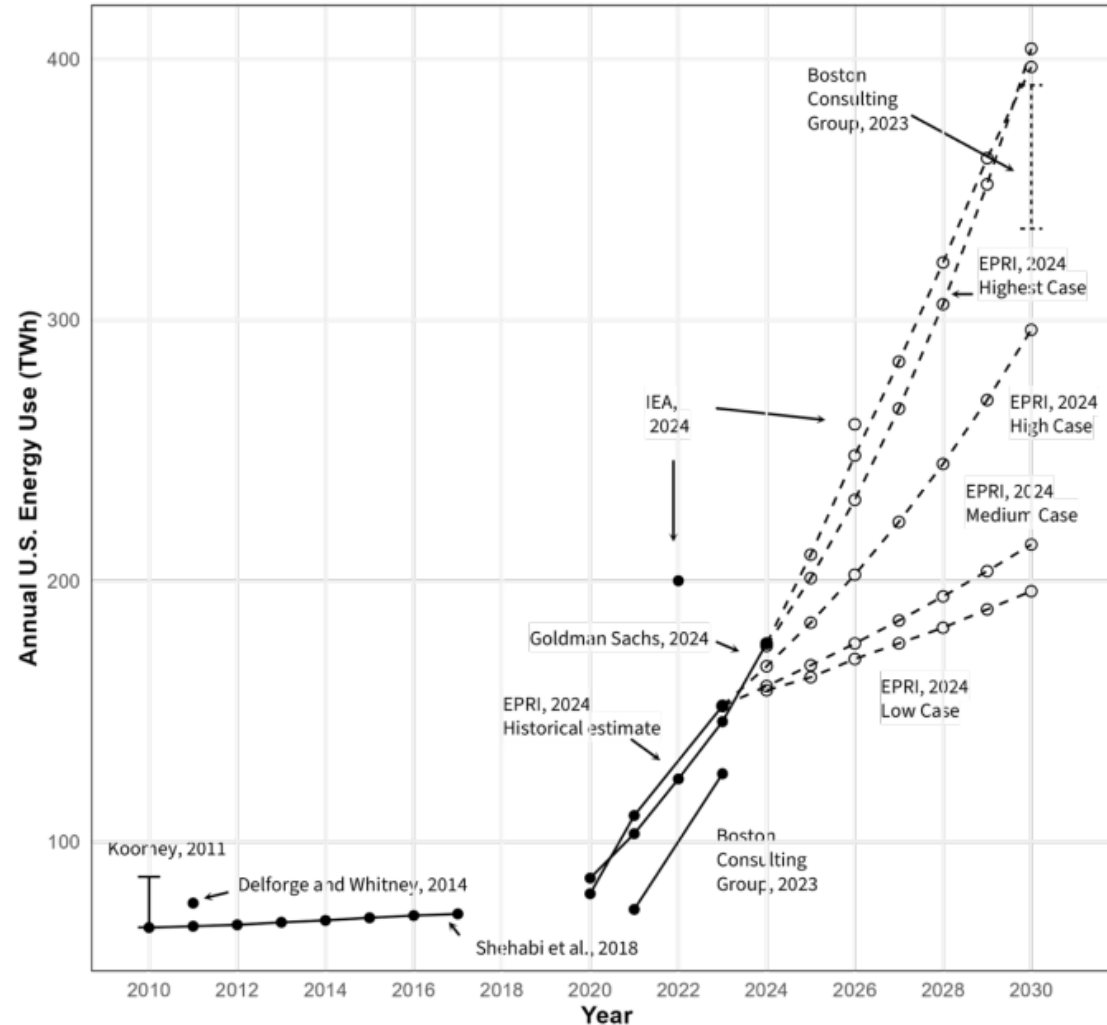
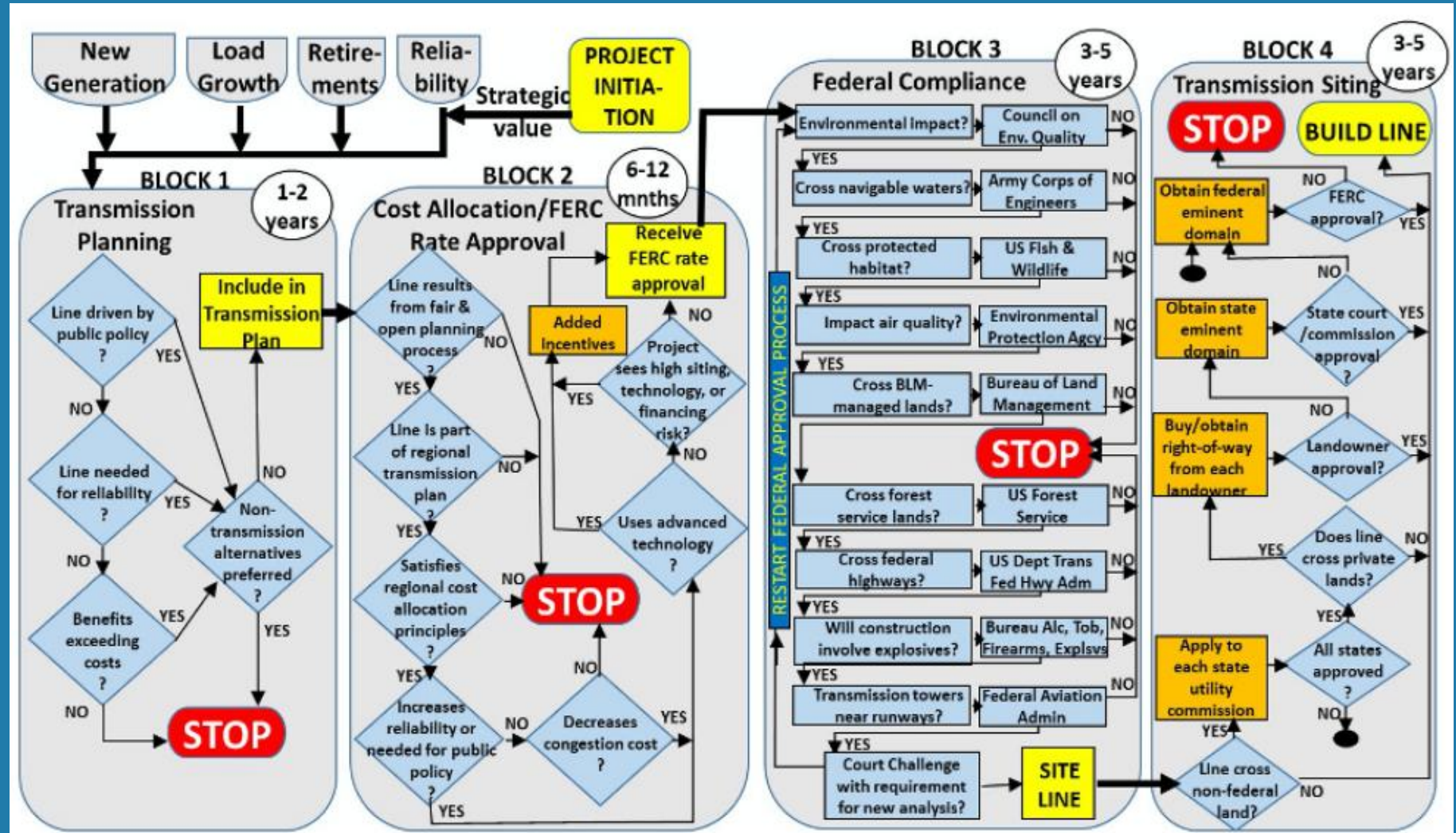


