

Community Advisory Group Meeting #5a Summary

10/20/14

Community Advisory Group Meeting #5a

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2014

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel Bellevue, 11211 Main St, Bellevue

Community Advisory Group in attendance

- Andy Swayne, Puget Sound Energy
- Barbara Sauerbrey, Woodridge Community Association (residential association alternate)
- Brent Camann, Renton Chamber of Commerce
- Brian Buck, Lake Washington School District
- David Chicks, Redmond Neighborhoods
- David Edmonds, Olympus Neighborhood Association
- David Hoffman, Master Builders Association
- Debra Grant, Hopelink
- Deirdre Johnson, South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails Neighborhood Association
- Floyd Rogers, Mountains to Sound Greenway
- Gregg Zimmerman, City of Renton
- Jack McLeod, Bellevue School District
- Lindy Bruce, Sunset Community Association (residential association alternate)
- Nicholas Matz, City of Bellevue
- Norm Hansen, Bridle Trails Community Club
- Paul Lwali, Coal Creek Family YMCA (alternate for Marcia Isenberger)
- Rob Jammerman, City of Kirkland
- Robert Shay, Wilburton Community Association
- Sam Baxter, Overlake Hospital Medical Center
- Scott Kaseburg, Lake Lanes Community Association (residential association alternate)
- Steve O'Donnell, Somerset Community Association

Members absent

- Bart Phillips, One Redmond
- Bill Taylor, Liberty Ridge Homeowners Association (residential association alternate)
- Darius Richards, Kennydale Neighborhood Association
- David St. John, King County
- Pete Sullivan, City of Redmond
- Steven Hanson, Renton Technical College
- Tim McHarg, City of Newcastle

Other attendees

- Leann Kostek, Puget Sound Energy, Senior Project Manager
- Gretchen Aliabadi, Puget Sound Energy, Communications
- Lindsey Walimaki, Puget Sound Energy, Communications
- Keri Pravitz, Puget Sound Energy, Community Projects Manager
- Jackson Taylor, Puget Sound Energy, Community Projects Manager
- Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues, Facilitator
- Dana Olson, EnviroIssues, Public Involvement
- Lauren Dennis, EnviroIssues, Public Involvement
- Liz Mack, EnviroIssues, Notetaker
- Other Puget Sound Energy staff

Meeting Purpose and Overview

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) hosted the Energize Eastside Community Advisory Group Meeting #5a in Bellevue on Oct. 1, 2014. The meeting agenda included:

1. Advisory group business, including review and approval of the Community Advisory Group Meeting #4b summary
2. Feedback from advisory group members and residential association alternates on constituent concerns
3. Determine the final evaluation factors and weighting
4. Discussion to finalize the narrowed list of route options to further evaluate
5. Prepare for the Multi-Objective Decision Analysis (MODA) evaluation
6. Public comment

Meeting Summary

Welcome, introductions and safety moment

Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues facilitator, welcomed everyone and led a round of introductions of the advisory group members and residential association alternates. She also introduced PSE staff seated at the table: Leann Kostek, PSE Senior Project Manager and Gretchen Aliabadi, PSE Communications Initiatives Manager. Penny then provided a safety moment about using extra caution now that it is getting dark earlier. Penny also conducted an overview of the agenda and walked through the handouts for the meeting.

Community Advisory Group business

Community Advisory Group Meeting #4b Summary

Penny asked if the advisory group had any objections to finalizing the Community Advisory Group Meeting #4b summary. The summary was previously emailed to the group for review. There were no emailed responses. One concern was raised during the meeting, but as the comment pertained to the 'Route Options Comments and Concerns' document rather than what occurred in the prior meeting, the issue was resolved. The summary draft was accepted as final.

Change in Community Advisory Group membership

Penny announced that Lynn Wallace left the Renton Chamber of Commerce and there was not yet an assigned alternate. Brent Camann, the current Chairman of the Board of the Renton Chamber of Commerce, was in the audience and announced that he would be filling in for Lynn. Penny invited him to join the advisory group table. No objections to his participation were received and Mr. Camann participated in the meeting.

