

Community Advisory Group Meeting #6 Summary

1/14/15

Community Advisory Group Meeting #6

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel, 11211 Main St, Bellevue

Community Advisory Group in attendance

- Andy Swayne, Puget Sound Energy
- Barbara Sauerbrey, Woodridge Community Association (residential association alternate)
- Bart Phillips, OneRedmond
- Brent Camann, Renton Chamber of Commerce
- Darius Richards, Kennydale Neighborhood Association
- David Chicks, Redmond Neighborhoods
- David Hoffman, Master Builders Association
- 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
- Nicholas Matz, City of Bellevue
- Nicola Barnes, Hopelink
- 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
- Sue Stronk, Olympus Neighborhood Association (alternate for David Edmonds)

Members absent

- Bill Taylor, Liberty Ridge Homeowners Association (residential association alternate)
- Brian Buck, Lake Washington School District
- Cathy Beam, City of Redmond
- Lindy Bruce, Sunset Community Association (residential association alternate)
- Marcia Isenberger, Coal Creek Family YMCA
- 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
- Alayna Linde, 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 #6 in Bellevue on Dec. 10, 2014. The meeting agenda included:

1. Review community feedback on the preliminary route recommendation
2. Public comment
3. Make final decision on route recommendation for PSE's consideration
4. Review approach for the Community Advisory Group Final Report

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 work that the advisory group had completed so far, conducted an overview of the agenda and walked through the handouts for the meeting. Penny also provided a safety moment about standing water on roadways.

Community Advisory Group business

Community Advisory Group Meeting #5a and #5b Summaries

Penny asked if the advisory group had any objections to finalizing the Community Advisory Group Meeting #5a and #5b summaries. The summaries were previously emailed to the group for review; there were no emailed responses. An advisory group member noted that the names of the speakers were not identified in the summary, but raised no objection. The summaries were accepted as final.

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. The inclusion here of the constituent input presented at this meeting is to maintain a record of the information and feedback received by PSE and is not a reflection of PSE's concurrence or disagreement with any statements in whole or in part. The feedback received by constituents is as follows:

- Andy Swayne mentioned that feedback from the in-person and online open houses is consistent with the feedback that the advisory group has been hearing throughout the process.
- Steve O'Donnell noted that many people are uncomfortable with the route options because they do not avoid residential areas.
- David Hoffman, Jack McLeod, Rob Jammerman, Brent Camann and Nicola Barnes stated that they did not have anything new to share.
- Deirdre Johnson said that individuals from the South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails Neighborhood are very pleased that Segment B is no longer being considered by the advisory group.
- Gregg Zimmerman indicated that he is hearing specific questions about pole locations and heights from his community.
- Sue Stronk, alternate for David Edmonds, said that she is disappointed that Segment M remains in all four routes. She shared that a home buyer in her area has backed out of a sale because of the project and its possible effects on property values. She also mentioned concerns about safety in relation to the Olympic Pipeline.
- Floyd Rogers noted that the Eastside has grown a lot since the 1960s and that it is very difficult to avoid residential areas.
- Norm Hansen mentioned that his community is concerned that the project is out of scale with neighborhood character. The community is not supportive of overhead routes that go through residential areas. Tariff changes are also needed, since a few property owners should not hold the burden for 1.1 million customers on the Eastside and Canada. PSE should look at alternative solutions. Norm requested that Community Advisory Group representatives do not recommend any of the routes.
- Sam Baxter indicated that Overlake Medical Center is anxious to have reliable power moving forward. He also shared that they appreciate the process that allows people to share their needs and concerns.
- Robert Shay mentioned that businesses and residences in his community are concerned about adding additional capital improvement projects along Segments D and F. However, he noted that his community is growing and recognizes the need for additional electrical capacity.
- Darius Richards noted that his community is pleased that Segment L along the lakeshore is no longer under consideration by the advisory group, but that, overall, alternatives need to be pursued. He also mentioned that individuals in his community appreciated the opportunity to participate in the online open house and feedback form.
- Nicholas Matz from the City of Bellevue said that the city is in the final stages of the interagency agreement and is working to select a consultant for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. He encouraged everyone to take advantage of the scoping process.
- David Chicks noted that his community does not want the transmission line near them.
- Bart Phillips mentioned that his community supports a successful conclusion of this process.