Figure 1.1. Academic and industry historical estimates of U.S. data center energy use.
Plot also includes future projections from those sources. Historical estimates are shown with solid lines, and projections are shown with dashed lines.

The Transmission Development Challenge ...

(It's complicated.)



The Frederick News-Post

Enraged, distressed residents tell PSEG to stop proposed regional transmission line

By Gabrielle Lewis glewis@newspost.com Nov 15, 2024 Updated Nov 15, 2024

LoudounNow

Residents, Parents Protest Transmission Lines on School Grounds

Amber Lucas [Mar 20, 2025](#)  14

Capital Press

Grant County farmers protest Washington transmission line

Published 8:10 am Monday, February 3, 2025

Siting fatigue/frustration is
real

It's a threat to energy
infrastructure deployment

Reimagining highways as infrastructure corridors to meet 21st-century needs

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Co-Location: Status Around the U.S.

Most states
(over 40)
have policy
prohibitions or
disincentives
to co-locating
transmission along
interstates



Changing a Risk-Averse Culture

- Transmission developers are creatures of process, history, and risk aversion
- Past experiences working with DOTs may have been challenging
- So they may hesitate to wade into co-location
- But consideration of co-location can speed up the permitting process and mitigate public backlash

NextGen Highways Goal

Collaborate to remove barriers to the co-location of energy and communications infrastructure in interstate and other highway rights-of-way

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WI Public Service Commission Order

Badger Coulee Line

“The route combination is 91 percent within existing ROW by length and 62 percent within shared ROW by area.

As such, it impacts fewer acres of new ROW, crosses less agricultural land, and impacts fewer residences.”

Badger-Coulee Transmission Line



Co-Location Outcomes

- Speed transmission development
- Impact fewer private landowners
- Lessen environmental impacts
- Support reliable, affordable, clean energy
- Support transportation electrification

Utility Accommodation on Highways: A Brief Timeline

- 1959: American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) set policy barring longitudinal occupations on interstates
 - 1969: Policy was expanded to include freeways
- 1989: Policy update allowed longitudinal use under “strictly controlled conditions”
- 1996: Telecommunications Act prompted big changes
 - Telecom providers began asking about installing fiber-optic cable along highways; state departments of transportation began saying yes
- 2003: Wisconsin DOT responded to Act 89 and changed its Utility Accommodation Policy (UAP) to allow longitudinal transmission along interstates and freeways
- 2021: Federal Highway Administration memo suggests options state DOTs have to leverage alternative uses of highway rights of way

Stuck In Our Silos



An aerial photograph of a multi-lane highway stretching into the distance under a dramatic sunset sky. The road is flanked by green hills and trees. Several vehicles, including cars and a large truck, are visible on the road. The text "Collaborate to remove barriers to co-location in interstate and other highway rights-of-way" is overlaid in white.

