
RENEWABLE ENERGY TOUR HANDBOOK: A PRACTICAL 10-STEP GUIDE



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*All photos courtesy of
the Graham Sustainability Institute*

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INTRODUCTION

If pictures are worth a thousand words, then a field trip is worth a million. That's true for lots of things, but particularly for renewable energy.

To learn more about the technologies, project siting and development, as well as the impacts of utility-scale wind and solar projects on the communities that host them, organizing a renewable energy site tour can provide a fantastic educational opportunity. Participants can get their questions answered by staff and other experts while walking between rows of solar panels and standing underneath a wind turbine. On the bus, participants can connect with peers on these issues and share their personal experiences surrounding the development of renewable energy facilities in their own community and in Michigan.

The Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) and the Center for EmPowering Communities at the University of Michigan (U-M), with funding from the State's Energy Office at the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), have

jointly offered a multitude of renewable energy bus tours since 2022. Their experience is summarized in this guide.

The guide is written to assist local governments, professional planners, interested residents, and others in coordinating a tour themselves. Organized into 10 key steps, the guide also includes an [Appendix*](#) with itineraries from past Michigan tours and planning templates for tour organizers. While aiming to assist those who wish to do it themselves, the staff at U-M is always happy to help answer any questions, and may even be able to help you organize your tour. You can contact Madeleine Krol, U-M's Clean Energy Land Use Specialist, at krol@umich.edu or 734-763-0061.

This guide is made possible through funding by the State's Energy Office at the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>

STEP 1: DEFINE THE GOAL OF THE TOUR & BUDGET

A bus tour of renewable energy sites is a great opportunity to see these energy systems up close and learn more about the technologies and their impacts first-hand. You probably already have in mind who you'd want to take on the tour or why this topic is important to you and your community. The first step in organizing an informative tour is to define the goal for the trip and the available budget. Questions to help you define a goal are:



- Which types of renewable energy projects** are you / is your group interested in, and at which scale? For example, would you like to learn more about utility-scale wind and solar projects, or focus on different scales of solar projects? Seeing multiple projects—whether they are projects of different technologies or different scales of the same technology—allows you to compare and contrast, but does add extra time to the tour.
- Who are your participants and how will their questions be answered that day?** What topics will they want to learn more about, and will you need tour guides on the bus beyond those hosting you at the site? Based on their background and/or active conversations in the community, participants may have a clear sense of what they want to learn more about. For example, some participants might have lots of questions about technologies, others may primarily want to connect with peers on these issues, and still others may generally want to learn more about a particular scale or type of project similar to one being proposed in their community. To make the tour as informative as possible, previous bus tours have not only toured the sites but included guests to share their insights while the group is driving from one project site to another. These guests could include researchers from MSU-Extension and U-M, township supervisors with experience reviewing or hosting a project, or attorneys. Staff at U-M are always happy to help you find guests for your tour and are available to speak at your tour.
- How much time is available for the tour?** Can participants spend the whole day on tour, or do you only have a few hours in the morning or afternoon to work with? Sample itineraries in the [Appendix*](#) might provide suggestions for how much you can fit into a whole-day tour.
- How will you pay for the tour?** Start setting up a budget and funding plan. Typically, the most expensive parts of the tour are the bus rental, any refreshments (if desired), printing costs of materials, and staff time. For example, the cost of past tours has ranged between \$1,700 and \$2,300 (plus 10% gratuity) for the whole day bus rental for approximately 160 to 280 miles, and roughly \$16 to \$28 per person for refreshments. The hosts you will be visiting will most likely not require any payment, but you may want to consider compensation or a free lunch if you have invited special guests. The expenses are not covered by registration fees alone (if you choose to impose some), so your tour requires a source for funding.
- How can you best advertise your tour?** Can you simply put the tour on your colleagues' calendars or will marketing take more effort, perhaps even requiring a marketing plan? Thinking of this early helps later on.
- Can you partner up?** Organizing a renewable energy site tour can be a lot of work. Neighboring communities, friendly colleagues, associations, or organizations working on similar issues might be interested in partnering with you to organize and advertise this tour jointly. If that sounds good to you, who could be such a partner for your tour?

