

Fact Sheet

December 2011

I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project: Keeping local lights on

What is the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project?

BPA proposes to build a high-voltage transmission line between new substations near Castle Rock, Wash., and Troutdale, Ore. The new line would be about 70 miles long.

BPA has identified four route alternatives. Each includes a new substation near Castle Rock, Wash.; a new 500 kV transmission line, a new Sundial Substation near Troutdale, Ore.; and new and improved access roads to these facilities. Each action alternative includes three options that use different route segments and substation sites to complete the transmission line route. The alternatives vary in length and amount of existing and new right-of-way they require. We will also consider a “no action” alternative, that is, not building the transmission line and substations.

The route alternatives were developed after considering comments from the public and interested and affected agencies.

BPA is preparing an environmental impact statement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act to make a well-informed decision.

Why is the project needed?

It's been 40 years since a high-voltage transmission line was built in the southwest Washington-northwest Oregon area. In that time, the population has more

than doubled. Businesses and industries along the I-5 corridor have grown and demand more electricity. Few power generating facilities are near large cities, and local utilities rely on distant generation sources for about two-thirds of the electricity supply to serve the increasing population. These distant power generators rely on BPA's transmission system to move the electricity they produce to the people and industries that need it.

Much of the capacity for transmission service that remains on BPA's system is already spoken for under contract. Not only do we need to meet our existing obligations, we are federally mandated to provide access to all eligible customers that meet our open access requirements. Without a new line, BPA will be unable to adequately serve local needs and meet existing obligations and new requests for transmission service.

Who is BPA?

Bonneville Power Administration is a nonprofit federal agency that provides about a third of the electric power and 75 percent of the high-voltage electric transmission in the Pacific Northwest. We provide the Pacific Northwest low cost, reliable, environmentally responsible electricity. We are accountable to the people of the Northwest and work collaboratively with residents, utilities, elected officials and other stakeholders to meet the region's electricity needs.



Transmission lines, like highways, can become congested, leading to gridlock. Today, BPA's transmission system in the Longview/Vancouver/Portland area is close to its limits. BPA studies have shown that this path has become more congested during the summer months because of growing seasonal peak demands, new generating plants connecting to BPA's transmission system, and to a lesser extent, power transfers through the Northwest.

Who will be served by a new transmission line?

Most of the power moved by a new transmission line would serve local needs in Cowlitz, Clark and Multnomah counties. Many local utilities purchase wholesale power delivered by BPA's transmission system. This project will help us keep pace with local population growth and higher demand for energy, particularly in the summer.

As with any addition to the high voltage transmission system, the line also would play a role in facilitating the exchange of power within the Pacific Northwest and between utilities across the West. When one region experiences increased demand on its system, another region with surplus supply can send power to help out. This keeps both regions' rates lower by reducing the need for each region to build expensive generating plants that would be used only during extreme conditions.

What is the environmental review process?

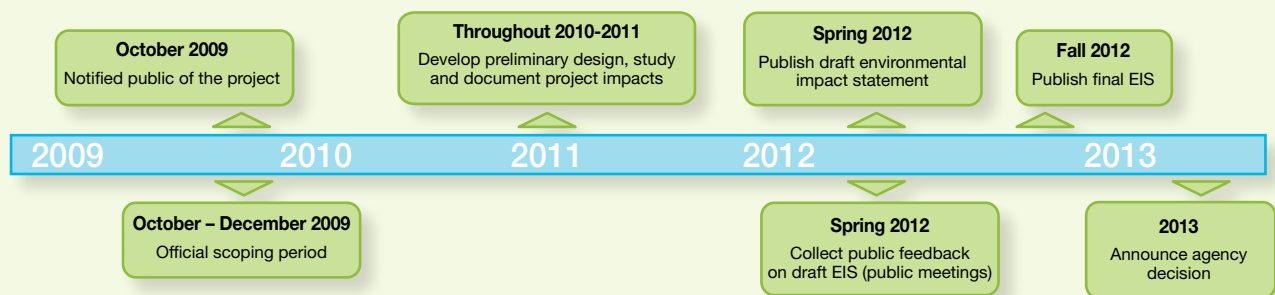
BPA will evaluate the project according to the National Environmental Policy Act, a law that requires all federal agencies to consider the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of their proposed actions. NEPA promotes better agency decisions by ensuring that high quality environmental information is available to agency officials and the public before the agency decides whether and how to undertake a federal action.

