



Community Engagement Strategies for Energy Storage Projects

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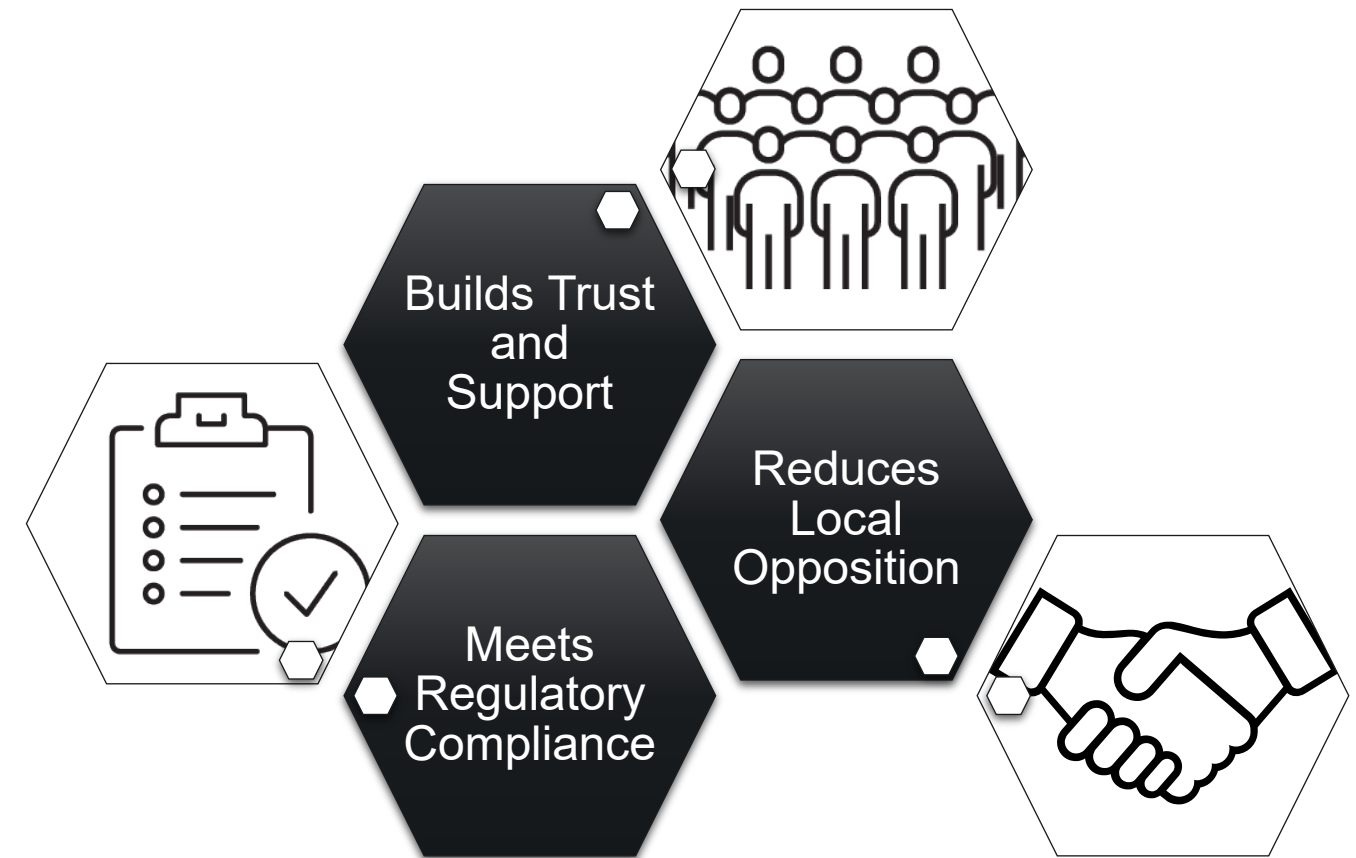


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Why Community Engagement Matters for Energy Storage

