

## Columbia Water & Light's Electric Transmission and Substation Project

### Historical Information

- 2007: Need for additional transmission and substation was identified.
- September 2009: Work session with the City Council on selection process for substation using the matrix selection criteria to create various routes.
- January 2009: Ten possible sites for a substation were identified and Interested Parties meeting for property owners in the area was held at Columbia Water & Light Administration.
- Spring 2009: Interested seller approached the city about selling land on Peach Court.
- Summer 2009: A property owner in the area requested other properties be investigated
- September 2009: Water and Light Advisory Board recommended to the City Council to acquire property on Peach Court site
- February 2010: Pre-Council work session describing factors associated with building a new electric substation and three new, 161 kV transmission lines
- March 2010: City Council approved Bill B54-10 adopting an ordinance to acquire Peach Ct. site for substation
- June 2010: Consulting engineering firm presented Columbia Water & Light staff with three or more alternate routes for each transmission line section
- July 2010: Purchase of substation property was completed
- October 2010: Three Interested Parties meetings were hosted at Rockbridge High School to introduce the public to the ten (with some small possible variations) proposed routes transmission line project. Letters were sent to property owners along the proposed routes and the event was covered in the local media. A different route was covered at each of these meetings. An engineer from Sega was available to talk to residents about electric and magnetic fields. Comments from customers/property owners and five to ten letters and e-mails were received each day in the weeks following the Interested Parties meeting. From this process, the public ranked these as the most favorable:
  - Streets preferred over backyards and cross country. Main roads preferred over side streets. Commercial corridors preferred over residential. Most direct route preferred (fewest angles in the route).
- Fall 2010: List-serv was created so those interested in the project could receive e-mail updates about the project.
- November 2010: City Council work session was held about substation and transmission lines were presented. Information about Electric and Magnetic Fields was presented. [Questions and answers](#) from this meeting were posted on the city's website and distributed to the City Council. At this meeting, the City Council requested that another option be considered which would include using 69 kilovolt lines on the outer portion of the city limits.
- February 2011: Pre-City Council meeting [presentation](#). Comments from 450 people living in the areas of the three proposed routes were reviewed. (This was for what is now known as Option A) It was noted during the presentation that both Ameren and Associated Electric Cooperative did not own/operate any underground high voltage transmission lines. The cost of

undergrounding lines was also reviewed along with photos of what is involved in burying transmission lines

- April 2011: [Transmission project report](#) discussed at the City Council meeting. The report included how feedback from those living near the suggested routes was used to decide which of the three routes was the most favorable. At this time, a [change order to the contract](#) with the engineering firm was approved so another route study could be completed (Option B).
- July 2011: [Report to the City Council](#) on possible Option B routes. Four [routes were identified for the McBaine to Perche Creek substations](#). There were four [possible routes identified to insert Millcreek substation between the Grindstone and Hinkson Creek substations](#).
- September 2011: An Interested Parties meeting was held at Gentry Elementary School and a [presentation](#) of the identified routes for Option B was reviewed. An engineer from Sega was available to talk to residents about electric and magnetic fields. Property owners along any of the proposed routes for Option B and the property owners along the Option A route were sent a letter about the meeting. The meeting was also covered by the local media. Written comments from those owning property in the areas of Option A and Option B (all possible routes) were collected.
- August 2012: [Report to the City Council](#) on Option B route options. Input collected from the public at this meeting was used in developing [the evaluation matrix](#) used for determining the preferred alignments identified in this report. After the Interested Parties meeting for the Option “B” routes identified by Sega, Inc., staff identified another alternative route for the McBaine to Perche Creek 161 kV line where approximately 37% of the line could be constructed on city property. This alternative route is only for the 161KV line in Option “B” it is being referred to as Option B-2 which is approximately 22% longer than the preferred route identified in Option B and was not initially identified Sega Inc. because of the lack of existing rights of way and the excessive length of the route
- November 2012: An open house was held which included a [presentation](#). Information about the need for the transmission project, Option A selection process, Option B selection process, the advantages and disadvantages from an engineering standpoint, undergrounding information and costs were reviewed. Electric and Magnetic Fields were discussed during the question and answer section of the meeting. A letter was sent to any of the interested parties identified during the selection process for Option A and Option B and the neighborhood/home owner associations. The meeting was held on the Stephens College campus so it could be rebroadcast on CAT TV for four weeks after the meeting. Attendees were urged to take the online survey or fill out the survey at the meeting. The local media reported on the event.
- January 2013: A letter was sent to 39,500 Columbia Water & Light electric customers urging them to take the online survey announced at the November open house. The letter was sent in case there were people who had not read about the project through the city’s communication outlets or through local media coverage. Staff members felt it was important to have the community weigh in on the project before the City Council’s Public Hearing deciding the route. This project involves the reliability of Columbia’s electric system and all electric utility customers

