



**Monticello to St. Cloud
345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Project
Advisory Task Force**

**Monticello to St. Cloud Advisory Task Force
Third Meeting – August 6, 2009**

DRAFT 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 substation locations and routes, (2) the alternative substation locations and 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 Minutes

Task force members were asked to review the meeting notes from meeting #2 and respond with any questions edits changes, etc.

The task force discussed edits suggested by Ms. Svensson regarding terminology for concurrent use of highway rights-of-way by multiple parties. The task force adopted her suggestions – replacing the “ROW sharing” text under bullet 1, and replacing the word “sharing” with “occupancy” in the first full paragraph on page 2. See Appendix A for Ms. Svensson's e-mail comments on the edits

Review of Substation Locations, Routes, and Route Segments

Advisory Task Force members were provided with maps of the alternative substation locations and routes identified at meeting #2 and a table providing comparisons of the routes. The members reviewed each alternative and identified pros and cons for each.

Maps for each alternative are available at:

http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/documents/19957/_XCL_CAPX_CATF%20Proposed%20Routes%20and%20Alignment_20090804.pdf.

The table is available at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/documents/19957/ATF%20Alternatives%20Comparisons.pdf>.

Substation Locations Reviewed

The applicant noted that the substation required for the 345 kV lines would have a footprint of approximately 15 acres. Further, the applicant noted it would likely require additional acres to be used as a buffer around the substation, for a total of approximately 40 acres. .

Applicant Quarry substation siting area – Alternative 1 – estimated area of 87 acres

Pros

- Area not currently populated
- Ability to plant a tree buffer in the 40 acres
- Roadway buffer – Hwy 23
- 40 acres available for buffer
- Shortest straight line distance between Monticello and St. Cloud
- On 115 kV line – comment provided by Xcel representative

Cons

- Four routes impacted out of five proposed for southwest beltway around St. Cloud and Waite Park
- Planned for single family housing in Comprehensive Plan
- Impacts mobile home park – Bel Clar Acres; environmental justice issue

Applicant Quarry substation siting area – Alternative 2 – estimated area of 290 acres

Pros

- Area not currently populated
- Ability to plant a tree buffer in the 40 acres
- Roadway buffer – Hwy 23
- 40 acres available for buffer
- On 115 kV line – comment provided by Xcel representative

Cons

- Four routes impacted out of five proposed for southwest beltway around St. Cloud and Waite Park
- Planned for single family housing in Comprehensive Plan

ATF alternative substation siting area – Alternative Group 4 – 1: estimated area of 15 acres

Pros

- Natural buffers on three sides: Interstate 94, county road, and wetlands
- Area not populated in near future or planned for any development

- Limited development options
- Proposed line crosses close to site

Cons

- Need to run four power lines into the site
- Rockville development under ½ mile away
- Minimum and/or restrictive acreage
- Narrow lot
- Additional cost incurred by running 115 kV line to reach substation
- Potential for construction costs to be greater because of smaller site; don't know if substation could fit on site

ATF alternative substation siting area – Alternative Group 4 – 2: estimated area 15 acres, currently an existing distribution substation

Pros

- Close to proposed transmission line going toward Fargo
- Co-location with existing substation
- Eliminates problems with Quarry substation siting areas

Cons

- Transmission line will have to run a long distance to reach substation
- Residential area impacted by lines coming into substation
- Smaller size of land area; may lose natural buffer
- On flyway, potential bird kill
- Close to river; impact on proposed Wobegon Trail

ATF alternative substation siting area – Alternative Group 2 – 1: estimated area 18 acres
[ATF removed this substation area for consideration after review]

Pros

- Avoids the issues and problems for Waite Park growth plan
- Substation is needed if ATF proposed alternative route is used going on the east side of St. Cloud and connecting with transmission lines to the north and west of St. Cloud (ATF alternative transmission line – Group 2, Alt. 1)

Cons

- Outside of identified area; residents not contacted
- Not on proposed transmission line route to Fargo
- Maximum distance away from St. Cloud for energy benefit
- Issue of bringing transmission line back to St. Cloud to create line loop

Transmission Line Routes Reviewed

Applicant preferred route

Pros

- Shortest route in miles
- Less impact on development for city of St. Augusta
- Natural buffer between residents and powerline along Interstate 94 (I-94), depends upon location along I-94
- Impacts least amount of agriculture area of the three routes proposed by applicant
- Least cost

Cons

- Number of times the route crosses I-94
- Impacts other cities along I-94 for commercial development
- Does not take advantage of already existing transmission line corridors
- Impact along Highway 23; limits development in the area south of Waite Park
- Higher number of residences impacted
- Limit future service road expansion in the area; especially along I-94
- Eliminates the potential for light rail along I-94
- Viewshed along I-94; scenic by-way, roughly 62,000 car per day use route
- Impacts flyways, possible bird kill
- Comment on other alternative ways to generate power for St. Cloud area – this is more of a need issue and need has already been determined

Applicant alternative route A

Pros

- Reduces impact on I-94
- No Mississippi River crossings

Cons

- Longer than preferred route
- Lower percentage of use of existing right of way
- Highest percentage of agriculture land area impacted
- As the route moves south of I-94 it impacts residential and commercial development in the area
- More costly
- Follows highways that may impact future development and/or future housing
- Destroys integrity of townships along the way; impacts housing, development options, agriculture, recreation, open space, and businesses
- Does not use existing right of way (utility and roadway) for much of route