Community Advisory Group round robin on constituent feedback

Penny led a round robin session during which the advisory group members shared the following feedback from their constituents:

- Steve O'Donnell shared that he has been involved in a number of additional community meetings including Newport Shores, Somerset and Bridle Trails. He has heard a lot of public interest in the project. He also pointed out that neighborhood groups have been meeting with the city of Bellevue and Newcastle staff members. According to Steve, no one is happy about the industrial blight of the project.
- Gregg Zimmerman reported that not much new is being heard from Renton and that many are waiting for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to start.
- Debra Grant hopes that PSE is hearing directly from her Hopelink clientele as they have had several opportunities to engage with the project.
- Deirdre Johnson shared that she attended a North Rose Hill briefing and the Open House in Bellevue. She met a neighbor who had recently moved and is affected by Route B. She pointed out that new homes continue being built and new neighbors are becoming aware of the project and getting information from her.
- Norm Hansen said that he has been involved in a lot of conversations and emails with Bridle Trails residents. He reports that no one is happy about any of the routes. He said his neighbors don't understand why PSE won't avoid residential areas. He also informed the group that Anaheim, CA charges a surcharge to its residents so that the city can underground its lines.
- Brian Buck reported that he is continuing to hear concern about lines being placed close to schools. He had a board member who recently brought up California regulations on transmission lines that are stricter than Washington regulations.
- Robert Shay noted that he attended a community picnic over the summer where he interacted with about 130 residents. He reported that no one thought the price of undergrounding was affordable. He pointed out that his neighbors do not see the towers as industrial blight, but instead appreciate the electricity and standard of living they provide. He also said there are concerns about the routes, which are being addressed.
- Nicholas Matz explained that Bellevue City Council was briefed about the project on Aug. 24. The council discussed the Interagency Agreement and EIS. As the lead agency in the EIS process, Bellevue is busy gearing up. The council will be briefed again in October.
- Paul Lwali, David Hoffman, David Edmonds, Floyd Rogers, Jack McLeod, Rob Jammerman, David Chicks, Sam Baxter and Andy Swayne all reported that they are not hearing anything new from their communities.

Evaluation factor weighting discussion

Penny presented an overview of the September in-person and online open house events. One component of the open house was collecting community feedback through a survey. One of the survey questions asked community members to weight the evaluation factors. Penny presented the results of this question in comparison to the factor weightings assigned by the advisory group. She asked the group if these results seemed reflective of the community, from their experience. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- A member noted that “Protects health and safety (9%)” was not indicative of his community, which sees health and safety as a key factor.
 - Another member pointed out that safety may be ranked lower by the community because the community assumes that whatever is built will be safe.
- One member noted surprise that cost was not higher for the community and pointed out that aesthetics was much higher in the community ranking.
- Another member expressed concern that there were significant differences between the public and the advisory group weightings and noted that the public sees avoiding residential areas as four times more important than the cost.
 - A member countered that in his community, cost is considered much more important than these rankings show. The advisory group has spent a lot of time looking at the facts, is a diverse representation of the community, and has well thought-out factors.
 - A member pointed out that the 461 people who responded to the question are not a representative sample of the community and those who live very near the route are more likely to comment. Those who live further from the route are more interested in the cost, but less likely to have completed the survey. This comment was echoed by another member.
- Another member pointed out that the factors that start with “avoid” were ranked highest by the community and also questioned if “maximizes opportunity areas” was understood by survey participants.

Penny clarified that there was never an expectation that this survey would be statistically valid; instead, it was intended as a way to gather information from those who chose to participate. People self-selected whether or not to participate, and the sample size is small in comparison to the number of people in the project area. Penny also pointed out that it is very challenging to get the general public to put in the amount of hours required to fully comprehend the complexity of the issues. She reminded the advisory group members that they have the responsibility to check in with their constituents about the project. Penny then showed the advisory group’s weightings and asked if these were the weighting they should use going into the Multi-Objective Decision Analysis (MODA) evaluation. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- One member pointed out the discrepancies in the “Avoids residential areas” weighting and noted that the advisory group is not being representative. The member expressed concern that the group is not as educated as some members think and that some members have not attended the meetings and are not in tune with their communities.
 - Another member disagreed, and pointed out that the advisory group members each interact with a large number of constituents and together the members represent tens of thousands of people, not just 23 individuals.