Through the NEPA process, all interested parties have an opportunity to learn about BPA's proposed action and to provide timely information and comments. BPA proposed this project in October 2009, followed by a public scoping comment period. The agency continues to accept and consider public comments throughout the entire process.

The draft environmental impact statement (EIS) will compare and analyze the four route alternatives, options, and the "no action" alternative. BPA expects to publish the draft EIS in spring 2012 for public review and comment. All comments received during the formal comment period will be addressed in a final EIS. The final step in the NEPA process occurs once BPA's administrator issues a record of decision, the final decision about if and how the project should proceed.

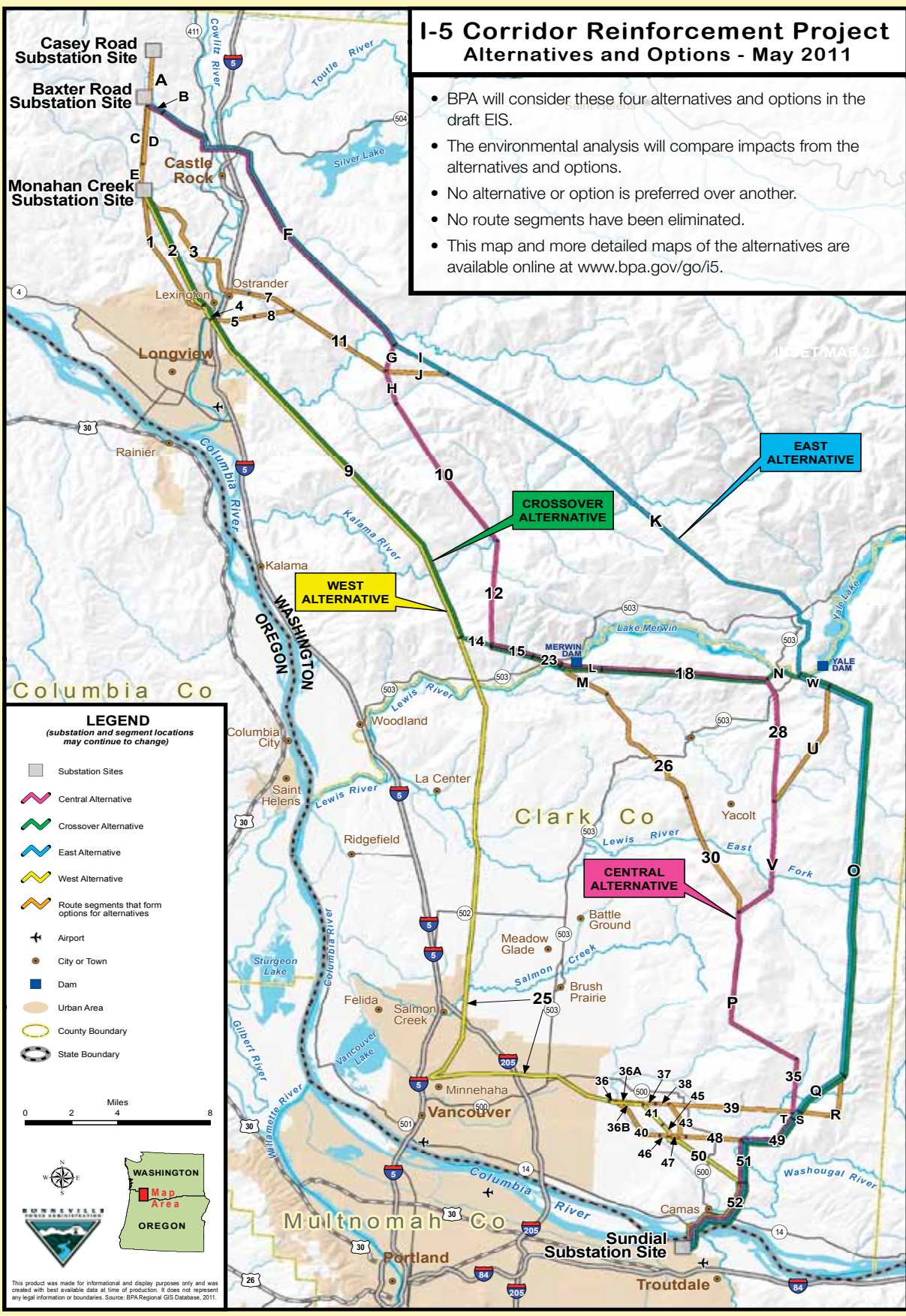
What is the time line?