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>



Components and intricate details of a wind turbine are part of every wind energy tour. (Crescent Wind Farm in Hillsdale County, MI)

STEP 2: CHOOSE A DATE FOR THE TOUR



The next step in planning a bus tour of renewable energy sites is to ensure that the date of your tour works well for your participants. The tour date and the time of day you choose for the tour will decide for many participants whether they'll be able to join at all. The weather will also play a crucial role in enabling any tour of energy facilities; tours between May and October are typically the least prone to bad weather. Questions that help you pick an ideal tour date are:

- Are there foreseeable scheduling conflicts?**
Make sure proposed dates don't collide with popular travel or busy times (e.g., harvest or hunting season, professional events/conferences your target group might attend) and holidays (consider a variety of religious holidays, too). Attendance may also be lower on either side of holiday weekends.
- Which days of the week are typically free?**
Are there some weekdays that work better than others? Maybe there are times when your group is typically available (e.g., the day of planning commission meetings if you're organizing a tour for your planning commission)? Don't rely on

hosts (i.e., renewable energy developers, project owners) to be available for tours on the weekend. Likely, their staff can only be on-site during the weekdays.

- Select an ideal date plus a couple of backup dates**, so you have alternatives when approaching hosts later. Hosts will typically try to make your preferred date work, but being flexible on your end goes a long way, especially when the final tour date hinges on the availability of multiple organizers/hosts.

STEP 3: PICK POTENTIAL DESTINATIONS

You have a goal and a couple of good dates for the tour. The next step is to determine which project sites you are interested in touring. To pick your destinations for the tour, you may want to consider the following questions, keeping in mind your identified goal and your available time frame on any day. The [Appendix*](#) includes past tour itineraries, which might provide inspiration, too.

 **3 to 4 months prior to the tour**

- Where are operational sites of interest located near you?** There are great resources available to map out where renewable energy facilities are located in Michigan, including the [U.S. Wind Turbine Database¹](#) and the [U.S. Solar Photovoltaic Database²](#) for operational utility-scale projects. These databases show individual wind turbine locations and solar arrays, respectively, and include information on the project name, its size, and the year it became operational. All of these projects are shown together on [EIA's Electricity Resources³](#) map. Some of the newest renewable energy projects in your region might not be displayed and would need to be searched for online or in newspaper articles, etc. Staff at MAP and U-M are happy to discuss potential sites with you based on their experience with past tours (see [Appendix*](#)).
- What are the broad travel times between these destinations?** Which town/city would be a good starting point for the tour—what is easily accessible by participants? Mapping tools such as [Google Maps⁴](#) are helpful for this.
- What is your ideal itinerary, and how do different itinerary scenarios compare?** Sketch out different scenarios with very broad travel times so that if your ideal route falls through (e.g., if a potential host is not able to accommodate your visit), you'll have a backup itinerary. As you are planning, you should plan to spend an hour at each site. Additionally, if you're choosing to tour multiple projects, you might be able to tour more sites if they are nearby, and/or close to each other—less time on the road means more time to tour. For example, you might be interested in touring a small and a large utility-scale solar project. If you pick projects that are nearby, you might even have enough time to tour a third project on the same day. Note that wind projects are not as scattered across the state as solar projects. If you plan on touring a wind project, the nearest wind project determines the bulk of the travel time and which additional projects you may be able to tour in your available time frame.



Wind turbines in Hillsdale County. Most of Michigan's wind projects are located north of Lansing.

