

Vantage to Pomona Heights

New transmission project to help improve system reliability

Project overview

Pacific Power is always working to provide safe, reliable electric service to our customers, and to support the needs of the region. As part of this commitment, we are planning a new 230-kilovolt transmission line that will enhance the overall operating flexibility and security of the regional transmission grid and improve system reliability in the Yakima Valley.

The new line will connect the existing Bonneville Power Administration substation near Vantage and Pacific Power's Pomona Heights substation near Selah, a distance of approximately 60 miles.

Pacific Power will develop this project in cooperation with area communities, landowners, businesses and residents, and is coordinating with the planning efforts of local, state and federal agencies. We will work to minimize impacts to the community and local environment from project development, construction and maintenance. Proposed route alternatives will be explored with landowners and key stakeholders, and their input will help determine the final preferred route. The company also will address all applicable federal, state and local permit requirements, which will involve environmental, cultural, land use and engineering studies.

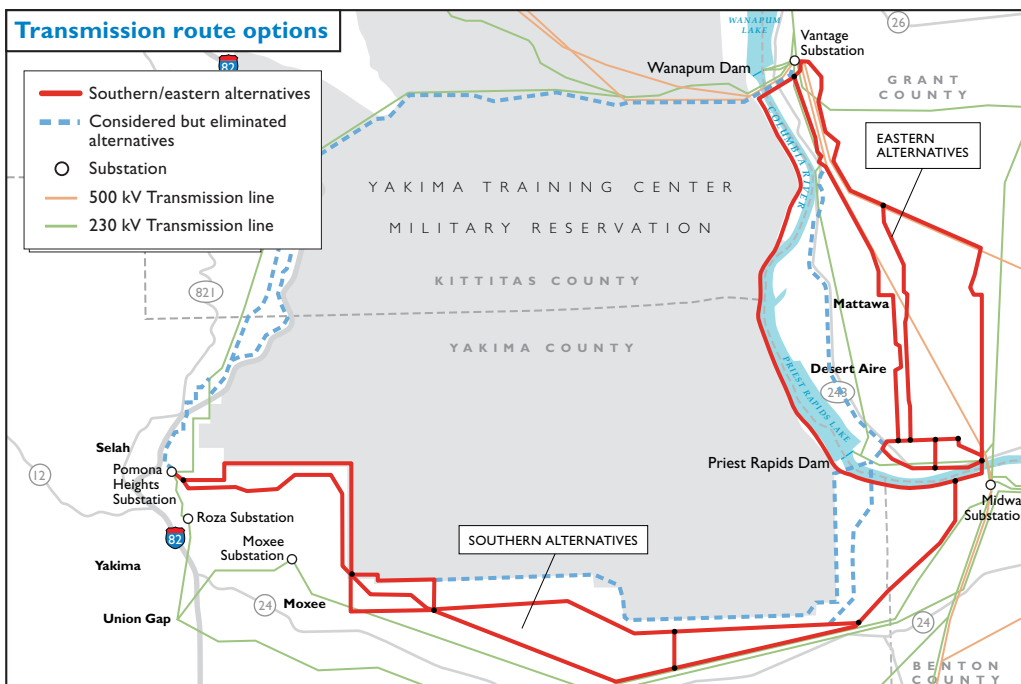
What has changed

More than two years ago Pacific Power applied for rights of way on Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Army Yakima Training Center lands for construction of the new line. The BLM and YTC were co-lead federal agencies for developing an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed line. Pacific Power has worked with the BLM and YTC on preliminary project studies and evaluations of alternative routes primarily on BLM and YTC lands.

The company was directed by the federal agencies to also propose private land alternatives. Three main routes under consideration by the BLM and YTC were presented for comment during the January-March 2010 EIS scoping period – one northern route that crossed the YTC near the existing Pomona to Wanapum line and two southern alternatives, one crossing YTC land and one route on mostly private land south of YTC. Public meetings were held in February 2010 in Selah and Mattawa, and were well attended.

Following the January-March 2010 NEPA scoping period, where public comments were solicited on various line routes, the preferred YTC routes (see map) were eliminated for three main reasons:

continued



No final preferred route has been selected

While Pacific Power's preference was to primarily cross federal lands, the federal agencies overseeing the process determined those options are not feasible. However, since the mailer was sent announcing the September open house meetings, two additional alternative routes have been added for consideration:

- A route along the abandoned railroad right of way on the west side of the Columbia River
- A route on the Yakima Training Center along the southwest edge of YTC in Yakima County near Kittitas Canyon and the Pomona Heights Substation

- The Army determined that overhead transmission routes on YTC land could potentially create significant aviation safety issues for the facility's core mission. To mitigate that risk, the Army would require that portions of the new line on YTC land be placed underground, and would also require that an existing line on YTC land be reconstructed underground.
- The preferred YTC routes crossed important, high-density sage grouse habitats with active leks.
- The northern route crossed the BLM's Yakima River Canyon property, a designated area of critical environmental concern.

The requirement to build underground created both a physical-construction and financial-responsibility dilemma for Pacific Power. While technically feasible, undergrounding extra-high voltage transmission projects is very expensive compared to building comparable overhead lines. The extremely rugged terrain – and comparably difficult constructability – means the cost of burying both the existing line and the new line on the YTC could be 10 to 20 times more expensive, in addition to the significant environmental impact. Also, undergrounding can negatively impact system reliability. When an underground transmission line fails or is damaged, the time required to locate and repair the problem is substantially longer than for overhead lines. These concerns, combined with the sage grouse and environmental issues, have eliminated YTC route options under the federal review process, and Pacific Power must now consider southern route alternatives that primarily cross private lands.

Other route changes came from public concerns raised during the scoping period. The sub-route option following State Highway 243 was eliminated to address concerns about aircraft safety at the Desert Aire Airport. Also, alternative sub-routes that crossed the Columbia River had to be eliminated due to extremely rugged terrain and constructability issues.

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Public feedback will contribute to the selection of a final preferred route and will be accommodated to the greatest

extent possible, even if all impacts cannot be eliminated. We welcome and encourage your participation.

Next steps

Public involvement:

Pacific Power is strongly committed to involving the public in planning this transmission line. This includes outreach to landowners, community leaders, local and state agencies, tribes and others, to help in identifying an acceptable route that balances current use of the land with the need to site the new transmission line.

Once a route has been selected, Pacific Power will continue meeting with affected landowners to discuss what could be involved, including structure siting to minimize impacts, easement terms and remuneration, and project construction. As part of this review, Pacific Power may request permission to enter private property to conduct necessary surveys and studies.

Public information:

Pacific Power will keep the public informed throughout the planning and construction of this line. Project newsletters will be distributed regularly to landowners and interested citizens, and will be posted online. Meeting notifications will be distributed and posted in local newspapers.

Project timeline

(This timeline is an estimate based on current information available.)

2008 – 2010

- Public outreach and route evaluation

2010 – Early 2011

- Environmental studies
- Final route selection

2011 – 2013

- Secure permits and rights of way
- Construction/completion, 2013
- Project in service, 2013

For more information, please contact us:

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Web: pacificpower.net/transmission

Information for this project can be found by clicking on "Vantage to Pomona Heights."

E-mail: ConstructionProjects@pacificcorp.com

Please specify "Vantage to Pomona Heights line" in your inquiry.



Let's turn the answers on.

