

Community Advisory Group Meeting #5b Summary

10/21/14

Community Advisory Group Meeting #5b

Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2014

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center, 16600 NE 80th St., Redmond

Community Advisory Group in attendance

- Andy Swayne, Puget Sound Energy
- Bart Phillips, One Redmond
- Brent Camann, Renton Chamber of Commerce
- Brian Buck, Lake Washington School District
- Darius Richards, Kennydale Neighborhood Association
- 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
- 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
- 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

- Barbara Sauerbrey, Woodridge Community Association (residential association alternate)
- Bill Taylor, Liberty Ridge Homeowners Association (residential association alternate)
- Cathy Beam, City of Redmond
- David St. John, King County
- Floyd Rogers, Mountains to Sound Greenway
- Marcia Isenberger, Coal Creek Family YMCA
- Steve Hanson, Renton Technical College
- Tim McHarg, City of Newcastle

Other attendees

- Leann Kostek, Puget Sound Energy, Senior Project Manager
- Jens Nedrud, Puget Sound Energy, Deputy 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
- Chelsea Ongaro, EnviroIssues, Notetaker
- Other Puget Sound Energy staff

Meeting Purpose and Overview

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) hosted the Energize Eastside Community Advisory Group Meeting #5b in Redmond on Oct. 8, 2014. The meeting agenda included:

1. Review and discuss the results of the Multi-Objective Decision Analysis (MODA) evaluation
2. Develop advisory group preliminary route recommendation for public review at November open houses
3. Provide advice to PSE on how to share the advisory group's preliminary route recommendation with the community
4. 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. Facilitator Penny Mabie reviewed the meeting ground rules, conducted an overview of the agenda, and walked through the handouts for the meeting. Penny also provided a safety moment encouraging attendees to call 811 before digging.

Community Advisory Group business

Change in Community Advisory Group membership

Penny announced that Brent Camann would be replacing Lynn Wallace as the advisory group representative from the Renton Chamber of Commerce and Cathy Beam would be replacing Pete Sullivan as the representative from the City of Redmond.

Apology for mistake during Community Advisory Group Meeting #5a

Penny apologized for an error that she made during Community Advisory Group Meeting #5a. She apologized for cutting off advisory group member Robert Shay during the conversation about community and advisory group weightings.

Multi-Objective Decision Analysis (MODA) results discussion

Penny explained that the advisory group conducted a Multi-Objective Decision Analysis (MODA) evaluation. The results were calculated using two sets of weighted evaluation factors via an online software platform between Oct. 2 and Oct. 6. The two sets were the community weighting and the advisory group weighting. Penny then reviewed the MODA evaluation results. A total of 19 out of 24 advisory group members completed the evaluation.

Penny asked for thoughts and observations about the MODA evaluation results. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- A member shared that the Bridle Trails community does not recommend any of the routes because all routes have a heavy impact on residential areas. The Bridle Trails neighborhood is already overburdened with infrastructure, when Bellevue and the Bel-Red are the areas that are growing. PSE should start over with the route selection process.
- A member asked what the consequences of the advisory group's recommendation were and how the recommendation will affect the routes that are reviewed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The member inquired whether PSE had a preference for how many routes the advisory group recommends.
 - Penny shared that PSE does not have a preference for how many routes are included in the advisory group's recommendation. PSE will consider the recommendation and then make a decision.
 - Gretchen explained that PSE will consider all routes recommended by the advisory group. If PSE decides to use a route that was not recommended by the advisory group, PSE will explain its decision. For the EIS, PSE will put forth a preliminary preferred route and alternative routes.
 - Leann clarified that PSE has not yet decided how many alternative routes will be included in the EIS, but the advisory group's recommended route or routes will be included in that mix.
- A member noted that it was surprising that Ash did not score higher than Oak and Redwood and asked for a description of Ash.
 - Leann explained that Oak and Redwood contain Segment E which runs through a commercial area. Ash, which contains Segments D and F, runs through a residential area that does not contain any existing transmission line infrastructure.
- A member commented that the advisory group process is flawed and pits neighborhood against neighborhood. The member did not choose to complete the MODA evaluation to avoid picking one neighborhood over another, with the exception of Segment I. The member would support a recommendation of Ash, Oak, and Pine which contain Segment I. All of the routes dramatically affect neighborhood character. The member asked the advisory group to consider recommending none of the routes.
 - Another member shared support for the advisory group process.
 - A member asked for the City of Bellevue's characterization and future plans for the area along Segment I.
 - Nicholas Matz, advisory group representative from the City of Bellevue, explained that Bellevue views Factoria as a high density neighborhood and has plans to create a mixed-use residential and commercial component in that area.
- A member noted that it seemed likely that the existing route would be chosen, so it is not surprising that Oak and Willow were the highest ranked routes in the MODA evaluation results.