- Several members then commented on the cost factor. One thought that a change of one dollar doesn't mean much to a lot of people. Another pointed out that those most affected by cost probably weren't the ones taking the survey. This comment was echoed by another member who pointed out that the community they represent is mostly renters and will be strongly affected by the cost.
- Another member expressed disappointment that the factors related to the environment (aesthetics, protects sensitive environmental areas, protects mature vegetation) scored low and that this is contrary to the sentiment in his community.
 - A member then proposed combining "protects mature vegetation" and "protects sensitive environmental areas" into one factor and combining the score.
 - Another member pointed out that there was a reason these factors were originally kept separate. This was echoed by two additional members who explained that these factors do not always align, for example some routes have sensitive environmental areas, but not mature vegetation.
 - The advisory group decided to leave these factors separate.
- A proposal was made to take 5 points from "Maximizes opportunity areas" and apply them to "Least impact to aesthetics".
 - There was no consensus so the factors were not adjusted.
- A proposal was made to take 10 points from "Maximizes opportunity areas" and apply them to "Protects health and safety".
 - There was no consensus so the factors were not adjusted.
- A proposal was made to take 7 points from "Maximizes opportunity areas" and add them to "Avoids residential areas".
 - There was no consensus so the factors were not adjusted.
- Three members then expressed concern about adjusting the factors. The advisory group represents a diverse set of interests and members were very thoughtful about completing the survey to reflect the interests they represent.
- A proposal was made to take 4 points from "Least cost to the ratepayer" and add them to "Avoids sensitive environmental areas"
 - There was no consensus so the factors were not adjusted.

The group did not come to consensus on adjusting the factors and decided to instead calculate the MODA evaluation results using the advisory group weighting and the community weighting of the evaluation factors.

Discussion of the route options for further evaluation

Penny displayed the community's feedback on the routes recommended and not recommended for further evaluation. She asked the advisory group if they would like to bring back any of the seven routes not recommended. The advisory group unanimously agreed to leave those unchanged. Penny then asked if any of the 11 recommended routes should be removed from the list. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- A member suggested removing the bottom three routes (Aspen, Cedar, and Laurel).
 - Another member disagreed and stated that the group has already gone through this process once and should stick with the decision to retain those routes for further analysis.

- Another member pointed out that removing the bottom three would remove all of the routes with Segment L. Community members living along L might have been overrepresented in the sample.
- About half of the group members stated that they would like to keep all 11 routes, while two members wanted to remove the bottom three.
- A member raised concern that Segment L might not be buildable.
 - Leann clarified that Segment L is more challenging to permit, but still a buildable option.

The advisory group decided to conduct the MODA evaluation using all 11 routes previously recommended for further evaluation.

MODA evaluation

Penny gave an overview of the MODA evaluation and explained that each member would receive an individualized link to the evaluation the following day. She reminded members with residential association alternates to make sure to include the alternate in the evaluation.

Public question and comment period

Members of the public were in the audience and shared their comments for the advisory group. Below is a summary, but not a transcript of these comments:

- I commend the advisory group for the decision to use the community's weighting factors in the MODA evaluation. I want to point out a principle called the wisdom of crowds. This came about from someone observing a group of people trying to guess the weight of a pig. The observer noticed that if you take all the estimates from all the people guessing and averaged them, the result was the closest number to the actual weight. This goes to show that it is very important to consider the community and their averaged input.
- I want to echo that sentiment. The community really endorses what happens in the neighborhoods. This is really important to consider when siting \$200 million of construction through our community. While I respect the fact that some options cost a little more, people will pay and appreciate the product when they get it. We should be looking at new technology and other route options and not nickel and dime this decision. Costco recently posted a poll about undergrounding power lines. It will be really interesting to hear what the public says about this issue.

Wrap-up and next steps

Penny thanked everyone for coming. EnviroIssues agreed to run two sets of MODA evaluation calculations: one using weighting factors from the community survey and the other using weighting from the advisory group.