1 U.S. Wind Turbine Database: <https://eerscmap.usgs.gov/uswtodb/viewer>
 2 U.S. Solar Photovoltaic Database: <https://eerscmap.usgs.gov/uspvdb/viewer>
 3 U.S. Energy Information Administration's map of electricity infrastructure in the U.S.: <https://atlas.eia.gov/>
 4 Google's "My Maps" tool helps to create, save and share routes: <https://www.google.com/mymaps>

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>

STEP 4: REACH OUT TO POTENTIAL HOSTS & GET A BUS ESTIMATE

 **3 to 4 months prior to the tour**

Now it's time to get in touch with your potential hosts to inquire whether they're interested and available to host you for a tour. You should aim to lock in a confirmed site on a confirmed date so that further planning can take place. Details of exact arrival times, necessary clothing, etc., can be addressed at a later time. Depending on the project, contact details for the project developer or owner can often be found with an internet search.⁵ U-M staff is happy to help find contact details and connect you. Hearing back from hosts may take longer if the contact forwards your inquiry to the appropriate person in their organization. Keep in mind that hosts may provide several staff members and they typically offer the tour free of charge, so courtesy goes a long way. When reaching out, you may find the sample email in the [Appendix*](#) and the following notes helpful:

- **After an introduction, briefly describe why that particular project is of interest to you and the goal of your tour.** Typically, a tour for sixty to ninety minutes is sufficient, but inquire whether the host suggests a different time frame. If there are multiple points of interest at a given project that you all plan to see, a tour might need to be longer.
- **Ask if there's a maximum number of participants** that can be accommodated at any given time (e.g., by available personal protective equipment supplied by the host, a conference room in case there's a presentation ahead of the site tour, etc.). A group size of roughly 30 participants is often a good upper limit, but defer to the host.



Got advanced electrical questions on the workings of a wind turbine? Let your host know! (Crescent Wind Farm in Hillsdale County, MI)

⁵ If a general web search is unsuccessful, you may be able to find contact information in "renewable contracts" published by the Michigan Public Service Commission: <https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/consumer/electricity/renewable-energy>

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>



Tour participants walking towards an inverter near solar panels. (Calhoun Solar, Calhoun County, MI)

- Let the host know what types of questions your group will have.** Very often, renewable energy projects are developed and owned by different entities. Letting the host know early on about the background of participants (e.g., elected officials, planning commission members, professional planners, residents) and their potential questions will help the host avail staff with the expertise needed to answer your questions. For example, if you explicitly have questions on the development of the project or questions related to planning and zoning, let the host know and inquire whether it might make sense to consider additional guests (e.g., representatives from the company that initially developed the project, or the local official of the hosting community). If your participants may want to focus on technical questions, let your host know.
- Propose the dates that work well for you and provide a couple of alternatives. Ask for hosts' availability and if they're restricted to only certain times of day (e.g., only in the morning).** Let them know if you're stringing together multiple sites that day and therefore do not yet know an exact time of arrival.
- Be clear on the formality of the event.** Typically, these tours are rather informal and casual/conversational. Imagine an industrial site where neither shade nor protection from rain is provided, and where the ground is often unlevel, requiring sturdy footwear. If either the host or you were to suggest tents, outdoor seating space, catered food, and a formal program on the site, it may give attendees the impression that they are being "sold" a project. It also would likely require more time on-site. Further, bringing in a tent or portable restroom may make it more difficult for attendees to realize what the site looks like on an average day.
- Depending on the availability of the host(s), you should soon be able to lock in a date for the tour and finalize which destinations you will be touring.** Confirm the final date with the host(s). At this point, you may prefer to send a "Save the Date" message to your tour participants, though this is not essential (see Step 7).
- Contact nearby charter bus companies for an estimate for a daylong trip.** If you are expecting a smaller group, can the local or county parks and recreation department provide transportation? The local transit authority is another resource to look into. They'll need to know your travel date, the estimated group size, and the general destinations. Additional details will be required later. The bus company will likely require a final itinerary one to two weeks before the event to finalize scheduling. Inquire whether the bus will have a bathroom and a microphone to make announcements or have speakers present on the bus, and also educate yourself about the cancellation policy (e.g., there's a risk that you may be charged for the bus even if the renewable site tour gets canceled due to inclement weather).

