

factsheet

September 2009

BPA Initiates Study of Proposed Transmission Services Facility

Background

The Bonneville Power Administration is considering building a new office building on its Ross Complex in Vancouver, Wash., to meet long-standing work space needs. BPA is inviting customer and public participation in environmental review of the proposed project.

BPA employs about 1,500 people in the Portland/Vancouver area, and the agency's existing facilities are inadequate to accommodate its work force. BPA is exploring work space solutions in the area to meet its space needs and increase employee efficiency and productivity

For the past 10 years, BPA has provided work space for area employees through a combination of federal government-owned buildings, leased office space in eastern Vancouver and assorted light industrial buildings on BPA's Ross Complex in western Vancouver. At the Ross Complex, employees currently work in modular and permanent buildings, some of which are aging and require extensive maintenance.

One potential solution would be to construct a new office building on BPA's Ross Complex. BPA is initiating a study to evaluate the feasibility of constructing this building, which is referred to as the Transmission Services Facility. The study will include preliminary building design, evaluation of potential project costs, possible alternatives and potential environmental impacts of project alternatives.

The proposal to be studied

The proposed Transmission Services Facility would be a three- to five-story office building located on the western edge of the Ross Complex between Ross Street and North Road, near BPA's existing Dittmer Building (see map). The building could be developed as either a 167,000- or a 210,000-square-foot facility. Either size would be constructed to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold standard in energy efficiency and sustainability. While the design and exact placement of the building have not been determined, the design would adhere to the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances of the City of Vancouver. The area is zoned for industrial/commercial development. The proposed design also will include expanded surface parking at the Ross Complex.

Why a new building at the Ross Complex?

While BPA is still investigating various options, a new office building on the Ross Complex would offer several benefits. Co-location of employees could be expected to result in increased workforce efficiency and productivity that could not be achieved otherwise. Locating the building on the secure Ross Complex also would help BPA better meet the requirements of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's Critical Infrastructure Protection standards, which require restrictions on physical access to critical computer network assets.



In addition, a new building would allow BPA to eliminate short-term leases, which over time are generally more expensive than owning facilities. A new building would allow BPA to move employees out of aging facilities with high maintenance costs. Finally, a new building could be constructed with modern, state-of-the-art energy efficiency measures, which would reduce BPA's carbon footprint.

If BPA elects not to construct the new Transmission Services Facility, the agency would expect to continue to meet its space needs through a combination of federal government-owned buildings and leased office space.

Next steps

In addition to developing preliminary designs for the proposed Transmission Services Facility and continuing to evaluate potential project costs, BPA will prepare an Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act. The EA will identify and evaluate potential project alternatives and analyze potential environmental impacts, including potential traffic, noise and air quality impacts.

BPA is now requesting comments on the scope of this EA from all interested and affected parties, including neighbors, interest groups and local, state and federal officials. Scoping will help BPA ensure that important issues related to the proposal are identified, considered and addressed.

Meeting schedule

An open-house style informational meeting has been scheduled as part of the EA scoping process:

Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009, 5 – 8 p.m.
Minnehaha Elementary School,
2800 N.E. 54th St. • Vancouver, WA 98663

At this informal meeting, BPA will provide information about the project and have members of the project team available to answer questions and accept comments. Interested parties may stop by any time during the open house.

How to comment

Written EA scoping comments are due to BPA at the address below by Oct. 29, 2009. Comments may also be made at the Sept. 29, 2009 EA scoping meeting.

To comment on the project, contact BPA by mail at Bonneville Power Administration, Public Affairs Office, DKE-7, P. O. Box 14428, Portland, OR 97293-4428; by phone at (800) 282-3713 or online at www.bpa.gov/comment. Please reference "Transmission Services Facility Project" in your comments.

Draft document to follow in 2010

BPA expects to issue a preliminary EA for public review and comment by June 2010. BPA then will prepare a final EA that responds to all comments and incorporate any necessary revisions. After the final EA is complete, BPA will make a decision by fall 2010 on whether or not to move forward with the project.

Contact information

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Proposed Transmission Services Facility