Penny asked the advisory group to consider which routes they wanted to include in their preliminary route recommendation. She reminded the advisory group that the community will have the opportunity to provide comments on their preliminary route recommendation at the open houses in November. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- A member suggested including the top five routes and Pine because it includes Segment I.
 - A member indicated that the Pine route did not score well and should not be included in the recommendation just because it includes Segment I. Several members shared this opinion.
 - A member indicated that Magnolia, which also includes Segment I, was previously removed and should not be reconsidered.
 - A member suggested that using Segment I also requires the use of either Segment K1 or Segment K2, which are residential.
 - Leann clarified that these routes are somewhat residential but go along a greenbelt.
 - Penny asked if anyone had any objections to removing Pine from consideration for the preliminary recommendation. No further objections were raised and Pine was removed from consideration for the preliminary recommendation.
- Ten advisory group members agreed with a suggestion made by another advisory group member to include the top five routes in the recommendation (Ash, Cottonwood, Oak, Redwood, and Willow), because the top five routes were the same for the advisory group and community weightings.
 - A member suggested removing Cottonwood to reduce the number of routes included in the preliminary route recommendation.
 - Penny asked if anyone had any objections to removing Cottonwood from consideration for the preliminary recommendation. No further objections were raised and Cottonwood was removed from consideration for the preliminary recommendation.
- Two advisory group members agreed with the suggestion made by another advisory group member to include the top three routes from the advisory group weightings in the recommendation (Willow, Oak, and Redwood).
 - A member noted that Oak and Willow are the most direct routes and use the greatest percentage of the existing corridor.
 - A member suggested that recommending the top three routes gives Bellevue a range of segment options through the central Bellevue area to examine during the EIS process.
 - Several members raised concerns that the top three were different for the community and advisory group weightings, so the group should either recommend two or four routes.
 - A member mentioned that Redwood includes Segment H and asked PSE to speak to the technical challenges of building the transmission lines along Segment H.
 - Jens noted that Segment H does not contain any existing infrastructure and there are challenges with steep slopes. In addition, a large number of trees would need to be removed along Segment H.
 - Several members expressed continued concerns about slope stability along Segment H, and therefore expressed a preference for Ash over Redwood.

- Five advisory group members agreed with a suggestion made by another advisory group member to include the top two routes in the recommendation (Willow and Oak).
 - A member expressed concern with only including two routes in the preliminary recommendation for community review.
 - Another member echoed that concern, noting that there are only minor differences between Oak and Willow. The community should be given more opportunity for input.
- A member suggested including the top four routes in the recommendation (Ash, Oak, Redwood, and Willow).
 - A member expressed concern that Ash included Segments F and D, which greatly affect residential areas and do not contain existing infrastructure.
 - A member noted that Ash and Redwood have different reasons for possible inclusion and there was no consensus between the community and the advisory group, therefore both should be kept in.

The advisory group decided to include routes Ash, Oak, Redwood and Willow in their preliminary route recommendation. Of the 18 advisory group members present, 15 supported the recommendation. Norm Hansen and Steve O'Donnell abstained and Robert Shay had a dissenting opinion to include only three routes in the preliminary route recommendation (Oak, Redwood and Willow).

Penny noted that three of the routes (Oak, Redwood and Willow) in the preliminary recommendation have two possible substations. Leann shared that PSE will select one substation site based on what is best for the system electrically. None of the routes that use the Vernell substation were included in the preliminary route recommendation. A member mentioned that prior to Energize Eastside, PSE had stated that the Lake Tradition site in Issaquah, WA was its preferred substation site. Leann clarified that upon further analysis, PSE learned that building a substation at the Lake Tradition site would not solve the problem on the Eastside, and in fact caused other problems in the Eastside system.

