

South Sub-Area Committee Meeting Summary

5/28/14

South Sub-Area Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 15, 2014

6:30 – 9 p.m.

Renton Technical College, 3000 NE Fourth Street, Renton

South Sub-Area Committee members in attendance

- Andy Swayne, Puget Sound Energy
- Bill Taylor, Liberty Ridge Homeowners Association
- David Edmonds, Olympus Neighborhood Association
- Darius Richards, Kennydale Neighborhood Association
- Floyd Rogers, Mountains to Sound Greenway
- Gregg Zimmerman, City of Renton
- Jules Dickerson, Lake Lanes Community Association
- Margot Smith, Kimberlee Park Neighborhood
- Steve Hanson, Renton Technical College
- Tim McHarg, City of Newcastle
- Ward Harris, Newport Shores Neighborhood

Members absent

- David Hoffman, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties
- Leslie Anderson, Glencoe Neighborhood
- Lynn Wallace, Renton Chamber of Commerce
- Marcia Isenberger, Coal Creek Family YMCA

Other attendees

- Leann Kostek, Puget Sound Energy, Senior Project Manager
- Jackson Taylor, Puget Sound Energy, Community Projects Manager
- Lindsey Walimaki, Puget Sound Energy, Communications Initiatives Program Manager
- Lowell Rogers, POWER Engineers
- Drew Thatcher, independent health physicist
- Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues, Facilitator
- Darcy Edmunds, EnviroIssues, Public Involvement
- Lauren Dennis, EnviroIssues, Notetaker

Meeting Purpose and Overview

The South Sub-Area Committee Meeting for the Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Energize Eastside project convened in Renton on May 15, 2014. The meeting included:

- Project overview
- Key questions and PSE responses
- Clarifying questions from the Sub-Area Committee
- Review of workshops #1 and #2
- Committee discussion on the outcomes of the Sub-Area workshops

Intended outcomes of the South Sub-Area Committee Meeting were to:

- Develop input on evaluation factors
- Determine key points for the committee to send to the advisory group for consideration
- Identify key questions for the advisory group to further explore

Meeting Summary

Welcome, introductions and safety moment

Facilitator Penny Mabie welcomed the group and thanked them for coming. Penny started the meeting with a safety moment, reminding people to watch out for bikers during bike to work month and led the group in a round of introductions. After presenting an overview of the meeting agenda, Penny reminded attendees that the purpose of the meeting was to provide time for the South Sub-Area Committee to meet and deliberate as a body, and therefore did not include time for public comment or questions and answers.

Penny introduced the committee members to the materials in their binders, including summaries from South Sub-Area Workshops #1 and #2, a summary of the online Sub-Area Committee survey results, the data requests from Workshop #1, the response to data requests and data provided at Workshop #2, and the scoring results from Workshop #2. She informed them that their binders contained a flash drive, with electronic copies of all the materials in the binders, as well as the visual simulations from Workshop #2. Penny also discussed the outcomes to achieve at the meeting.

Presentation

Senior Project Manager Leann Kostek started the presentation with a brief project overview. She next summarized attendance at South Sub-Area Workshops #1 and #2, stating that there were 104 and 72 attendees respectively. Leann then presented to the committee six key questions Puget Sound Energy has been hearing from the community and shared PSE's responses to those questions.

1. **Alternatives selection process**— How did PSE arrive at the potential route segments that have been presented for consideration?

Response: Leann briefly explained the six-step process through which the route segments were identified:

- 1) PSE's planners and engineers generated a list of all solutions that could solve the need for growing electrical demand and increased reliability on the Eastside, which solutions included conservation, local electricity generation, and new infrastructure.
- 2) PSE evaluated those solutions to see which would provide enough electricity to meet the Eastside's needs. A combination of conservation with local generation and conservation with infrastructure were identified as possible solutions.

- 3) Then, PSE and third-party experts studied those solutions and found that the best way to ensure the area's electric transmission system will reliably meet growing demand is by bringing new higher capacity electric transmission lines and a new transformer to the Eastside. Local generation was ruled out at this point.
- 4) Next, PSE reviewed three general routing possibilities: Seattle City Light's existing corridor, PSE's existing corridor and new right-of-way were all considered. Of these three possibilities, the Seattle City Light was not available for PSE's use. PSE's existing corridor and a new right-of-way were both deemed feasible options.
- 5) From that point, PSE's engineers and third-party routing experts used an analysis tool called the Linear Routing Tool (LRT) to determine potential routes. The LRT processed more than 50 layers of GIS data for opportunities and constraints, different criteria were weighted, and routes were scored. After generating hundreds of possible routes, the LRT identified the best possible route options, which included two general north/south route paths with multiple crossover points – one along PSE's existing corridor and one along a combination of roadway and rail corridor.
- 6) The two remaining route paths were broken into 16 constructible route segments that could be configured in a number of ways. PSE brought the potential route segments to the public to ask what they recommend. PSE does not have a preferred route in mind.

2. **Undergrounding**— Why doesn't PSE underground the Energize Eastside project?

Response: PSE has proposed overhead transmission for the Energize Eastside project due to significant cost differences between constructing underground and overhead transmission lines. This cost would be passed on to PSE's customers via higher rates that many customers would not be able to afford. Several neighborhoods are interested in undergrounding through their area. Any neighborhood interested in this option has to commission a feasibility study, which is expensive. The neighborhood would also be responsible for paying, up front, the cost delta between overhead and underground transmission.

Leann also reminded the group that there is a difference between undergrounding distribution lines and transmission lines. To underground distribution lines costs roughly only \$1 million per mile. Undergrounding of distribution lines happens more often in new developments and large public improvement projects. In new developments, the developer pays 100% of the cost to underground the existing overhead. In the case of large public improvement projects, there is cost-sharing between local jurisdictions and PSE.

