



**Hampton to Rochester to La Crosse
345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Project
Advisory Task Force**

**North Rochester to Mississippi River Advisory Task Force
Third Meeting – June 3, 2010**

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Agenda Review

The facilitator for the task force, Charlie Petersen, State of Minnesota, Management Analysis & Development, welcomed task force members and all present. Task force members were asked to introduce themselves and share their designation (representing a particular constituency or serving as an individual citizen member of the advisory task force).

Charlie reviewed the task force charge and emphasized that the work of this day, the third meeting, was to discuss in greater detail: (1) the applicant's proposed routes, (2) the alternative routes proposed by the task force at its second meeting, and (3) any additional routes or route segments, and discuss the process for developing the report of the task force. Questions by task force members were discussed and addressed.

Review and Approval of Meeting Notes

Task force members were asked to review the meeting notes from meeting #2 and respond with any questions edits changes, etc. A task force member suggested adding to the second meeting notes that another request was made for ATF members to hand in issues and impacts "homework." Three were handed in at the second meeting and will be included in the ATF website.

The task force approved the addition. The task force then approved the meeting notes as amended.

An ATF member requested that an attendance record based on representation be included in the report. Charlie noted that the report does identify members and who they represent so it would not be a problem to note attendance in that section of the report.

Review of ATF Generated Routes, and Route Segments

Advisory Task Force members were provided with maps of the alternative routes and route segments identified at the second meeting. A map identifying all the routes discussed is attached. The members reviewed each alternative and identified pros and cons for each.

Applicant preferred 345 kV route

Pros

- Uses existing corridors, both roadways and transmission lines
- Less deforestation
- Uses existing Zumbro River crossing

Cons

- Cuts through area of Pine Island planned growth (on east side)
- Health issues – impact on pace makers, etc.
- Conflicts with proposed new interchange in U.S. 52 north of Pine Island (interchange has been mapped by MnDOT and is expected to start construction in 2018)
- Culture and heritage issues: Native American mounds, graveyard, scenic area
- Impact on Gold Rush Days held in Oronoco
- Only one location for crossing of Mississippi River proposed by applicant; need to look at additional options: going underground at the river (A transmission line was placed under the St. Croix scenic riverway); additional crossing points for the Mississippi River need to be considered

[One ATF member noted that they oppose going under Mississippi River because it would not mitigate anything and would be cost prohibitive. Additionally, it would take more land on both sides of the river and maintenance costs (including blackout/brownout) would be increased.]

Applicant alternative 345 kV route

Pros

- Solves Pine Island issues, goes outside of planned growth areas

Cons

- City of Mazeppa: route crosses growth and development area for city
- Reduces future eco-tourism opportunities for City of Mazeppa
- Pine Island township concerns: takes agriculture land; route divides parcels of land; impacts future land use; farms transected (including century farm); soil compaction from construction of line and poles
- Impacts cultural and heritage area surrounding the Zumbro River
- Route is contrary to Wabasha County Comprehensive Plan
- Wabasha County concerns: economic impact; loss of tax base, thereby leading to potential tax increase; decrease in land production, where poles are placed takes land out of production; because land taken out of production and property devaluation – reduced tax base for county; reduction in property values because of proximity to line; the impact of the transmission line should not be borne by one county – counties should share

burden; inability of landowners to build additional buildings/outbuildings on property because of pole and line placement

- Impacts on hydrology and sustainable development; impacts the way the watershed moves; location of poles impacts the flow of water in the area
- Health issues
- Route is contrary to Minnesota non-proliferation policy
- Impacts ski hill
- Route does not use an existing Zumbro River crossing
- Impacts Zumbro River trail; DNR trail
- Close proximity to eagle nests
- Impacts sensitive habitat: oak savannah and remnant prairie
- Impacts private landing strip in Mazeppa
- Many sinkholes in the area
- Increased deforestation caused by route
- Limited use of existing corridors
- Impacts two tree farms
- Impacts property with DNR stewardship plans (management plans for forest and wildlife)
- Economic impact on eco-tourism and proximity to camping facilities

Applicant route 345 kV line Route Option segment – West of Mississippi River

Pros

- More favorable for DNR

Cons

- Longer route
- Electromagnetic impact on wildlife
- Impact on McCarthy Lake and Blanding's turtle
- Crosses rare prairie area
- Concern of adding to existing line
- Impacts critical habitat at Weavers Dunes

Applicant route 345 kV line Route Option segment – Dam route

Pros

- Has existing infrastructure for line at Zumbro River crossing – dam

Cons

- Camp proximity and area of biodiversity noted by DNR east of Zumbro River
- Impacts two family campgrounds, would destroy the natural character of each
- Requires cutting many hardwoods
- Does not comply with Wabasha County Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Impact on agriculture land and farming
- Does not comply with the two registered Minnesota stewardship hardwood/woodland forest plans – totaling 117.5 acres
- Impacts wildlife area, including nesting eagles

- Native conifer – white pines present in route area

ATF alternative 1 – combines 345 kV and 161 kV lines for a majority of route

Pros

- Stays out of Pine Island growth area; route follows east side of city growth area