Discussion of how to share the preliminary route recommendation with the community

Penny explained that PSE will be soliciting the community for feedback about the preliminary route recommendation at the November open houses. She noted that PSE wants to share the advisory group's primary comments and concerns about the routes included in the preliminary recommendation. Advisory group members mentioned the following comments and concerns to be shared with the community:

Ash

- Segments F and D do not have existing infrastructure; building along these segments will have a significant effect on residential areas
- The owners of the Factoria Mall said that they were amenable to siting infrastructure along Segment I

Oak

- A mostly direct route from Segment A to Segment N
- The owners of the Factoria Mall said that they were amenable to siting infrastructure along Segment I

Redwood

- Segment H does not have existing infrastructure
- Concern about slope stability along Segment H
- Concern about cutting a large number trees along Segment H, which may further impact the slope stability

Willow

- The most direct route from Segment A to Segment N
- Constructability issues along Segment J
- Effects on views along Segment J

Penny then asked if there was anything that the advisory group wanted PSE to ask the community that would help them finalize their recommendation in December. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- A member brought up asking the community about whether they would be willing to pay for undergrounding.
 - Gretchen explained that if a transmission line were to be constructed underground, PSE can't justify asking customers across its entire service territory to pay the significant cost increases for a local aesthetic benefit. That's why, per state-approved tariff rules, the local jurisdiction or customer group requesting underground transmission lines must pay the difference between overhead and underground costs.
 - Nicholas Matz, the advisory group representative from the City of Bellevue, the lead agency for the EIS, noted that undergrounding is not a route option for the advisory group to recommend. He also explained that undergrounding is a mitigation factor that will be examined through the EIS process.
 - Several members mentioned that the specifics about undergrounding should be shared with the community at the November open houses, as it is an area of great interest for members of the community.
 - A member noted that undergrounding transmission lines is being done around the world and across the United States. All ratepayers should have the responsibility for paying for undergrounding, and the tariff should be changed.

The advisory group members agreed that information about undergrounding will not help them make their decision about a route recommendation, so the group decided not to request that PSE ask the community about undergrounding.

Penny explained that the final product from advisory group will be a recommendation report. The report will include background information about the advisory group and the route recommendation. Advisory group members will be asked to sign the report after the December meeting. Any dissenting opinions will also be included in the recommendation report.

- A member mentioned that a minority report is being prepared for those who object to the conclusions.
 - Penny clarified that dissenting opinion will be incorporated into the recommendation report being prepared by EnviroIssues and that the advisory group could discuss this further when there is a recommendation to discuss.

Public question and comment period

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

- I would like to talk to you for a minute as a fellow community advisor. I have talked to many community members over the past few months. I am a member of CENSE. I have an alternative viewpoint to present to you. Whether the project is needed is a big concern for all of the people that I have talked to. If energy sales have been going down in recent years, why is the demand forecast going up? Tax revenue from the cities on the Eastside indicates that the Eastside is not growing as quickly as the demand graph indicates. PSE's projected rate of growth for the Eastside is dramatically higher than any of the other areas around us, including Seattle. According to the Eastside Needs Assessment report, if PSE added some critical peak pricing, the issue on the Eastside could be addressed for zero cost to the ratepayers. I would love to talk to people who are interested about this. It might not solve the problem forever, but it would buy us four years to look at alternative technology.
 - Jens Nedrud, Deputy Project Manager, clarified how PSE develops its projections for future need on the Eastside. No utility uses only actual loads to plan for the future. Looking backward to plan for what's ahead is not only a poor planning practice, but it does not meet the federal standards PSE is required to follow – these standards require that PSE plans to forecasted loads. Historic data, or actuals, are one of many data points for load forecasts. Other data points include: weather, economic growth, population, building permits, employment, large customers, impacts of conservation programs, etc. Looking at one data point independently of the others does not tell the full story. PSE has an obligation to serve its customers and must follow federal standards.
- The number one criteria of the public was "Avoids residential areas." I would like to propose that one of the routes be removed based on that criteria. Willow and Oak are identical except for Segments I and J. Segment I runs through a commercial area and Segment J runs through a residential area. I would propose removing the Willow route.
- At your last meeting you kind of discredited the community input provided at the open houses. After the next round of open houses, will you value the community's input, or will you only consider the advisory group input? Will you listen to community comments?
- I would like to commend you for all of the work you have done. If you cannot underground the transmission lines, you should submerge them because it would avoid all residential areas.

Wrap-up and next steps

Penny thanked everyone for coming and reminded them that the community would review their preliminary route recommendation at open houses in Renton on Nov. 12 and Redmond on Nov. 13. The advisory group will reconvene on Dec. 10 to review community feedback and finalize their route recommendation.