Public question and comment period

Members of the public in the audience shared their comments for the advisory group. The inclusion here of the public comments shared at this meeting is to maintain a record of the feedback and is not a reflection of PSE's concurrence or disagreement with any statements in whole or in part. Below is a summary, but not a transcript of these comments:

- My community of Greenwich Crest along Segment H is concerned about the safety risks along this segment. I shared a letter from our attorney with the Community Advisory Group about this issue. There are sensible, moral and legal reasons to remove Segment H from consideration.
- The developer that developed Somerset valued the view that we have, as do all of the people that live there. I'd hate to see it defaced with huge poles.
- Many Eastside residents have been wondering why PSE isn't proposing underground transmission lines, which is a solution that is used in other parts of the country. PSE successfully lobbied the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to create a tariff. This project benefits Canada and California, not just the Eastside. It is time for the Eastside to join with regional businesses to support using green energy. We need to solve this problem with 21st century technology.
- Getting advice from the community is a great idea, but there have been three problems. 1) The Community Advisory Group discussion has been limited to only one topic: overhead lines. This process should include reasonable solutions that were eliminated before the advisory group was formed. 2) The advisory group wasn't given any more data about the energy issues facing the Eastside than the general public. The need is based on a three year old forecast. 3) PSE is ignoring conservation efforts that could allow for a delay of the project and save the public money. I urge you to sign the Minority Report.
- I am a real estate agent with Windermere and a Somerset homeowner. Somerset has the unique situation of view homes. I have listed and sold 161 homes in the area, there is about a 10 percent adjustment for current power lines. This could result in a \$200,000 to \$300,000 impact to Somerset homes. I would like to see a financial impact study done.
- I am a Somerset homeowner and I know that some of us have nice views, but I don't think the rest of us should have to pay to underground just to protect a few views.
- The method for forecasting the need is totally flawed. I also just learned that PSE is owned by a private equity firm that wants to increase PSE's value. I even saw that someone would pay one third of the cost of the project for them. The forecast is exaggerated to validate the need for this project. I feel deceived by this project. I ask the Community Advisory Group to look for better solutions.
- Multiple communities on the Eastside will be able to see the power lines going over the hill in Somerset.
- View home or no view home; no one wants to look at power lines.
- You're representing your community, nonprofits, cities, and businesses. I still, after all this time, do not understand this chart that says the need is in Bellevue. If you do not understand the specifics of the demand forecast, then do not sign the Final Report.
- You've been told to select a route. It may be that that's the right question. Where are the rest of the questions that PSE had to ask first? PSE is a private company that is here to make money.
- How can you ever conceive putting these enormous power lines over a 60 year old gas line?
- We just moved here and learned about this project and process. No one in my neighborhood has spoken to any representatives. I urge you to sign the Minority Report because there is not enough information out there.

- It's not only Somerset properties. It's all of us who are involved. It will devalue our property. Can you imagine looking at one of these poles on your property? It is very imposing. I ask you to think about that as you vote this evening.
- I too am appalled at the notion of these power lines going up along the Olympic Pipeline, and that the pipeline runs along schools, and that you would consider putting these power lines along school property.
- Uniquely in this room, I don't live on any of the routes that have been proposed. I think you've heard a lot of reasons why this process is flawed, but PSE is a private corporation that could just do what they want to do. They don't have to do this. It seems silly to choose a residential route. If this has to happen, which I don't think it does, we need to make sure we're doing the right things in preserving residential and commercial areas.
- I wanted to second the previous comment that power lines affect home prices by 10 to 15 percent. When people are renting, it is in the short term. People that are renting are not as concerned about home values. Power lines are a deal breaker for many home buyers. They affect price and reduce the number of people that are willing to buy.

Discussion of community feedback on the preliminary route recommendation

Penny shared information about attendance at the in-person and online open houses and the community's feedback on the preliminary route recommendation. Penny asked the group if they had further thoughts about how many routes should be included. Advisory group members provided the following comments:

- A member noted that the advisory group and the community were in agreement that "avoids residential areas" is the most important community value. None of the route options comply with that value, so the advisory group cannot make a route recommendation.
- A member said that a recommendation of one or two route options is preferable since it will make the preferences of the advisory group better known.
- Some members shared a preference for selecting a main route with one or more secondary routes for consideration in the EIS process.
- Several members commented that the Redwood route raises concerns about new infrastructure and steep slopes along Segment H, and that Segment I in the other route options is a better choice.
- A member shared concerns with Segments F and D, expressing a preference for Segment I and the Oak route.
- A member advocated for signing the Minority Report instead of the Final Report. The mission of the advisory group was constrained to route options and the route options do not comply with many of the community values, including avoiding residential areas and protecting aesthetics.
- A member shared that power lines are included in many view communities across the country and are a necessary part of a community that uses electricity.

