



# Progress Continues On Alton Landfill Solar Farm, Council Passes Related Ordinances

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
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ALTON - The Alton City Council recently passed two ordinances related to the Alton Landfill Solar Farm project, which was [first announced earlier this year](#) and is taking shape as progress continues. One item passed was a lease agreement between the City of Alton and Alton Landfill Solar LLC, while the other was an electric easement allowing Ameren to do minor work on the site.

In a series of recent drone photos from [618 Drone Service](#), workers can be seen installing several concrete bases with metal brackets, which will eventually hold the solar panels. These concrete bases are necessary to install the solar panels without breaking ground on the former landfill, given the nature of what's beneath its surface.

Also known as the "Old Alton Landfill," the site first opened as a municipal landfill in 1968. Prior to that, the area was once part of a much larger piece of land belonging to the Alton Brick Company, who used it to excavate clay for their bricks. Clay from the north end of the property was later used to cap the landfill once it reached capacity and closed. Digging into the ground at the site could penetrate that landfill cap, potentially causing leachate (or toxic-waste-contaminated water) and releasing greenhouse gasses.

While the city "did not knowingly accept any hazardous waste materials" when the site was still an open landfill, some residential waste can still contain environmentally harmful toxins, according to the ordinance. Examples cited include electronics, such as computers and televisions, which can contain arsenic, acids, lead, and more. Fluorescent light bulbs are also a frequent source of mercury in landfills.

“Use and development of the site of the former landfill refuse area as a solar energy facility represents a productive use of the environmentally sensitive, contaminated, and potentially dangerous real property owned by the City of Alton that is unsuitable for any other municipal purposes, including use as a park or recreation area,” according to the ordinance.

The solar energy facility will reportedly “produce a source of clean, renewable energy to the benefit of the public health, safety and welfare of the greater Alton community and the public at large,” the ordinance states. According to [early estimates](#), the project is expected to generate approximately 10,000 megawatt hours of electricity within the first year, reducing Alton’s carbon footprint by over 7,000 tons.

While the ordinance also alleges the site will “produce additional municipal revenue to the city” to use for municipal purposes like park enhancements, it did not specify the amount of revenue expected nor the municipal purposes that revenue would be used for. When the project was [first announced](#), it was expected to generate approximately \$1 million in revenue for the city over the course of its lifetime.

The lease agreement with Alton Landfill Solar LLC allegedly has a “fixed term of years,” but the ordinance does not specify how many years that “fixed term” consists of. An estimated completion date for the solar farm is still uncertain.

In addition to the lease agreement, the council also passed an ordinance authorizing an electric easement to Ameren Illinois Company to facilitate The Solar Farm Project. Specifically, they granted Ameren an electric easement to allow them to install electric communication lines on the property.

See the photo gallery at the top of this story for aerial views of the landfill-turned-solar-farm. A full recording of the [Alton City Council meeting](#) is available at the top of this story, on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video), or on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#).