Bonneville Power Administration I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project

Public Meeting Summary: Listening Session
December 8, 2011
6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Battle Ground Community Center, 912 E. Main Street, Battle Ground, Wash.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) hosted a listening session on December 8, 2011, in Battle Ground, Wash. The purpose of the public meeting was to provide an additional opportunity for the public to provide comments to the project team. The project team also shared a brief update on recent project developments.

Format
Project manager, Mark Korsness, provided an update on the project schedule, non-wires measures and newly released project data. Meeting attendees were invited to sign up to provide verbal comment. Each interested participant completed a speaker card and was then called to speak (three minute limit) in the order they signed up. Commenters spoke directly to a panel consisting of BPA project manager, Mark Korsness, and public process manager, Maryam Asgharian.

Attendees
Two hundred sixty-four (264) people signed in at the meeting. An additional 20-30 people are estimated to have attended. Meeting attendees included property owners, residents, and local business representatives, as well as representatives from Portland General Electric, Washington Department of Ecology, City of Camas, U.S. Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler’s office and Washington Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council. Some individuals identified an affiliation with a neighborhood association or one of the opposition groups including A Better Way for BPA, Stop Towers Now and Yale Valley Coalition.

Project update
BPA project manager, Mark Korsness, provided an update on the project at the start of the meeting. His remarks are summarized below.

- **Principle agency considerations:** Mark described the four principle considerations BPA uses to make significant decisions, including: 1) the reliability of the transmission system, 2) providing low-cost services, 3) concern for the environment and 4) accountability to the region and ratepayers. This meeting was organized as part of BPA’s ongoing effort to remain accountable by hearing public concerns.

- **Draft Environmental Impact Statement:** BPA continues to work on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which will consider four route alternatives and document impacts that may occur to the manmade and natural environment. BPA recently rescheduled the release of the draft EIS from December 2011 to spring 2012 to allow more time to complete a thorough analysis and respond to comments from stakeholders.
When it is released, BPA will post the draft EIS on the project website and send it on CD to those on the project mailing list. The document will also be available at libraries and resource centers. Individuals with special needs or requests related to accessing the draft EIS should contact BPA.

- **Decision criteria data:** A new datasheet ([Preliminary I-5 Route Data by Alternative](#)) is posted on the project website comparing route alternatives by a list of over 90 decision criteria. In addition to route alternatives, a number of options are still under consideration for transmission line routing. BPA is currently compiling similar counts of comparative criteria for all options that appear on the Alternatives and Options map released in May 2011, and will post this information online as soon as it is available.

- **Non-wires measures:** BPA commissioned a non-wires screening study to determine if are measures that do not include transmission lines that may have the potential to reduce the need for the project. Non-wires opportunities were identified and BPA then commissioned a second phase study to consider the feasibility of the identified measures. Results from the second phase were recently presented to the Non-wires Solutions Round Table, a group of industry experts. BPA is currently incorporating comments from the Round Table and will have a report to share with the public soon.

The latest analysis shows that the non-wires measures will not eliminate the need for project construction, but may allow a delay in the construction schedule by a few years. BPA will continue with its environmental review process and preliminary project design to select a Preferred Alternative and reach a Record of Decision, regardless of whether the energization date is ultimately delayed. A new non-wires fact sheet was available at the meeting and can be viewed on the project website at [www.bpa.gov/go/i5](http://www.bpa.gov/go/i5).

- **Identifying a Preferred Alternative:** Mark emphasized that BPA continues to work through the analysis needed for the draft EIS. At this time, BPA has not identified a Preferred Alternative. BPA will announce a Preferred Alternative as soon as there is conclusive enough evidence to do so. Mark emphasized that the draft EIS is not required to include a Preferred Alternative, but that BPA will include one if the analysis is able to support it. BPA must identify a Preferred Alternative by the release of the final EIS. The final EIS will be followed by a Record of Decision by the BPA Administrator. All segments are still under consideration and will remain so until the Record of Decision, when the build (or “no build”) alternative is formally established.

- **Potential property value and health impacts:** Mark acknowledged that BPA has received many comments about property values and health concerns and informed attendees that the agency has commissioned studies on these issues that will be included in the draft EIS.

- **Additional route alternatives:** About a year ago, BPA reviewed the citizen-proposed “grey line” route and decided not to pursue it further. In response to additional comments and more
specific information, BPA is reconsidering whether to develop an additional route further east. BPA has done some fieldwork and spoken with property owners and route proponents. A decision will be announced soon about whether to develop it as a route alternative for the draft EIS. If it is developed as a new route additional time will be needed to notify the public and property owners and then develop centerlines, tower locations and access roads.

Overview of public comments
Following the project update by Mark Korsness, 37 meeting attendees gave verbal comment. Attendees also submitted 29 written comments at the meeting.

A full transcription of the comments and a video of the meeting are available on the project website at www.bpa.gov/go/i5. Meeting comments and all other public comments are also documented in a searchable database on the project website at www.bpa.gov/corporate/i-5-eis/search.cfm.

Closing remarks
At the conclusion of the verbal comments, Mark acknowledged that the process is taking longer than many people would like and is a source of frustration as some people have had to put their plans on hold. He noted that he was impressed not only by the content of the comments, but also the passion with which they were expressed. He informed attendees that the comments will be passed along to the project team and BPA management. Mark encouraged anybody that is interested in having a site visit to contact him or BPA directly. He stated that past visits have been valuable to help the project team better understand the impacts of the project.

The agency is trying to be as thorough as possible so that no decisions will need to be revisited. BPA’s most current information lists the project energization date as 2015. However, the ultimate construction date of the project remains subject to change as BPA continues to monitor and analyze existing conditions over time. BPA is dedicated to completing the process, finding a preferred alternative and coming to a Record of Decision as quickly as possible and will continue to hear comments from the public along the way.

Learn more and stay connected
There are a number of ways members of the public can learn more about the project and submit their comments:

- Visit the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project web site: www.bpa.gov/go/i5
- Sign up for the mailing list: To be added to the mailing list, visit the project Web site and click the “Get Involved” link or call 800-230-6593 to leave your contact information.
- Submit comments: Online at www.bpa.gov/go/i5; by mail at BPA I-5 Corridor Reinforcement, PO Box 9250, Portland, OR 97207; toll free at 800-230-6593; by fax at (888) 315-4503.