BPA has not made any final decision about building the line or where it might be built. Extensive study and analysis are required by law before the final decision is made. The draft environmental impact statement is scheduled for release in 2012, after which another round of public meetings and public comment will be conducted before BPA finalizes the EIS and makes a decision. If BPA decides to proceed with a new line after the environmental review is complete, construction could begin in 2013 with completion as early as 2015. We will continue to accept comments and meet with stakeholders throughout the life of the project.



I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project Alternatives and Options - May 2011

- BPA will consider these four alternatives and options in the draft EIS.
- The environmental analysis will compare impacts from the alternatives and options.
- No alternative or option is preferred over another.
- No route segments have been eliminated.
- This map and more detailed maps of the alternatives are available online at www.bpa.gov/go/i5.



LEGEND
(substation and segment locations may continue to change)

- Substation Sites
- Central Alternative
- Crossover Alternative
- East Alternative
- West Alternative
- Route segments that form options for alternatives
- Airport
- City or Town
- Dam
- Urban Area
- County Boundary
- State Boundary

0 2 4 8 Miles

WASHINGTON
Map Area
OREGON

This product was made for informational and display purposes only and was created with best available data at time of production. It does not represent any legal information or boundaries. Source: BPA Regional GIS Database, 2011.

What will BPA consider when comparing alternatives?

BPA is considering public comment and carefully studying and evaluating four route alternatives, options, and a no action alternative for the line. BPA will consider how well the various route alternatives meet the project purposes, the potential impacts, and what it would take to minimize and mitigate those impacts.

We will evaluate many factors that generally fall into three categories:

Electrical need: The transmission system in the area is congested and close to its limits. Without a new line, we could be unable to adequately serve local needs in the very near future. Our analysis must confirm that the project is necessary to maintain the reliability of BPA's transmission system to BPA and industry standards. We must then ensure that a selected route meets those electrical needs and fulfills our contractual and statutory obligations.

Economic considerations: We consider economic impacts to landowners, businesses and others who may be affected by the construction, operation and maintenance of the line. We compare what each

proposed route would cost to construct, and the cost of mitigation. If the project is built, our transmission customers will repay the cost in future rates.

Environmental impacts: For this project, as with every transmission project, we work to minimize impacts to the natural and human environment. Among other issues, our environmental review considers:

- Social and economic impacts to private and public land
- Sensitive animal and plant species and their habitat
- Human health and safety, including electric and magnetic fields
- Aesthetics and noise levels
- Water and air quality
- Recreation, natural resources, historic and cultural sites

We also consider the cumulative impacts of the project and identify ways to avoid or minimize impacts to the natural and human environment. If it is not possible to avoid or minimize impacts, mitigation opportunities are proposed.

How you can stay involved

There are several ways to stay informed and to get involved in the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project:

Get on the mailing list: If you would like to be added to the email or mail list, please visit the project website at www.bpa.gov/go/i5 and follow the "Get Involved" link. You can call us toll free at 800-230-6593 and leave your name, phone number, mailing address or email.

Go online: Visit the project website at www.bpa.gov/go/i5. The website has a wealth of information about the project and we update it regularly.

Submit comments on the project: You may submit comments, suggestions or requests to BPA at anytime:

- Online: www.bpa.gov/go/i5
- Mail: BPA I-5 Corridor Reinforcement, P.O. Box 9250, Portland OR 97207
- Toll free: 800-230-6593
- Fax: 888-315-4503
- Email: at i-5@bpa.gov