Penny shared a letter from Marcia Isenberger and Paul Lwali from the Coal Creek Family YMCA, who could not be present at the meeting. She also indicated that Brian Buck from the Lake Washington School District was unable to attend. Penny said that PSE would follow up with them, and any other absent members, after the meeting to get their input on the final recommendation.

Penny observed that several members expressed concern with the Redwood route. She asked if there were any comments or concerns about removing the Redwood route from consideration. Advisory group members provided the following comments:

- A member stated that the advisory group should bring forward at least two of the four route options, and that they should be the route options that most avoid residential areas.
- A member expressed concern about removing Redwood because Segment E avoids residential areas. In addition, Segments D and F in the Ash route don't come as close to as many people. The member expressed a preference for Oak.
- A member noted that Oak and Willow are the best route options because they are the most direct. Also, Segment D is currently a commercial area, but the Bel Red corridor will change dramatically in the next 10 years.
- A member reiterated concerns about Segment H in the Redwood route, and expressed a preference for recommending Oak.
- A member noted that the number of residential tax accounts along the four route options ranges from 1,400 to 1,600, so there is not much of a difference between the options. There is not one preferred route that avoids residential areas.
- A member pointed out that Segment F is residential and runs through the Woodridge neighborhood. Using segments F and D would add a third power corridor through the Wilburton and Woodridge communities. Other communities in the other route options would only be getting upgrades to existing lines.
- A member stated that Willow and Oak are the preferred routes moving forward. Ash has the highest cost, which was a concern brought up by the YMCA in their letter.

Penny asked if the advisory group had any objections to removing the Redwood route from consideration. No objections were raised and Redwood was removed from consideration.

Penny asked for any comments or concerns about removing the Ash route from consideration. No objections were raised and Ash was removed from consideration.

Penny then asked the advisory group for their comments about the two remaining route options, Oak and Willow. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- A member shared that Oak and Willow are good choices moving forward, but that Ash and Redwood should possibly be included as back up options.
 - Penny indicated that Ash and Redwood would be noted in the Final Report as being part of the preliminary route recommendation.
- A member indicated that Oak and Willow would be good options to recommend. Infrastructure should be spread out and Oak and Willow are the best choices, with Oak being the best.
- A few members indicated that Willow is the best choice because it has the least cost, is 100 percent on the existing corridor, and has the greatest longevity. However, Oak is also an acceptable option.
- A member shared that the community does not want poles and wires and other means can be used to satisfy the problem.

- A member asked if lines were built on new segments, if the 115 kV lines in the existing corridor would be removed.
 - Leann clarified that if the 230 kV lines are built on existing segments, the wooden H-frame poles would be removed and both the existing 115 kV and new 230 kV transmission wires would be placed on new poles. If the 230 kV lines are built on new segments, the new 230 kV poles and wires would be built on those new segments, and the existing 115 kV infrastructure would remain on existing segments.
- A member shared that Segments C and D go through the Bridle Trails neighborhood, which already has high voltage power lines. If the poles could be kept around 50 feet, the community might be more accepting of the project.

Penny went around the table to ask if the advisory group would be in favor of recommending both route options, and whether either Oak or Willow should be put forth as a preference. A majority of the advisory group agreed with including both route options, and some indicated a preference for either Oak or Willow. Three members requested that only Oak be recommended as Oak contains Segment I which runs through a largely commercial area.

