

transmission lines

Important news about Pacific Power's Vantage to Pomona Heights transmission project

Project overview

Pacific Power is committed to providing reliable, safe and cost-effective energy to customers and to enhancing the overall reliability, security and operating flexibility of the regional electric transmission grid. To accomplish these important objectives, the company is proposing a new transmission line between Vantage and Selah, Wash., – its first new transmission line built to serve the area since the mid-1970s.

The approximately 60-mile 230-kilovolt transmission line will connect the existing Bonneville Power Administration substation near Vantage and Pacific Power's Pomona Heights substation near Selah, providing critical new transmission reliability in the area.

Key project benefits:

- **Reliability** - This new line will strengthen the regional transmission system and enable Pacific Power to more reliably serve its customers.
- **Security** - This project adds to the security of the regional electric grid by increasing options for routing power in the event of a line outage due to fire, vandalism or other causes.
- **Economic development** - Supports local economic development by improving access to regional electricity sources and helping meet future energy demand growth.
- **Investment** - This project represents millions of dollars of new infrastructure investment and increased tax benefits for the communities it crosses.

What's happening now?

For the past two years, Pacific Power has worked with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Army's Yakima Training Center on this proposed transmission project. They serve as the joint federal lead agencies on the required National Environmental Policy Act preliminary project studies and evaluation of proposed routes, including Pacific Power's preferred route across YTC land.

Following the January-March 2010 NEPA scoping period, where public comments were solicited on various line route options, the preferred YTC routes (see *map*) were eliminated for three main reasons:

- The Army determined that overhead transmission routes on YTC land could potentially create significant aviation safety issues for the facility's core mission. To mitigate that risk, the Army would require that portions of the new line on YTC land be placed underground, and would also require that an existing line on YTC land be reconstructed underground.
- They crossed important sage grouse habitats that have active leks occupied by high-density populations of sage grouse on and off YTC land.
- The proposed northern routes crossed the BLM's Yakima River Canyon property, a designated area of critical environmental concern.

What this means:

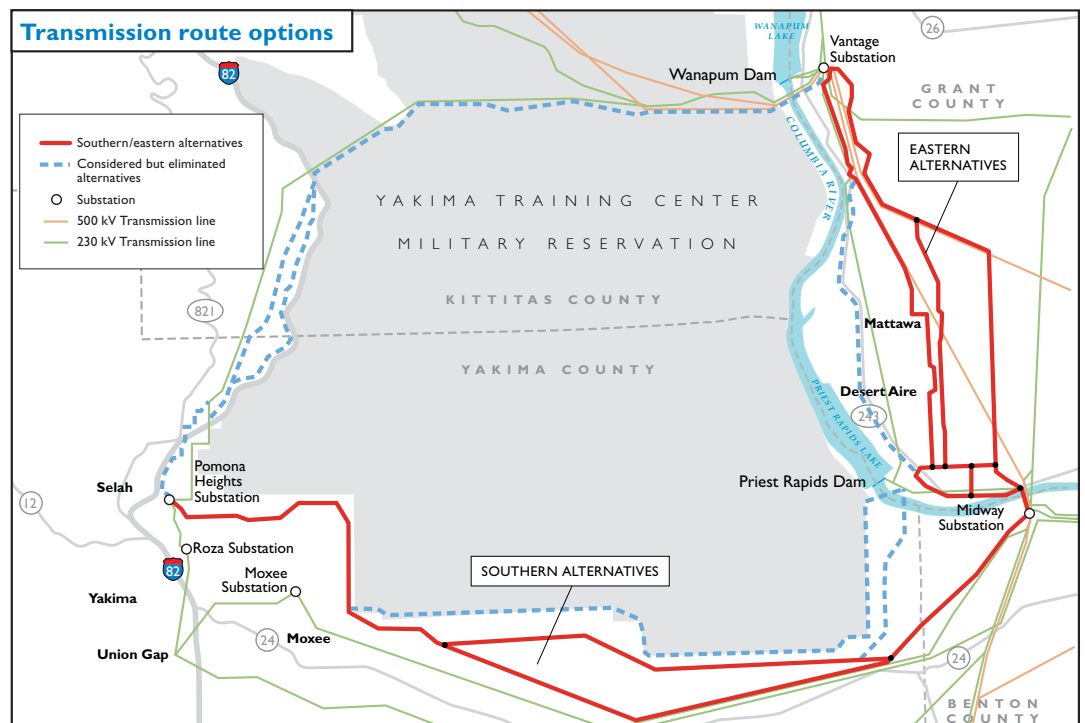
The requirement to build underground created both a physical-construction and financial-responsibility dilemma for Pacific Power. Combined with the impact to sage grouse on both YTC routes and a designated area of environmental concern, the preferred YTC route alternatives are no longer feasible.

While technically feasible, undergrounding extra-high voltage transmission projects is very expensive compared to building comparable overhead lines. The extremely rugged terrain – and comparably difficult constructability – means the cost of burying both the existing line and the new line on the YTC could be 10 to 20 times more expensive, in addition to the significant environmental impact.

Also, undergrounding can negatively impact system reliability. When an underground transmission line fails or is damaged, the time required to locate and repair the line fault underground is substantially longer than for overhead lines.

These conditions and safety concerns have eliminated YTC route options under the federal NEPA process, and Pacific Power must now consider southern route alternatives that primarily cross private lands.

(continued)



While Pacific Power's preference was to primarily cross federal lands, the federal agencies overseeing the process determined those options are not feasible.

Also, public concerns about aircraft safety at the Desert Aire Airport resulted in elimination of a sub-route following State Highway 243.

And, alternative sub-routes that crossed the Columbia River had to be eliminated due to extremely rugged terrain and constructability issues.

Public information process

Pacific Power is committed to engaging the public in helping shape the options for this transmission line, and will hold public meetings in September (see *details at right*).

We will work with landowners, agencies and interested parties to balance interests and determine a preferred route that minimizes environmental and land use impacts and meets the requirements of permitting and approval agencies.

We also will address all applicable federal, state and local permit requirements, which will involve environmental, cultural, land use and engineering studies. Construction will not begin until all necessary permits and approvals have been received and right of way acquired.

In summary:

Pacific Power has fully explored every option for siting a large portion of this project on federal land, but the results of the NEPA scoping process now require the company to explore other transmission route options, which is the process we are undertaking. Public input will contribute to the preferred route and we encourage your participation.

Public open houses

Wednesday, Sept. 8, 2010

6-8 p.m.
Red Lion/Yakima Center
607 East Yakima Avenue
Yakima, Washington

Thursday, Sept. 9, 2010

6-8 p.m.
Desert Aire Multi-Purpose Building
504 Clubhouse Way West, Lower Level
Mattawa, Washington

Project timeline

(This timeline is an estimate based on current information available.)

2008 – 2010

- Public outreach and route evaluation

2010 – Early 2011

- Environmental studies
- Final route selection

2011 – 2013

- Secure permits and rights of way
- Construction/completion, 2013
- Project in service, 2013

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For more information:
Public input is a very important part of this process, and questions and comments about this project are welcome at any time.
Project website: pacificpower.net/transmission
Project contact: 1-877-620-7678 (toll free)
Project e-mail: ConstructionProjects@pacificcorp.com
Please specify Vantage to Pomona Heights line in your inquiry.

transmission lines



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