STEP 5: DEVELOP THE AGENDA

 **2 to 3 months prior to the tour**

An agenda of the tour is extremely helpful to provide an overview of how the day of the tour will unfold. You may find it handy to start setting the agenda up while you're reaching out to hosts and as you are confirming the final sites and date.

Refer to the [Appendix*](#) for examples of an agenda, which includes destinations, addresses, notes for the bus driver (e.g., on parking), driving and tour times inclusive of time for bathroom stops and time to board the bus, etc.

- **In which order will the sites be toured?** This depends on whether all hosts are available throughout the whole day and which order will yield the shortest driving time. It may also be influenced by the following points:
- **Finalize which starting point you'll have for your tour** (see [Step 3](#)). Which location is accessible for participants (e.g., near highways)? Will there be bathrooms to use before the tour kicks off? Will there be (free) parking for participants? In the past, staff of community colleges and township halls have been happy to provide their space for this.
- **Include bathroom stops throughout the day** (e.g., one stop every two to three hours), even if your bus will have a bathroom onboard. Often, there are no bathrooms near renewable energy sites, especially in rural areas. The Michigan Department of Transportation maps out rest areas and welcome centers on its [website](#)⁶. Restaurants, truck stops, township halls, and public buildings (e.g., campsite, local park) can work, too. Verify that they'll be open and let them know you plan to stop by.
- **Will you stop for food on the way?** If you're offering a whole-day tour, some form of lunch should find its way onto your agenda. If you have sufficient time, a lunch stop at a restaurant *en route* makes sense. Alternatively, having packed lunches on the bus to eat either while driving from one stop to the next, or when stopping at a park for a picnic works great, too, and may be a cheaper and time-saving option (see [more in the next Step 6](#)).
- **Groups move slower than you may think!** Plan for time getting on and off the bus at every stop. Include very generous time buffers in case of delays, traffic, and tours that take a bit longer. Further, tour buses often travel below the posted speed limit, so you'll want to pad the travel time.
- **Take note of all addresses.** Sometimes, the meeting location at the renewable energy site will be hard to pinpoint. There may not be a precise street address, in which case you would need to resort to a nearby residential address or landmark for the bus driver to navigate to.
- **Scope out a place to park for the bus** while you're touring a project. Most renewable energy project sites don't have parking lots. If you're along a quiet street in a rural area, the bus may be able to simply park on the side of the road. For busier areas, look for large parking lots and project driveways nearby for the bus to wait during your tour.



*Tour participants peek into a wind turbine tower.
(Crescent Wind Farm in Hillsdale County, MI)*

⁶ Michigan Department of Transportation, Welcome Centers & Rest Areas: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/travel/tourists/>

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>

STEP 6: SECURE BUS AND REFRESHMENTS

As soon as your tour date is confirmed, you need to secure a contract with a bus company. Also, reserve a spot for lunch and/or prepare to purchase refreshments for the day. Add all relevant contact information for the bus company, the driver, and (if applicable) the restaurant to your agenda.

 **2 months
prior to
the tour**

Finalize your contract for transportation.

Review your travel date, the estimated group size, the destinations, and how long to expect to stay at each location. Secure a contract with a company you feel has communicated promptly and reliably, and is located in the area where the tour starts. Review the cancellation policy, whether gratuity is included, and the required deposit before signing the contract.

Food during the tour will keep spirits high.

Secure a spot for lunch and/or plan for refreshments for the day. This may include either a restaurant reservation (buffet or menu, will participants pay their own bill or will you?) or arrange for packed lunches to be delivered or picked up ahead of the tour. Additionally, you could purchase snacks, fruit, and drinks to be stored on the bus. You may prefer to have a cooler on board to keep lunch/refreshments chilled. If you choose to picnic in a park, make arrangements accordingly and add napkins, trash bags, tablecloths, and other handy items to your shopping list. Ask the caterer how long the items need to be kept cold. Add reminders and details to your agenda to make sure refreshments are purchased and picked up ahead of the trip.



