
Study on Ways of Smoothly Consensus Building in Utility Pole Removal Projects

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1. Introduction

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) formulated a new Plan to Promote Utility Pole Removal¹⁾ in May 2021, pursuant to Article 7 of the Act on the Promotion of Utility Pole Removal, and has been moving forward with utility pole removal.

Based on this, NILIM created a Guide to Consensus Building in Utility Pole Removal Projects (draft), which gives commentary on basic knowledge about utility pole removal projects, matters relating to consultation between those involved, etc., for the people in charge of this in local government, who may have little or no experience of involvement in utility pole removal projects, and it published this guide in April 2022.

2. Background and objectives of creating the guide

In carrying out a utility pole removal project, it is essential to build consensus with residents, shops, companies, and others along the roads, not just with companies such as the road administrator and the power line administrator. This is because when electric lines and other equipment are buried or moved under eaves or off major streets, it is necessary to relocate the lead-in equipment for power and communication lines leading to

residences, shops, and others along the road, and in addition, to obtain the understanding of roadside residents and others about aboveground devices that will be newly installed on sidewalks, etc. in conjunction with the utility pole removal and about the plan and construction schedule for interconnection equipment.

Thus, utility pole removal projects involve coordinating a wide range of items with a large number of associated people and require knowledge of power and communications technologies, not to mention roads, and they therefore present a high level of difficulty for personnel in charge of the practical work who have little experience in utility pole removal projects. Moreover, according to a 2020 questionnaire survey of local governments throughout Japan, approximately 80% had “no experience of conducting utility pole removal projects in the past five years.” This created a demand for easily understood materials for the personnel in charge of practical work to understand the items to coordinate at each stage of a utility pole removal project and the matters to note in consensus formation.

3. Outline of the guide

The guide is divided into a fundamentals volume and the main volume (fig. 1).

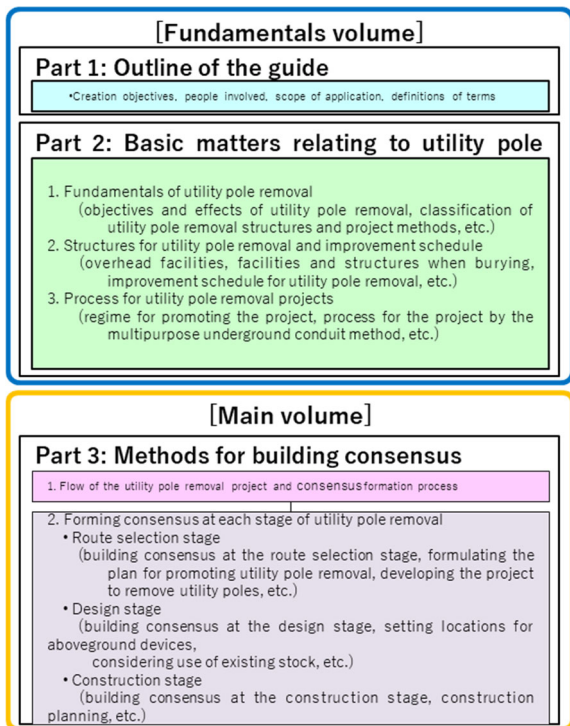


Fig. 1. Composition of the guide

(1) Fundamentals volume

The fundamentals volume explains the public works, electricity, and communications technologies concerning utility pole removal and how to proceed with a utility pole removal project, to give the reader the knowledge needed to carry out the project.

(2) Main volume

The main volume explains the many matters for coordination with the people involved in a utility pole removal project and the points to note in order to build consensus smoothly. For example, for the matters for coordination with people involved, by showing the basic flows of the overall project and the project stages (route selection stage, design stage, construction stage) as in figure 2, it gives a bird's-eye view of the operations to be performed and the contents to be coordinated between people involved.

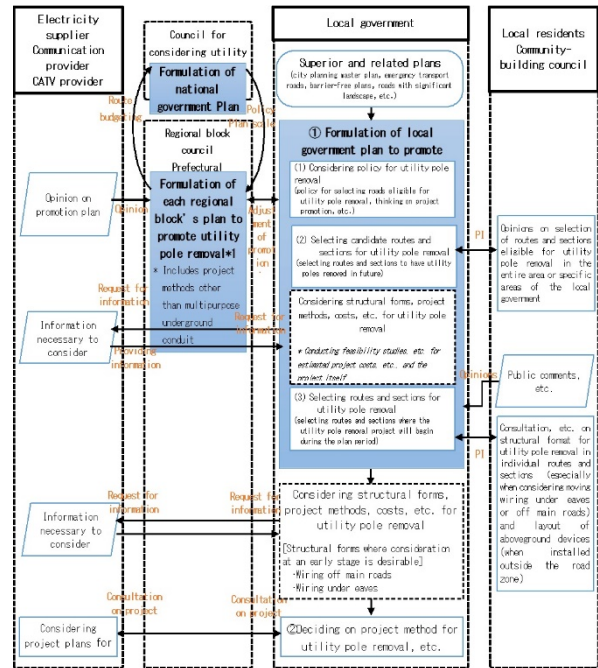


Fig. 2. Image of the basic flow of the route selection stage

(i) Building consensus at the route selection stage

This section describes the significance of building consensus for the route selection stage, key points when formulating the local government plan for promoting utility pole removal, and things to be considered when developing the project to remove utility poles, among other items. Key points listed for when the local government formulates its plan for promoting utility pole removal include considering the utility pole removal policy based on superior and related plans, such as the national government's utility pole removal promotion plan and city planning master plans, and selecting candidate routes for utility pole removal as the foundation for the utility pole removal policy, and this section explains matters to note in relation to these. Things that the local government should consider when developing the project to remove utility poles

include considering the possibility of adopting low-cost methods, such as adopting wiring off main roads or under eaves and making use of existing stock. The points to note when considering explain that consensus with residents is essential if the local government will adopt wiring off main roads or under eaves.

(ii) Building consensus at the design stage

This section describes the key points in building consensus in each of the practical operations at the design stage. It is particularly detailed with regard to the installation of aboveground devices, which can have a wide range of contents that need to be coordinated at the design stage, and the use of existing stock. In relation to the installation of aboveground devices, in addition to explaining traffic safety above footpaths and ways to handle cases needing care to ensure smooth traffic, it explains matters to note like considering design schemes that allow for the surrounding landscape, as in figure 3, in utility pole removal aimed at building a better landscape.



Fig. 3. Design schemes allowing for the surrounding landscape, etc.

(iii) Building consensus at the construction stage

This section describes methods of explaining to residents before the works, matters to consider in the construction plans, and other matters. For the pre-works explanation to

residents, it gives such matters to note as that the road administrator and the power line administrator should cooperate to explain the overall image of the works relating to utility pole removal.

4. Conclusion

The guide is published on the NILIM website for download²⁾ to be widely used. Furthermore, we plan to continue to collect examples and conduct investigations and to update and enrich the contents of the guide.

In preparing the guide, we benefited from the opinions and advice of the working group (WG) consisting of people with expertise and experience and related businesses. We take this opportunity to sincerely thank every WG member.

☞ See here for detailed information

1) MLIT: Plan to Promote Utility Pole Removal
<https://www.mlit.go.jp/road/road/traffic/chicity/uka/pdf/21-05.pdf>

2) Guide to Consensus Building in Utility Pole Removal Projects (draft)
<https://www.nilim.go.jp/lab/dcg/kadai6-mudenchu-guide.html>