

# GridSmartCity® Launches Industry-Leading DSO Strategy

*Coordinated roadmap positions GridSmartCity LDCs at the centre of modern and responsive electricity grid*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**July 9, 2025 – Ontario** – GridSmartCity® has officially launched its coordinated distribution system operator (DSO) readiness strategy, outlining a pathway to transform Ontario’s local electricity distribution into a more integrated, intelligent, and customer-driven system.

The strategy was presented during a public DSO capabilities consultation hosted by the Ontario Energy Board on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Developed over two years, the plan enables a phased rollout of new DSO capabilities, supported by a shared services platform aligned with provincial and system-level initiatives.

“At a time of rapid transformation across the energy sector, GridSmartCity is proud to lead with a shared vision and a pragmatic, scalable strategy,” said Art Skidmore, President of GridSmartCity. “We identified DSO readiness early as a critical priority, and today, with phase 1 underway, we’re moving from design to action—equipping our member LDCs with the tools and coordination needed to shape the future grid.”

## Aligning vision with execution

With the active participation of all GridSmartCity LDC members, the DSO readiness strategy is designed to integrate seamlessly with the work underway by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), as well as the Ministry of Energy and Mines. By aligning with broader provincial goals around decarbonization, electrification, and grid modernization, GridSmartCity’s strategy ensures that local utilities play a central role in driving innovation while maintaining system reliability and customer value.

## An industry-wide collaboration

“As consumer behaviors shift and distributed energy resources grow, utilities must evolve to operate in more dynamic, data-rich environments,” said John Avdoulos, Chair of GridSmartCity and President & CEO of Essex Powerlines. “This strategy represents the power of LDCs coming together to build shared capabilities that will enhance efficiency, reliability, and innovation across the province.”



### **Key highlights of the GridSmartCity DSO readiness strategy**

- Clear transition path: Explores a range of DSO operating models and establishes a phased roadmap toward an advanced implementation model designed to deliver greater system value.
- Common services platform: Acts as a secure, standardized overlay system to provide essential DSO-related functionalities to all member LDCs.
- Integrated stakeholder coordination: Enables seamless interaction with IESO, OEB, the Ministry of Energy and Mines, DER aggregators, and DER operators to support market setup, service delivery, and transactional capabilities.
- Delivering customer value: Enhances reliability, enables participation in DER programs, and supports cost efficiency for approximately 1 million customers through improved system operations and service delivery.
- Phased rollout timeline: Phase one is underway, with remaining phases aligned to provincial policy.

### **Looking ahead**

GridSmartCity's DSO strategy reinforces its commitment to innovation, customer value, and collaborative leadership as part of Ontario's evolving energy landscape. As the program moves into implementation, GridSmartCity looks forward to working with stakeholders across the sector to unlock new efficiencies and accelerate the grid's transformation. Click [here](#) to read the report.

-30-

### **About GridSmartCity®**

GridSmartCity® is a consortium of 18 local distribution companies (LDCs) and 22 partner organizations. It draws strength from its member utilities and the communities they serve. Collectively, these LDCs manage over \$3.64 billion in assets and deliver electricity to approximately 1 million customers in more than 60 communities across the province. Our purpose is to continuously increase value through a collaborative framework that reflects the importance of local community. Since 2009, we have worked to lead sector innovation synergistically and will continue to deliver on this mandate as we seek to prepare Ontario's electricity grid for the future. Find out more about GridSmartCity [here](#).

### **For more information or media inquiries, please contact:**

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