Participants arrive by bus at a wind turbine and watch it spin from a safe distance. (Crescent Wind Farm in Hillsdale County, MI)

STEP 7: INVITE YOUR PARTICIPANTS



Now that you know the date and your destinations, and now that you have a bus secured, it's time to invite your participants to get the tour on their calendars. You may have sent a "Save the Date" message before (as soon as the tour date was confirmed with the hosts), but either way, now is the time to share essential information and a call for registration.

- Make your invitation exciting and draw interest!** Need inspiration? There's a template with sample language in the [Appendix*](#). Be clear that the tour involves walking, especially on uneven and potentially muddy terrain. There will be lots of standing and most sites are not shaded. Closed-toe shoes and pants are recommended—and sometimes even required by hosts—and participants may also want to pack bug spray (ticks, mosquitoes) and weather protection (e.g., rain-coat, umbrella, sunscreen, hat).
- How will you distribute your invitation?** Do you have a list of email addresses of potentially interested candidates? Can a partner organization help distribute the invitation?
- Ask people to register** with you by phone, email, or a free registration form such as [Google forms](#)⁷. Let them know which information you need to register, including but not limited to dietary and accessibility restrictions, and an address for billing if you choose to impose a registration fee.
- A small registration fee** (e.g., \$20) won't cover all the expenses ([see budget in Step 1](#)), but it will drastically increase the chances that registrants actually show up on the day of the tour. It is unfortunate when refreshments and space on the bus are wasted due to last minute cancellations. If you know all of the group members well, this might not be necessary.
- Keep a real-time list of registrants.** Keep in mind whether there's a maximum number of participants that can be hosted ([see Step 4](#)) and the capacity of the bus ([see Step 6](#)). If you receive more registrations than available spots, keep a waiting list and, in case of cancellations, offer seats to those on the waiting list. Note the contact details of interested people in case you plan to offer more tours in the future.
- Once folks are registered, send them information about the upcoming tour regularly and often.** Weekly reminders may seem excessive but they will fuel the registrants' anticipation for the trip and will help remind everyone that they are, in fact, signed up. Schedule a final reminder the day before the tour, and, if desired, share a list of fellow participants, contact information for yourself or someone who can provide assistance the day of the tour, any clothing requirements (e.g., closed-toe shoes), and final announcements.



Advertise for your tour loud and clear.

⁷ Google forms: <https://docs.google.com/forms/>

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>

STEP 8: DISCUSS DETAILS WITH HOST(S)

The day of the tour is coming closer and all of the major components are handled. Now it's time to work on the finer details. Particular attention should be paid to making sure both you and the host(s) know exactly what to expect on the day of the tour. Schedule a meeting/meetings or phone calls with the host(s) and discuss the following:

