

EAST CORRIDOR

INSIDER

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PROJECTS.

INVESTMENTS.

*Understanding the people, places, projects and investments
shaping Calgary's East Corridor.*

POWER WATCH

THE POWER QUESTION

The East Corridor has sites for major industry. Can its electricity supply keep up?

Last week, East Corridor Insider reported that Wheatland County had opened the land-use path for Goldfinch Technology Park, the proposed data-centre campus west of Carseland. The next question is harder: **when, and on what terms, can a very large new electricity user actually receive power?**

AESO's September 2026 project list shows Goldfinch Technology Park requesting **650 megawatts** in a first stage and **300 MW** in a second, for **950 MW** in total. The project is at **Stage 2**, with a status of **"ISD Under Review"** and both requested in-service dates under review. These figures describe a request for potential load, not power delivered, a final allocation or a construction commitment.

Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) says the **1,200 MW** of large-load capacity in its interim Phase 1 process has been assigned to two other projects, with executed load contracts. Requests outside that allocation move into a still-developing Phase 2 framework. The provinciewide limit and Goldfinch's site-specific request measure different things; simply subtracting one from the other would misstate what is available at Goldfinch.



land use cleared

grid connection under study

power delivery unconfirmed

THE SIGNAL AT A GLANCE

950 MW — Goldfinch's requested load in AESO's September list: 650 MW in EN1 and 300 MW in EN2; both in-service dates are under review.

1,200 MW — provinciewide Phase 1 interim large-load allocation, fully assigned to two other projects.

FALL 2026 — AESO's stated target for opening applications under the proposed bring-your-own-generation process; final documents are pending.

ECI TAKE: Land-use approval tells us where a data centre may be pursued. The power process will help tell us when it might be built, in what phases and at what cost.

GRID INTELLIGENCE

THREE GATES BETWEEN A REQUEST AND RELIABLE POWER

Grid access is a sequence of decisions, studies and infrastructure—not a number printed beside a project name.

1. A CONNECTION REQUEST

An accepted system access service request puts a project on AESO's public list. The list records a project's requested capacity, connection-process stage and requested in-service timing. Its guide explicitly distinguishes a requested in-service date from a facility's commercial opening. Appearance on the list does not mean electricity has been reserved or delivered.

2. A RELIABLE SUPPLY AND CONNECTION PATH

AESO evaluates whether the wider system can reliably serve new demand and what transmission facilities or other changes may be required at the proposed location. Alberta's interim Phase 1 allocation is already assigned: **970 MW** to GLDC Load and **230 MW** to Keephills Data Centre Phase I. Even these allocations lead to further connection work; they are not statements that the facilities are operating today.

3. APPROVALS, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGIZATION

Any needed utility infrastructure follows its own design, regulatory and build sequence. Only after connection requirements are met can a facility energize and operate within those requirements. For Goldfinch, the adopted area concept plan says AESO studies will determine connection timing and feasibility; the number and size of its emergency backup generators are still to be finalized.

WHY THE DISTINCTION MATTERS

To a community or investor, "950 MW proposed" can sound like a certain 950 MW industrial project. It is better read as a measure of potential scale and of the work that remains. The credible milestone will be a defined first phase with a documented supply path, infrastructure requirements, financing and delivery dates.

Sources: AESO, Connection Project List Guide, Large Load Projects and The AESO's Role in Data Centre Projects; Wheatland County, Goldfinch ACP, §4.7.

DEVELOPMENT WATCH

COULD A PROJECT BRING ITS OWN POWER?

AESO is designing a path for large loads paired with new generation. Goldfinch’s current plan makes a narrower commitment.

AESO’s next large-load framework is considering projects that supply their own power on site or enable new generation elsewhere on the transmission system. Its September 8 update said the proposed **bring-your-own-generation (BYOG)** process was still being finalized, with documents and application intake expected in the fall. The process had **not** opened as of that update.

Goldfinch’s adopted area concept plan says the campus would receive electricity through AESO. It also proposes on-site **backup generators for outages**. Those emergency generators are not, by themselves, evidence of a normal-operation BYOG strategy or a firm power allocation. The plan says AESO is assessing whether grid upgrades or new generation capacity would be needed; detailed power design comes later.

Diode Ventures says its project would pay for power grid upgrades necessary to serve Goldfinch. The precise upgrades, capacity available in each phase and delivery schedule remain subject to studies. Broader questions about how new large users contribute to transmission costs are part of AESO’s Phase 2 work.



THE ECI TAKE

Power may become the project’s defining phasing decision. A first building served at a known capacity and date is a more useful economic signal than a maximum campus request. Readers should watch for an actual supply strategy and connection milestones before treating the proposed full build-out as an assured development.

Sources: AESO Engage, Phase 2A stakeholder update, September 8, 2026; Wheatland County, Goldfinch ACP, §§1.4 and 4.7; Diode Ventures, Goldfinch Project Updates; AESO, The AESO’s Role in Data Centre Projects.

CORRIDOR INTELLIGENCE

WHAT WOULD ANSWER THE POWER QUESTION?

Six signals to watch as the corridor's industrial plans meet Alberta's grid.

1. A SPECIFIC FIRST PHASE

A publicly defined initial load, buildings and timetable would make the proposed campus easier to assess than its full requested capacity.

2. AESO CONNECTION PROGRESS

Watch the monthly project list for changes in status, stage, requested capacity and in-service dates; read each field using AESO's guide.

3. THE PHASE 2 RULES

AESO's finalized large-load and bring-your-own-generation processes will clarify how projects outside the fully assigned interim allocation can advance.

4. A DOCUMENTED SUPPLY STRATEGY

Look for a credible mix of grid supply and any proposed new generation, with clarity about what is emergency backup.

5. FACILITIES AND COSTS

Identified lines, substations, upgrades, regulatory applications, construction responsibility and delivery dates would turn power discussion into an executable plan.

6. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

Wheatland County's future permit review should supply more detail about site layout, utility design and generator noise, alongside other technical conditions.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

The East Corridor has the space to imagine major new employers. Turning a proposed site into a working facility requires land, water, roads and reliable electricity to arrive on compatible schedules. Goldfinch's planning approval is real. Its requested power is also real as a measure of ambition. The next credible signal is a workable connection and supply plan for a defined first phase.

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COMING NEXT WEEK — PROPOSED

WHO PAYS FOR GROWTH?

When a major industrial site needs roads, water and electricity, which costs belong to the developer, utilities and the wider community?