

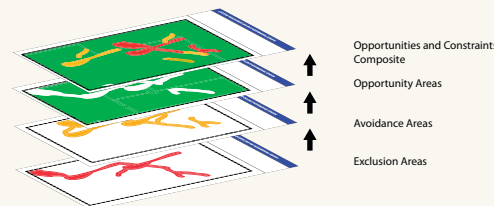
SITING AND NEPA

Western Area Power Administration and Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Inc. will use an open and comprehensive siting process that considers electric system planning, economics, environment, public involvement, regulatory requirements, acquisition of land rights, and engineering



Siting Goals

- Maximize the use of opportunity areas
- Minimize the use of constraint areas



Common Terms

Corridor: A one-mile wide strip of land to be evaluated for possible transmission routes.

Route: A specific alignment of the transmission line within a 200-foot wide easement.

Opportunity: A favorable location for siting a transmission line. While opportunity areas are preferred for siting, they are rarely present along an entire proposed route.

Constraint: A location that should be avoided, to the extent possible, when siting a transmission line. Because of the complex nature of siting, constraint areas are often crossed by portions of proposed routes.

Preliminary Corridor Identification Phase

Step 1. Conduct opportunity and constraint analysis using mapped resource data.

Primary opportunities include:

- Existing utility line easements
- Transportation corridors
- Rangeland
- Edges of fields

Primary constraints include:

- Residential areas and structures
- Water bodies
- Irrigated agriculture
- Conservation areas
- Critical plant or wildlife habitats

Step 2. Identify preliminary alternative corridors.

Step 3. Seek public input/feedback on preliminary alternative corridors during the public scoping period.

Route Refinement Phase

Step 1. Address specific concerns identified by the public, including new resource information, and refine preliminary alternative corridors into alternative routes

Step 2. Conduct comparative analysis of the alternative routes.

- Identify resource criteria
- Rank individual criteria between alternatives
- Calculate composite scores to compare alternatives

Step 3. Present alternative routes and comparative analysis at public route refinement workshops (to be scheduled at a later date) for review and comment

Alternative Identification Phase

Step 1. Use public comments and stakeholder concerns from the route refinement workshops to make final adjustments to the alternative routes.

Step 2. Update comparative analysis to reflect the refined routes.

Step 3. Identify a preferred route and any feasible alternatives based on the comparative analysis.

Step 4. Carry the preferred and alternative routes forward for analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement, where the public is provided additional opportunities to be involved and provide comments.

What is NEPA?

- A Federal law that requires all Federal agencies to consider the effects of their proposed actions.
- Promotes better agency decision-making by ensuring that high quality information is available to officials and the public before the agency decides whether and how to undertake a major Federal action.
- For major Federal actions that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment, an EIS is prepared.
- An EIS is a detailed analysis of the effects of a proposed action and the range of reasonable alternatives, including a "no action" alternative.
- The EIS also discusses ways to avoid or reduce adverse effects.
- Through the NEPA process, the public has an opportunity to learn about the proposed action and provide information and comments.

The EIS Process

Prepare a Notice of Intent

- Publish a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register
- Make local announcements of the NOI

Conduct scoping to:

- Discover alternatives to a proposed action
- Identify significant effects
- Eliminate insignificant issues
- Communicate information
- Consult with agencies and organizations
- Solicit public comments

Develop scoping results and share with public

Prepare Draft EIS

- Consider scoping comments
- The Draft EIS identifies the preferred alternative

Seek Public Comment on the Draft EIS

- Issue Draft EIS
- Publish a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register to begin the 45-day public comment period

Prepare Final EIS

- Analyze and consider comments on Draft EIS
- Issue Final EIS
- Publish a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register

Announce Record of Decision

- Describe commitments for mitigating effects
- No sooner than 30 days after the Notice of Availability of the Final EIS is published