 **2 to 3 weeks prior to the tour**

- Discuss the run-of-show.** Often, the host will provide a brief welcome and introduction, and then open it up for Q&A and discussion, which will take up most of the time on site. Will all of this take place at the same location, or will the host walk through parts of the project with you? If you tour a solar project, discuss how close your group may walk up to panels, and if you can have the host show you other equipment, such as an inverter. If you tour a wind turbine, guests often find it interesting (and hosts find it possible—if you request) to arrive at the turbine while it is spinning to listen to it in operation, and then have the host remote-control the turbine to be shut off before safely walking to the base of the turbine together.
- Reiterate what types of questions and/or backgrounds your participants have and what learning outcomes you hope to achieve.** Make clear what your host should anticipate, including the level of expertise on renewable energy, and which things you'd like the host to explain or point out during the tour (for examples of learning outcomes, see [Appendix*](#)).
- Is there educational/informational material on the project** that you could share with participants ahead of time or on the bus?
- Current head count.** Double-check with the host the maximum number of people that can tour the site. Acknowledge that there might be last-minute changes to the exact number of participants during the days before the tour.
- Which Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required, can the host provide a sufficient amount, and do participants need to consider a dress code?** Frequently the host can provide PPE (e.g., vests, hard hats, safety glasses), but in case they can't, ask specifically what you'd need to buy or borrow. The host will often require participants to wear closed-toe shoes and long pants.
- Are liability waivers required?** Some hosts may ask participants to sign a waiver to protect themselves from any claims, relating to injuries occurring during the tour, such as a twisted ankle. If these are required, can the host provide copies ahead of time so you can distribute and sign them on the bus ahead of the tour?
- What does the weather forecast look like?** Agree on which terms you or the host would cancel a tour if the weather were prohibitive (e.g., thunderstorms, lightning). Keep the cancellation policy of the bus company and potential food reservations in mind.
- Verify the address of the meeting point and your exact arrival time for the tour,** and verify with the host whether the bus can be parked in the location you designated.
- Exchange cell phone numbers** with the hosts so that you can get in touch with someone on-site in case of delays or other unforeseen circumstances.



Safety gear and a dress code may be required for your tour.

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>

STEP 9: FINAL PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE TOUR

 **7 to 10 days prior to the tour**

Using your agenda, you should have a checklist of things that need attention in the final days before your tour. Most importantly, remind yourself of the following:

- **Review your agenda!** Are there any questions left unanswered? Designate someone, maybe even yourself, to keep the group on schedule during the tour and for other tasks, and ensure every helper has access to and understands the agenda.
- **Confirm the reservation with the bus company,** including departure time and location, and provide the final destination addresses/itinerary. The bus should arrive at least 15-30 minutes before departure.

- **Confirm your lunch** reservation with the restaurant or the caterer preparing your packed lunches, if applicable. Also purchase snacks, fruit, and drinks and prepare, if desired, a cooler to store the refreshments on the bus.
- **Prepare informational materials for participants.** Print a brief version of the agenda for participants and any educational material you might want to share, including things such as project information provided by hosts or found online, information on renewable energy development in Michigan, or zoning ordinances that may be of interest to your group. Suggestions on what to include in packets are listed in the [Appendix*](#) and include [EGLE's](#) and [U-M's](#) suite of resources, including U-M's slide deck on energy basics.⁸ Pack printouts into folders or envelopes for participants. You may want to have an extra printout with addresses available for the bus driver. Print name tags, if desired.



Many questions, many answers. A designated time-keeper can help stay on schedule. (Calhoun Solar, Calhoun County, MI)

⁸ U-M's Center of EmPowering Communities resource page: <https://graham.umich.edu/empowering-communities> and EGLE's community energy resources: <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/materials-management/energy>