would be paying for the transmission project. The deadline for the survey was extended to February 1 and there were 1,500 responses to the survey.

- May 2013: A [report](#) to the City Council outlined the need for the project and considerable detail about the selection matrix and the results of the survey.
- June 2013: [Presentation](#) to the City Council at a work session included 88 slides since it included information from the beginning of the project.
- July 2013: City Council Public Hearing. Columbia Water & Light staff members made a [presentation](#) which was a shorter version of the information presented at the work session. There was a possibility that there would also be Public Hearings on August 5 and 19 if the amount of people wishing to speak was not possible to get through in one meeting. Seventeen people commented during the public hearing and there was a great deal of City Council questions and discussion. Option A, built overhead, was approved by a vote of five to two.
- January 2015: Council work session to review the website and hotline for the transmission line project.
- Late 2014: Columbia Water & Light staff members started compiling the list of bond funded project from the five year Capital Improvement Plan approved by the City Council each year. In discussions regarding the transmission project, it was decided that building the transmission lines along Grindstone, Nifong, Vawter School Road and Scott Boulevard, building a new substation and reconfiguring the current substations would take five years to complete. It was decided by staff that the transmission line route along Providence/Route K could not be completed in the five year funding period and other parts of the project were more critical. Although this portion of the project is not funded at this time, it will still need to be completed.
- Beginning in 2013 through 2015, customers, property owners and neighborhood/home owners associations within 150 feet of the transmission line corridor were notified by mail about surveying and soil sampling being completed along the route. Information in the City Source newsletter also provided information about the status of the project.
- April 2015: Every registered voter in Columbia was able to vote on an electric bond issue. The Boone County Clerk's office sent a sample ballot to registered voters in advance of the election date. Of the \$63 million bond funds requested, \$36.2 was set aside for the transmission project.

#### Public Communication Outlets

- Created in 2009, the GoColumbiaMo.com web page has the entire project history including presentations, memos to the City Council, feedback, artist renderings of the substation and transmission pole structures and where to get information about Electric and Magnetic Fields, etc.
- Starting in 2015 a website specific to the project was created: poweringcolumbia.com and a phone hotline.
- Press releases and meetings with reporters/editors to discuss the project details
- Local news media (Multiple stories from different media outlets since the Interested Parties meeting about the substation in 2009 to the present)

- Transmission line project list-serv (subscribe to e-mail updates, 14 updates have been sent to date)
- City Source newsletter
- Letters to property owners within 250 feet of any of the suggested routes for Option A and Option B were notified of an Interested Parties meeting and were encouraged to take an online survey. Letters were also sent to Columbia Water & Light electric customers in advance of the City Council public hearing to gather feedback.
- Neighborhood/Home Owner Associations were included in mailings
- Neighborhood Association newsletter from the Department of Community Development
- Public meeting notification process (online meeting calendar, bulletin board, etc)
- Preceding the electric bond issue in April 2015, thirteen civic groups were provided information about the transmission/substation project along with the other items where bond funding would be used. All local media outlets ran stories about the electric bond election.