Applicant alternative route B

Pros

- No impact on I-94

Cons

- Of applicant's proposed routes, crosses most areas of wetlands and woods

- Longer than preferred route
- Lower percentage of use of existing right of way
- Highest percentage of agriculture land area impacted
- As the route moves south of I-94 it impacts residential and commercial development in the area
- More costly
- Follows highways that may impact future development and/or future housing
- Destroys integrity of townships along the way; impacts housing, development options, agriculture, recreation, open space, and businesses
- Does not use existing right of way (utility and roadway) for much of route

ATF alternative route – Group 2, Alt 1

[ATF removed this route for consideration after review]

Pros

- Route runs along existing 230kV line
- Follow primarily a straight line therefore a potential to be cheaper
- Avoids population dense areas
- Avoids problems raised by applicants routes’
- Reduces damage to virgin area and uses existing corridors

Cons

- Two Mississippi River crossings
- Limited substation options
- Impacts St. Cloud airport
- Impact a greater amount of agriculture land than applicant’s proposals
- Moves the line out of one area and into another area

Note: this line is out of the area contacted by the applicant to review and comment on the transmission line; area townships, towns, and other entities have not been notified of potential impact.

ATF alternative route – Group 3, Alt 1

[ATF removed this route for consideration prior to any review]

ATF alternative route segment to Applicant route B – Group 3, Alt. 2

Pros

- Follows Highway 39 right of way
- Straighter than Applicant route B

Cons

- Crosses areas of wetlands and woods
- Longer than preferred route
- High percentage of agriculture land area impacted

- As the route moves south of I-94 it impacts residential and commercial development in the area
- More costly
- Follows highways that may impact future development and/or future housing
- Destroys integrity of townships along the way; impacts housing, development options, agriculture, recreation, open space, and businesses

ATF alternative route – Group 3, Alt. 3

Pros

- Follows existing powerline
- Second least amount of agriculture land of all routes
- Second shortest route of all routes
- Least residential impact
- Least amount of impact to I-94 and MnDOT
- Avoids problems with applicants route

Cons

- May go through city of St. Augusta and impact water, sewer, and development options (could tie into I-94 preferred route just before St. Augusta to address this issue)
- Most impact on center pivot irrigation systems
- Two Mississippi River crossings

ATF alternative route – Group 4, Alt. 1

Pros

- Highest portion of existing use right of ways
- Second least amount of impact on residents
- Avoids I-94 issues at Monticello, Silver Creek, and Clearwater
- Addresses issues on applicant's routes
- Uses portion of existing power line right of way
- Two river crossings; at already existing transmission line river crossing sites

Cons

- Two river crossings; at already existing transmission line river crossing sites
- Impacts development planning and options in Waite Park area along Highway 23

Note: portions of this line are out of the area contacted by the applicant to review and comment on the transmission line; some area townships, towns, and other entities have not been notified of potential impact.

ATF alternative route – Group 4, Alt. 2 (may follow Highway 10 corridor through Big Lake and Clearwater)

Pros

- High usage of existing corridors

- Highway 10 rules around accommodating transmission lines in right of way are more accommodating and flexible
- Affects less agriculture land
- Uses existing river crossings for Mississippi River
- Avoids problems of applicant routes

Cons

- Mississippi River crossings
- Large number of impacts on center pivot irrigation systems
- Impacts on historical sites
- Impacts airport – Clear Lake
- Impacts Waite Park development options and plans at it leaves I-94 and follows Highway 23
- Impact existing urban areas in Big Lake and Clear Lake
- Impacts rail line; Northstar Corridor

Discussion of Preferred Alternatives

The task force considered whether there were any routes that they would like to single out and prioritize. After discussion, the task force voted 7 in support, 1 opposed, and 2 abstaining to prioritize the **ATF alternative route – Group 3, Alt. 3 with modifications**.

The modifications include:

- shift the route moving east to west to the Applicant's Preferred Route at a point where the two routes intersect close to the border between Lynden Township and Saint Augusta and then follow the Applicant's Preferred Route to the Applicant identified substation; and
- use the existing Mississippi River crossing in the southern part of Haven Township and then connect to the Applicant Preferred Route along I-94

The task force noted that all other route and substation alternatives identified (and not removed from consideration by the task force) should be carried forward. These routes and substation locations include:

Substations

- ATF alternative substation siting area – Alternative Group 4 – 1
- ATF alternative substation siting area – Alternative Group 4 – 2

Routes

- ATF alternative route segment to Applicant route B – Group 3, Alt. 2
- ATF alternative route – Group 4, Alt. 1
- ATF alternative route – Group 4, Alt. 2

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.

Appendix A:

To all:

I wanted to clarify some of the language that was used in the meeting minutes from the last meeting. On Page 1 in the first bullet at the bottom of the page the terminology "Shared ROW" is a term that is not consistent with policy, statute and regulatory language. This is causing some confusion with the public. The bullet should read as follows:

Mn/DOT has a Utility Accommodation Policy that provides guidance for utility permitting and installations on the trunk highway rights of way. Most utilities are allowed longitudinal and crossings by permit on facilities that do not have access control (non-freeway sections). Interstates (such as I-94) are governed by federal regulation in addition to the State's Utility Accommodation policy and typically are not allowed longitudinal installations within the right of way. Variations from the State's Utility Accommodation Policy require an exception from the FHWA.

Also in the first paragraph below the bullet on page 2, there is again a reference to sharing of interstate ROW. The state does not have "shared ROW", we have permitted uses within the right of way. To reflect this intent the work "sharing" should be changed to the word "occupancy".

Thank you for these revisions
VAL

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