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>

- **Send repeated reminders to your participants a week before the tour and a few days before the tour with all of the important details**, and include departure time and location, parking opportunities, a brief summary of the agenda for the tour, emergency phone numbers, clothing requirements if applicable, the forecast, and other pertinent information. Participants may find a list of fellow participants helpful as well.
- **Prepare a set of helpful documents.** A list of registrants and their contact details can help you when checking participants in at the beginning of the tour. Keep the agenda with you, as it includes all important cues, phone numbers, addresses, and time stamps. Pack any additional items you may need, such as a list with learning outcomes, business cards, evaluation sheets, etc.
- **Prepare any spoken content** you may want to share while on the bus. To make every part of the tour an educational experience, you may want to use the time on the bus for group conversations on the topic. Some of the following points might be helpful:
 - On your way to the (first) site, an introduction to renewable energy deployment in Michigan and a broad introduction to the technology you'll be touring is helpful to set the tone. Remind everyone why this tour is of interest to you and the group (e.g., what motivated you to organize the tour, current news on the subject). The materials from the previous step can provide content (see [Appendix*](#)).
 - If your route includes passing by other renewable energy projects ([which can be planned with the databases mentioned in Step 3](#)), you could gather some information on these projects and provide a few key specs (e.g., name, capacity and age of the project, wind turbine height, etc.) to further stir the anticipation as you approach the site visit.
 - In the final moments before arriving at the site, you may want to point out any available project information you have received from hosts or found online (and included in the packets). Beyond that, encourage your participants to ask questions during the tour, and feel free to leave it to the hosts to provide more information on the projects—they're the experts!
 - After each tour, participants may want to debrief and discuss what they've learned, observed, or wondered. Lead a group discussion with your learning outcomes in mind ([Step 8](#)) as well as probing questions like this: What was the most notable thing you learned on the tour? What unanswered questions do you have about solar/wind energy? What did you notice (e.g., about screening/fencing, setback distances, noise)? Did something surprise you? If you have on-board experts or attendees who have visited other energy facilities, you might ask them to compare what they saw on the tour to other projects.



Discussions on the bus are invaluable—to introduce a topic, to debrief, and to share observations. Here, guest speaker Charles Gould from MSU-Extension provides expertise on pollinator habitat and sheep grazing for solar projects.

*Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN>

STEP 10: ENJOY YOUR TOUR & WRAP UP



It's the day of your tour! Enjoy it and remember that while unexpected curveballs may happen, everything is organized well.

- Your arrival at the departure location:** Arrive early at the departure location and set up your check-in stand to hand out materials to participants as they arrive (if desired). Point checked-in participants to any bathrooms, if available. If the bus does not arrive at the promised time, call the company and/or driver immediately to begin planning around the delay, then follow up with the hosts. Once the bus arrives, store materials and refreshments on the bus. Discuss the itinerary with the bus driver (including parking opportunities during the site visits), answer any questions, and verify you have each other's cell phone numbers.
- Departure:** Depart on time. If registrants have not arrived in the final minutes before departure, you may want to call them with the provided contact information to inquire whether they're on their way. If their expected delay is longer than five minutes, suggest that the late participant meet you at the first site and follow the bus from there.
- Once on the road, welcome your participants** and explain the content of the packets. Encourage them to talk to their seatmate to get to know each other.
- En route to your site visits:** Let hosts know that you're on your way and communicate any delays early. You can use the time on the road to present any educational material and, in between tours, lead the debriefing discussion (see Step 9).
- During site visits:** Introduce yourself to the host as the organizer. Keep the tour on schedule and assist hosts and participants if needed. Keep your identified learning outcomes (Step 8) in mind and, if necessary, point to them during the tour. Thank the hosts for their time.

- Continue to review your agenda** and announce lunch, bathroom breaks, and next stops to participants.
- At the end of the tour,** thank the participants, organizers, and the bus driver. Hand out the evaluation sheet, if you have prepared one. Unload the bus and check for lost items.

After the tour, wrapping everything up is done in just a few steps!

- Thank your hosts** and let them know of any questions that emerged since the site visit.
- Share any material with the participants,** including any files you provided copies of.
- Share an evaluation form** to learn from participants what they found most helpful and what can be improved, if this is helpful in your work. You can easily set up a [Google form](#)⁹, which allows anonymous feedback.
- Administer the billing.**

Congratulations on organizing your renewable energy site tour!

There's more! Don't forget to check out our Appendix document. We have collected the following for you:

- Template agendas from previous bus tours that may inspire your itinerary planning and help to keep an eye on all the necessary details for a successful tour.
- A sample invitation to advertise your tour.
- An extensive list of helpful information on what content you may want to address during the tour—including an introductory slide deck, fact sheets, and more—so that participants have an informative, engaging tour.

Access the Appendix at <https://myumi.ch/bEgrN> or by clicking »



⁹ Google forms: <https://docs.google.com/forms/>