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How Infrastructure, Energy and Water are Reshaping Site Selection in 2025

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At the Site Selectors Guild [2025 Annual Conference](#), leading site selectors came together for the panel “Infrastructure, Energy, and Water, Oh My!” to answer this question. Here’s what Guild members [Michelle Comerford](#), [Brad Lindquist](#), [Sarah White](#), [Gary Yates](#) and [Johan Beukema](#) had to say.

The Evolving Landscape of Site Selection

As companies expand, accelerate automation and shift to more resource-intensive operations, potential bottlenecks in power, water, natural gas and wastewater capacity are becoming greater concerns in the eyes of corporate decision-makers.

Put simply, infrastructure is now a key factor in the site selection process.

Overall, the site selectors agreed that they are seeing new projects and expansions with higher capacity requests than ever before. Meanwhile, many companies are requesting additional capacity for their existing sites.

In both cases, community leaders must invest in infrastructure to accommodate newcomers while also ensuring business retention.

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invest in a location that takes 4-5 years to get its electricity operational.

Guild members also emphasized the importance of communication. When site selection consultants send a request for information (RFI) to a location, they will ask a bevy of targeted questions based on their client's exact power needs, such as: "What is the distance for a primary service line extension to a site? Who pays the cost? Is the market regulated or deregulated? Are there green energy options?" Having this information for all sites in a community is critical.

Communities that provide timely, high-quality information for these data points prove two things: first, that they have the capacity to handle the project at-hand; second, that there's an active partnership between local leaders and utility providers. Both qualities are vital for a project to succeed.

Water: A Major Differentiator

Water access and quality are widespread issues – currently, the United States earns a 'C-' grade for its water infrastructure. Yet the site selection consultants also noted that water is hyper-local, serving as a regional differentiator in the site selection landscape.

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sustainability and well-being.

And if upgrades are needed, the consultants stressed that the cheapest time to build water infrastructure is today – not tomorrow.

Natural Gas: Opportunity Amid Uncertainty

For many industrial operations, natural gas remains an important energy source. In fact, its demand is increasing for production processes, equipment and power generation for electricity.

However, challenges persist with natural gas. Availability can be inconsistent in some areas, whether due to geographical restraints or local energy policy. Additional volatility has entered natural gas markets like those in Europe, contributing to increased uncertainty.

This uncertainty makes it even more important for communities to deliver transparent, comprehensive information about their capacity and willingness to support a project utilizing natural gas. Line size, extension plans, interstate pipeline access, market regulation, rate schedules and maps of service lines – along with community buy-in – should all factor into the equation.

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Best Practices: What Competitive Communities are Doing Right

What are the key takeaways for economic development organizations? The Guild members made it clear: if you can't deliver information about a site's infrastructure quickly and transparently, you may be putting your community out of the running before the conversation truly begins.

To that end, the consultants shared several calls-to-action for community leaders and stakeholders looking to position their infrastructure as an asset, not a liability:

Be proactive. Prepare detailed, site-specific infrastructure data ahead of RFIs. Don't rely on "yes/no" answers to companies' questions – be ready to share your line sizes, rate structures, system maps and more.

Be collaborative. Hold regular meetings with all utility partners in your region to align strategies. Coordinate with local companies on peak usage and maintenance scheduling to optimize shared capacity.

Be strategic. Know what your community *doesn't* want – and make it a priority to express that. Market your sites based on real strengths, not wishful thinking. Consider brownfield redevelopment to capitalize on



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