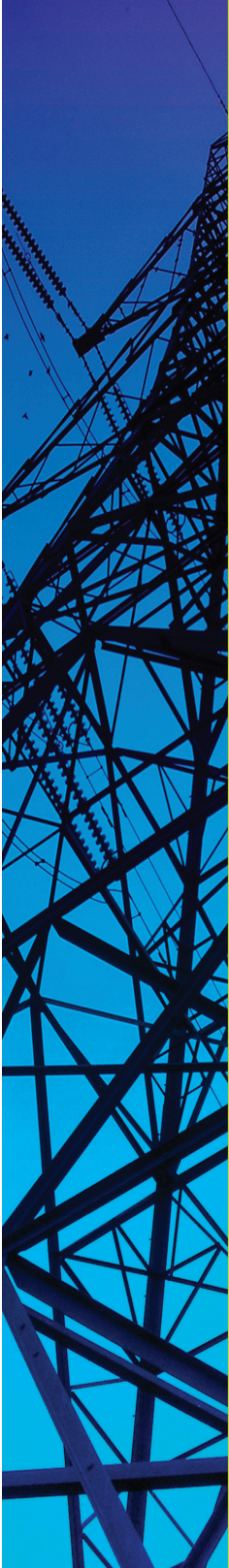


I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project

Project Update

January 2012



Northeastern route considered

On January 18, 2012 we announced that we will not add a more northeastern route as an alternative for the northern half of the project. After thorough study, we found that the East Alternative achieves most of the same objectives as the suggested route. The suggested route may have affected slightly fewer homes compared to the existing alternatives, but with significant consequences. The suggested route would adversely impact small private landowners and homeowners not yet aware of the project, the timber industry, trust lands managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the natural environment; and would increase costs. Adding this route in our environmental analysis would further delay the release of our draft EIS and our identification of a preferred route by one and a half to two years. As a result, it would negatively affect many people who have asked us to complete these tasks as soon as possible. The decision document is available on the I-5 Project website at www.bpa.gov/go/i5.

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Non-wire measures won't delay route analysis

As plans take shape to address load growth, constraints and congestion on the transmission system, BPA considers measures other than building new lines, while maintaining our commitment to provide reliable transmission service. We, along with others in the region, explore non-wire measures as a way to defer large construction projects. In the case of the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project, non-wire measures cannot eliminate the need for the line and we must continue to address growing congestion to maintain reliable service. Consequently, we will not delay the evaluation of proposed route alternatives.

BPA recently received a final report on the feasibility on implementing additional non-wire measures. As we continue to evaluate the route alternatives for the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project, we will also pursue options identified in the report. For instance, the report suggested exploring operational requirements and possible contracts with regional generators for BPA to redirect generated power on a day-ahead or day-of basis when certain

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The I-5 Corridor Project is a 500-kilovolt transmission line that the Bonneville Power Administration proposes to build to reinforce the high-voltage power grid in southwest Washington.



Route and segment data released

In December, we released preliminary information for the four route alternatives we are considering. The information includes preliminary cost estimates for each of the four route alternatives; housing counts near the alternative; acres of timber land cleared; number of schools near proposed routes; miles of access road easements acquired; and acres of wetlands filled.

This month, we have the same data available by segment.

The preliminary data includes many factors BPA evaluates as we

consider alternatives for new transmission system facilities. In addition to this data, we will consider whether the project can meet the electrical need BPA has identified. Then, we will evaluate whether each alternative can achieve other project purposes including: using ratepayer funds responsibly and efficiently; minimizing impacts to the natural and human environment; maintaining system reliability and performance; and meeting BPA's statutory and contractual obligations.■

Cooperating agencies

BPA is the lead agency responsible for preparing the environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act. Regulations allow designation of other federal, state and local agencies and Indian tribes as cooperating agencies for an EIS.

The Army Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency in this process. The Corps' role is primarily to implement the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbor Act of 1899. This includes reviewing and making permit decisions on proposals that may require discharge of dredged or fill material into U.S. waters and construction or other work within navigable waters. The Corps assists with identification of appropriate mitigation under these statutes. One of the key issues the Corps considers is how wetlands are impacted by new projects.