Collaborate to remove barriers
to co-location in interstate
and other highway rights-of-way

Putting Policy Change to Work

- NGH Minnesota Coalition, utilities and DOT collaborated on policy change
- Significant new transmission projects coming
- Opportunities for co-location consideration
- Engagement of coalition and other stakeholders

NGH Colorado

Co-Convened with CETA

- NGH Colorado Coalition, DOT and other stakeholders advocate for policy change
- CETA identified \$4B needed transmission
- Bill in the legislative process

What's the risk of not
considering co-location?

An aerial photograph of a multi-lane highway stretching into the distance under a dramatic sunset sky. The road is flanked by green trees and rolling hills. Several vehicles, including cars and a large truck, are visible on the road. The text "The public prefers infrastructure to be built where there is already infrastructure." is overlaid in white, with the last two lines underlined.

The public prefers
infrastructure to be built
where there is already
infrastructure.

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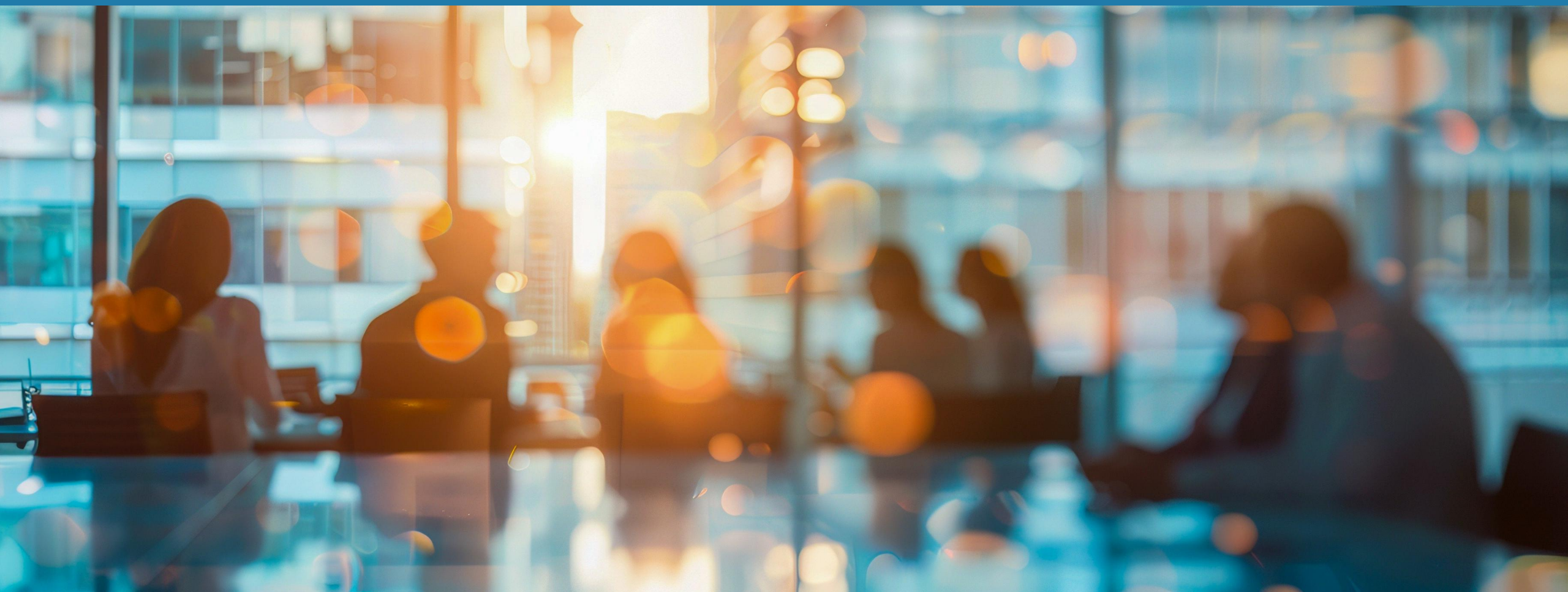
In New Poll, Iowans Strongly Prefer Siting Electric Transmission Lines Along Highway Corridors Versus Private Land

Results suggest nearly all voters want reliable energy
but with private property rights in mind

Survey: Minnesota Voters Want Electric Transmission Lines Built Along Highways

Minnesota voters overwhelmingly support the building of electric transmission lines alongside highways and other existing infrastructure corridors, according to a new NextGen Highways initiative survey.

In the statewide survey, 79 percent of respondents prefer building electric transmission lines alongside existing powerlines, highways, rail, and other existing public right of way (ROW) corridors. That compares to just 3 percent who prefer private lands such as farms, forests, or neighborhoods, according to the Public Policy Polling survey of 684 Minnesota registered voters on February 21 and 22, 2023.



Join us

[Nextgenhighways.org](https://nextgenhighways.org)



Thank you!

For more information, please check out our website
(www.nextgenhighways.org) or send us an email
(info@nextgenhighways.org)