Cons

- Area has not been mapped or studied for transmission line route(s)
- Impacts Gold Rush days in August in Oronoco (One held at fairground in Rochester but the other is in Oronoco)
- Impacts outdoor recreation for Lake Zumbro and Zumbro River; impacts cabins in the area
- Sinkholes in the area; impact of unsteady ground on pole placement and cost
- Impacts farms in area still using top water aquifer
- Impacts watershed for North Fork of North Branch of Zumbro River
- Impacts multiple farms in the area
- Route transects century farm (at point where ATF alternative 1 parallels Applicant Alternative Route and then turns south – impacts east boundary of farm)
- Impacts another century farm (on east border of route)
- Impacts old stagecoach route on north/south portion of line (stagecoach line was Mantorville to Rochester to Wabasha line)
- Impacts small private cemetery (close to east corner of route where it turns south)

ATF alternative 2 – combines 345 kV and 161 kV lines for a majority of route

Pros

- Portion of route has already been studied for 161 kV applicant-preferred route
- Impacts Pine Island growth area but only in its 20-year-plus projections
- Combines 345 kV line and 161 kV line for a good portion of route – less visual impact
- Avoids two dairy farms and milking parlors

Cons

- Area has not been mapped or studied for transmission line route(s)
- Impacts Gold Rush days in August in Oronoco (held at fairground in Rochester)
- Impacts multiple farms in the area
- Does not use existing corridors (it partially follows corridors of applicant-preferred 161 kV route and County Highway 11)
- Area residents have not been notified of transmission line option

ATF alternative 3 – combines 345 kV and 161 kV line for first half of route

Pros

- Portion of route has already been studied for 161 kV applicant-preferred route
- Impacts Pine Island growth area but only in its 20-year-plus projections
- Combines 345 kV line and 161 kV line for a good portion of route – less visual impact

- Avoids two dairy farms and milking parlors

Cons

- Area has not been mapped or studied for transmission line route(s)
- Impacts Gold Rush days in August in Oronoco (held at fairground in Rochester)
- Impacts multiple farms in the area
- Does not use existing corridors (it partially follows corridors of applicant-preferred 161 kV route and County Highway 11)
- Area residents have not been notified of transmission line option
- More residents are impacted
- Deforestation in Dry Creek area
- 345 kV route (where it splits from where it is coupled with the 161 kV line) is new, unstudied ground

ATF alternative 4

Pros

- Uses existing corridor – follows U. S. 52
- Eliminates spraying for plants underneath lines
- Area along highway is part commercial and part industrial

Cons

- Impacts proposed north interchange in Pine Island (interchange has been mapped by MnDOT and is expected to start construction in 2018)
- Impacts residences along U.S. 52; they have not been notified of transmission line option
- Impacts cemetery
- Impacts waste treatment plant for Pine Island
- Route goes close to North Branch of Zumbro River
- Along U.S. 52 – one side has cliffs with houses, and the other side is in a flood plain
- Erosion issue along U.S. 52
- This route does not have an end point for 345 kV line after it ends on U.S. 52
- Impacts environmentally sensitive area – Middle Fork North Branch of Zumbro River

New alternative route segments

At the end of the meeting and during meeting notes review, the ATF members identified and discussed four segments to various routes proposed. The segments include:

ATF alternative 5

On applicant-preferred 345 kV route: at quarter mile west of where route turns south (where it meets Dam route option meets and goes east); angle route south along lot line and when lot line intersects with 510 street angle to applicant's preferred route about one-half mile south of existing turn.

Combine 345 kV and 161 kV lines (where applicant preferred 345 and 161 kV routes create a "box" between Zumbrota and Pine Island)

Combine 345 kV and 161 kV lines where applicant's preferred routes for both 345 kV and 161 kV exit at southeast corner of substation location rectangle; a square box is formed. The 345 kV route goes east, and the 161 kV route goes south (following existing 345 kV transmission line), and then each route turns at a 90-degree angle and cross again at U.S. 52. Either option (northeast or southwest of square) would reduce the footprint of the route. Both options should be studied. It was noted by an ATF member that a DNR sensitive area is in close proximity to the southwest portion of this segment.

Extend ATF alternative 4

Extend ATF alternative 4, 345 kV route from the end point identified to follow proposed County Road 12 as it extends east of the new interchange and connect up with applicant preferred 345 kV route where proposed County Road 12 crosses that route.

Continue Dam Route Option east to Hwy 21 then go south

Continue the Dam Route Option east of Highway 21, then go south and follow existing 69 kV transmission line to meet Applicant Preferred Route. This route segment would not cross the Zumbro River at the dam and would avoid camps and high biodiversity area east of Zumbro. Further, it uses an existing transmission line. However, it would add more transmission line in Wabasha County.

The task force noted that all ATF routes and the new route segments identified above should be carried forward.

Report Process

Charlie will draft a report based on the three meetings of the task force, outlining the process and the action of the task force. The report will be e-mailed to task force members for review and comment. The comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the report as appropriate. If the comments are extensive or differ substantially from meeting notes, then a request may be made to have these comments submitted and referenced electronically.

Notes from meeting #3 will be sent to task force members for review and comment prior to development of the final report.

The task force was thanked for its good work, understanding this was a difficult issue to undertake.