Penny asked the advisory group how strongly they felt about including a preference for either route option. Advisory group members provided the following comments and questions, and clarifying answers were given when appropriate:

- Some members indicated that they did not feel strongly about recommending a preferred route option, and that both Oak and Willow were fine.
- A member noted that selecting a preferred route is part of the advisory group's purpose. The preferences of the group should be noted in the Final Report.
 - Penny clarified that both route options could be included in the recommendation section of the final report, and a note could be included indicating how many members preferred Oak and how many preferred Willow.
- A member felt strongly that the group should recommend one route and include the other as an alternate. The member also expressed a preference for Oak.
- A member asked whether the letter from the YMCA could be viewed as a preference for Willow.
 - Several members said that the letter supports the lowest cost routes. However, since the group has narrowed the recommendation to the two lowest cost routes, the letter cannot be interpreted as a preference for Willow.
- A member mentioned a preference for Oak because of the difference between Segments J and I, but noted that some advisory group members are prioritizing cost rather than location.
- A member expressed concern for recommending any of the routes. The member shared information about project demand, and indicated that the demand graph does not clearly show the need for a 230 kV line.
 - Another member said that the independent analysis contracted by the City of Bellevue may reveal that the project is not needed at all.
- A member shared that the advisory group needs to choose the optimum route, as indicated in the charter.
- A member noted that Oak is superior in terms of impact to the entire region. There are more residential parcels on Segment J than Segment I. Selecting Oak over Willow is worth the \$22 million cost difference.
- A member said that the differences between Oak and Willow should be called out in the Final Report.

The Community Advisory Group selected routes Oak and Willow as their final route recommendation for PSE’s consideration. Of the 20 advisory group members and residential association alternates present, 17 supported the final recommendation. Of those 17, eight expressed preference for the Oak route and five expressed preference for the Willow route, while four supported either route. Three advisory group members – representing Bridle Trails Community Club, Somerset Community Association and Olympus Neighborhood Association – dissented from the recommendation and supported none of the routes.

Route benefits and tradeoffs noted by the Community Advisory Group members and residential association alternates with a route preference included:

	Benefit	Tradeoff
Oak (Segments A-C-E-G2-I-K2-M-N)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has fewer adjacent residential parcels (524) of the two routes. • Has one quarter of adjacent residential parcels (31 in segments G2, I, K2) compared to same portion in Willow (123 in Segment J) and less than half the residences within 600 feet (289 vs. 721) • Avoids residential areas by using Segment I, which is a largely commercial corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated cost is \$22 million more than Willow (\$176 million; \$1.03 estimated monthly increase to an average residential customer) • Requires building infrastructure in new areas (83% of the route is within the existing corridor) • Has a larger number of adjacent residential tax accounts (1,425)
Willow (Segments A-C-E-J-M-N)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the smaller number of adjacent residential tax accounts of the two routes (1,422) (One advisory group member noted that the difference in residences between Oak and Willow was minor.) • Is the most direct route • Has the highest percentage of route within the existing corridor (100%) • Is the least expensive (\$154 million total cost; \$0.90 estimated monthly increase to an average residential customer) • Has the greatest longevity (2038) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a larger number of adjacent residential parcels (616) of the two routes • Uses Segment J which is a view neighborhood

Discussion of the Community Advisory Group Final Report

Penny explained that a draft Community Advisory Group Final Report, excluding the recommendation section, had been previously emailed to the advisory group for review. The recommendation section will be emailed to the group after the meeting. Penny also explained that EnviroIssues heard from Scott Kaseburg and Darius Richards that the cover letter and signature page should be removed entirely, since the signature page only signifies that the member participated in the process and not their support for the recommendation. Penny asked if anyone objected to removing the signature page. Several questions were raised about how preferences would be indicated and Penny explained that the dissensions would be included in the recommendation section. The advisory group agreed to remove the cover letter and signature page from the Final Report.

A member mentioned that the advisory group's discussions about property values need to be included in the Final Report. Penny said that it would be captured.

Penny also mentioned that the Minority Report must be submitted by Dec. 19.

Next steps

Leann Kostek, PSE Senior Project Manager thanked the advisory group for their work. She indicated that PSE will continue public outreach through the remainder of the project, including environmental review, design, and permitting. Construction is expected to begin in 2017 and PSE will continue to work with homeowners along the route.

She shared that PSE will take Oak and Willow under consideration. PSE will begin surveys of private property and right of way lines. An announcement about routing is expected to be shared in early 2015 and design workshops will begin in the spring.

Wrap-up and next steps

Penny thanked everyone for coming and participating in the process. She reminded the advisory group that they would be getting an email from EnviroIssues with the draft recommendation section of the Final Report for review. The Final Report will be posted on the project website in January.