BPA has existing agreements to work with the states of Washington and Oregon and the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council and the Oregon Department of Energy as cooperating agencies in preparation of the EIS. These state agencies assist BPA in the environmental evaluation of transmission line routes, help develop possible mitigation measures and identify state interests that should be addressed in the EIS. BPA also coordinates with the state of Washington so that environmental issues relevant to state agencies and the State Environmental Policy Act are addressed to the fullest extent practicable in BPA's NEPA process.

Clark and Cowlitz counties are also cooperating agencies in this process. They provide knowledge, information and expertise to BPA about their respective jurisdictions.■

December listening session

BPA hosted a listening session in Battle Ground on Dec. 8 to hear from the community. Nearly 300 people attended. We shared brief updates, but, mostly, we listened. Members of the public, including children, landowners and foresters, asked us to make decisions as soon as possible to provide them with more certainty about what this project could mean for them and their communities. You can watch a video of the meeting online or read comments from the meeting at www.bpa.gov/go/i5. BPA will continue to send updates as we have new information about the project and schedule and we will host more public meetings to provide updates and opportunities for people to share their thoughts.■

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Sharing our environmental analysis and the draft EIS

You will be notified when the draft EIS for the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project is available. If you are on our mailing list you will receive a copy of the draft EIS on compact disc. The draft EIS will also be available on the project website. Because the draft EIS and its supporting documents will exceed 1,000 pages, we will limit printing hard copies to save paper and reduce costs. Hard copies will be available by request and at locations in the project area.

Internet

Anyone with internet access will be able to view the draft EIS on the project website. We'll notify you when it's available online and tell you where to find it.

Compact disc

CD copies of the document will be mailed to everyone on our mailing list as soon as they are available.

Hard copy

Hard copies will be available for review at many locations between Castle Rock and Troutdale. We will let you know where these copies can be reviewed. If you need a hard copy sent to you directly, you may request one by sending a request online or by calling our automated line and leaving a message.

Non-wire measures (continued from page 1)

conditions are expected to create peak electricity flows over the transmission system. These actions in partnership with other utilities could help reduce power flows on congested pathways until a longer-term solution is in place.

The final report follows up on an initial report in early 2011 that had suggested non-wires solutions could delay but not replace the need for energizing a new line in the project area.

BPA must follow reliability standards established and enforced by the North American Reliability Corp. and Western Electricity Coordinating Council. Prior to starting the I-5 Project, BPA took several non-wires steps to reduce congestion on and maintain the reliability of its transmission system without building new lines. We put operational procedures in place that maximized the use of existing lines and equipment. We also upgraded existing facilities. In time, we realized these actions could not mitigate stresses on the system without further intervention.

You can find more information about non-wires measures and effects they could have on the proposed I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project online at www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Non-Wires_Round_Table/. ■

Northeastern route considered (continued from page 1)

Nearly a year ago, a citizen group submitted a concept to us for a transmission line route that would run farther north and east of the route alternatives BPA is considering. The group referred to the route as the "grey line." After studying the suggestion, we initially decided against adding the route and announced our decision in February 2011. Since then, we received additional, more specific suggestions about a proposed optional route for the northern half of the project from the public.

Over the last several months, we further evaluated the possibility of developing this route and considered whether to add it as a route alternative in our environmental impact statement. This citizen group emphasized that the transmission line should be routed as much as possible on public and private timberlands to reduce impacts to private homes. Our evaluation of this route was as consistent as possible with this objective. We also had to consider limitations on transmission line siting, as we did when we developed our proposed routes.

We used aerial photography, helicopter reconnaissance, numerous field trips and meetings with affected utilities and with public and private owners of large timberland parcels.

We evaluated broad corridors where a new line could be located, except for the portion of the route in the Cougar area. We studied the Cougar portion in greater detail because it would be difficult to cross the Lewis River and route the line through the surrounding steep terrain, existing homes, wetlands, streams with endangered bull trout and lands managed for spotted owl habitat. ■

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