- Community engagement is a key piece of environmental review and permitting
 - Creates opportunities for public input
 - Provides transparency in decision-making
- Early engagement helps address concerns before they become project delays
- Meaningful engagement strengthens relationships between developers and communities
 - Incorporates local perspectives into design
 - Demonstrates transparency and accountability



Why Community Engagement Matters for Energy Storage

Types of Risk Managed:

Social

- Perceived safety concerns
- Trust gaps
- Community mobilization

Political

- Permitting delays
- Elected official opposition
- Regulatory scrutiny

Fairness

- Environmental impacts
- Distribution of project benefits

Meaningful Engagement Enables:

- Streamlined project timelines
- Financing confidence
- Regulatory approval
- Long-term operational stability

Principles of Effective Engagement

Start with Context *(Recognition)*

- Acknowledge community history and lived experiences
- Identify who may be impacted and why
- Partner with trusted local organizations

Make Participation Meaningful *(Procedural)*

- Engage early and throughout the project lifecycle
- Provide accessible, transparent information
- Demonstrate how community feedback shapes decisions

Balance Benefits & Burdens *(Distribution)*

- Assess who bears risks and who receives benefits
- Avoid concentrating impacts in already overburdened communities
- Share project benefits with the surrounding community

Repair and Rebuild Where Possible *(Restorative)*

- Address historical and ongoing community concerns
- Build relationships beyond the project lifecycle
- Reduce barriers to community participation

Who to Engage

Directly Impacted



- Adjacent residents
- Landowners
- Businesses
- Advocates

Indirectly Impacted



- Communities with historical environmental burden
- Ratepayers
- Workforce
- Advocates

Institutional Actors



- Local officials
- Fire departments
- Permitting agencies
- Tribal governments
- Utilities
- Interconnection entities
- Planning boards

Examples of Effective Engagement Strategies

For Building Understanding

- Site tours
- Visual simulations
- Safety workshops with fire officials
- FAQ transparency dashboards

For Building Trust

- Community advisory boards
- Independent technical review panels
- Transparent safety data sharing

For Sharing Benefits

- Local hiring commitments
- Community benefit agreements
- Revenue sharing or resilience benefits
- Storage for backup power to community facilities

Examples of Meaningful Feedback Mechanisms

Progress & Impact Updates

- Follow up after major milestones and show how feedback influenced decisions
- Maintain long-term communication channels
- Track engagement metrics or *Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)*

Low Participation Barriers

- Offer hybrid (virtual + in-person) engagement options
- Provide translation services and multilingual materials
- Partner with trusted community-based organizations
- Provide participation support (stipends, childcare, or transportation)

Process Transparency

- Publicly document how input shaped outcomes
- Maintain a “comment → response → action” tracking log
- Share timelines, milestones, and plain-language summaries of technical issues
- Maintain accessible digital repositories

Examples of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Participant Diversity
 - Representation across demographics and geography
 - Inclusion of historically impacted groups
- Engagement Depth
 - Participation trends over time
 - Quality and substance of feedback
- Decision-Making Impact
 - Project changes linked to community input
- Community Surveys
 - Post-engagement surveys
 - Perceptions of fairness, clarity, and responsiveness

International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation



Levels of engagement range from informing the public to empowering communities in decision-making (IAP2 Spectrum), which can guide KPI development.

Examples of Community Engagement's Impact

When Engagement Leads to Successful Outcomes:

Blue Lake Rancheria Microgrid, CA

- Solar + battery microgrid powers tribal offices, EV charging, fuel services, and community facilities
- Developed through Tribal leadership and partnership with researchers and state agencies
- Designed as a resilience hub during wildfire-related power shutoffs

When Community Concerns Impact Project Success:

Wendell, MA 105-MW BESS

- Strong local opposition and formation of a citizen advocacy group
- Residents raised concerns about safety, forest clearing, and siting
- Community passed a bylaw regulating large battery facilities
- Project ultimately withdrawn by the developer



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Discussion



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Thank you