3. **Seattle City Light (SCL)**— Why doesn't PSE build along the SCL corridor?

Response: Leann explained that PSE has reached out to SCL several times, but SCL company representatives have said repeatedly that they need their corridor to meet their future needs on the Eastside. The two companies met most recently on April 25, 2014.

4. **Olympic Pipeline**— Is it safe to build the 230 kV line along the Olympic Pipeline in the existing corridor?

Response: PSE knows how to install transmission poles along a gas pipeline, as PSE itself is an owner and operator of natural gas lines. Leann noted that PSE has safely installed transmission poles along gas pipelines for other projects, and 5-6 years ago safely replaced 300 poles right next to the pipeline on the existing Eastside alignment.

5. **Property values**— Will PSE take into account impacts to property values?

Response: Leann explained that PSE will not use property values as a criterion for making route decisions on this project. She explained that whether a home is a \$1 million dollar home or a \$300,000 home, everyone loves their homes, no matter how much it is worth. For that reason, it is not equitable to use property value as criteria.

6. **Electromagnetic fields (EMF)**— Will this project produce harmful levels of EMF?

Response: PSE knows that some Eastside residents have concerns about electromagnetic fields, or EMF. Over the past 45 years, there have been many scientific studies conducted to determine if EMF from transmission lines have any effect on human health. To date, this large body of research does not show that exposure causes adverse health effects.

Clarifying questions

Leann asked for clarifying questions from the South Sub-Area Committee members regarding the key questions and responses. They had the following comments and questions, which Leann answered (Q: question, A: answer, C: comment).

Q: When do we expect to get detailed information on local construction impacts (in this case, impacts to Renton Technical College's parking lot)?

A: It is difficult to assess specific impacts before a final decision on the route is made, but PSE will work with you before construction begins to determine an appropriate mitigation plan for offsetting impacts. For example, we could help secure off-campus parking or plan for work to occur on nights and weekends.

Q: Do you have written documentation of refusal from SCL to allow use of their corridor? The public would like to see that.

A: We have asked SCL for written documentation numerous times, but it has not been provided by SCL; therefore, we don't have it at this time.

Q: The Olympic Pipeline directly abuts the Olympus neighborhood, and the photo in your presentation from the Skagit example represent distance between poles and houses that seem greater than what we have. Are Olympus neighborhood houses closer to the PSE right-of-way than houses pictured to be in PSE's Skagit project?

A: The distance to the right-of-way varies from house to house, depending how developers decided to site homes.

C: If SCL is not willing to provide written documentation of its refusal to collaborate, the next logical step is for PSE to send SCL a memo describing the situation and noting that a lack of response confirms SCL's refusal to collaborate. You could make a copy of that memo available to the public.

A: We can try that approach.

Q: I believe the cited cost to underground is overstated. We would like to see a breakdown of the cost estimate. Additionally, undergrounding results in greater reliability and less vulnerability to windstorms and natural disasters. Why is the decision to underground not driven by PSE, but

considered an amenity that neighborhoods are asking for? If PSE took a position that it is a necessary feature of reliability, the cost could be passed on to ratepayers.

- A: We can get you a high level breakdown of the cost to underground. That is included in the undergrounding report found on the website. We believe we have an overhead solution.
- Q: To what extent has PSE looked into submarine installation in Lake Washington? Is PSE considering it or is the study an academic exercise?
- A: We have a feasibility study currently underway that looks at submerging transmission lines as an alternative. People have asked about submarine cables, so we are looking into it.
- Q: Is it possible that submarine cables could be included as a potential solution?
- A: We are looking into it in the same way as undergrounding, where the cost delta is paid for by the requesting parties.
- Q: We have not gotten answers to the questions we have asked of PSE, nor the data we have asked for. What is the cost of getting answers, and how long will it take PSE to get them? Can we delay the process until we have those answers?
- A: We have provided the data available at this time.
- Q: I've been told we can't keep horses under transmission wires due to electromagnetic fields (EMF). Is that still a concern?
- A: [Answer provided by Drew Thatcher.] My focus is on humans and not animals. However I am aware of research on EMF and cows that shows no behavioral or physiological impacts as a result of residing under transmission wires.
- C: The energy from EMF is miniscule compared to the energy needed to break the chemical bonds that would result in health impacts. There is no impact on mammals.
- Q: Have there been any engineering interconnection studies regarding the use of the SCL line?
- A: No interconnection studies have been completed.
- Q: People in Renton are concerned about the need for the project. Is there anything in the literature publicly provided that has more detailed information about current and future demand?
- A: We have that published in our Needs Assessment report, and we will connect you with Carol Jaeger, our system planner, at the break, who can speak further on this topic.

Review Workshops #1 and #2

Penny led the South Sub-Area Committee through a review of the activities and results from the South Sub-Area Workshops.

Workshop # 1 – Penny described Workshop #1 as a listening workshop: attendees identified priority issues and considerations for the sub-area, identified community values, and compiled a list of data requests to use to score the potential route segments. In addition to the workshop, there was also an online survey that asked some of the same questions related to issues and segment-specific concerns.

Results: The top issues identified by workshop participants and survey respondents for the South Sub-Area were property values, visual impacts, aesthetics, EMF, residential impacts and environmental impacts. Other issues mentioned included encroachments, community character, design features,

number of properties impacted, existing utility corridors, construction, cost, and impacts to trees and mature vegetation.

The key themes from the workshop and survey input were turned into evaluation factors for the South Sub-Area. The evaluation factors were:

- Least proximity to sensitive community land uses
- Least proximity to sensitive environmental areas
- Least proximity to residential areas
- Least effect on aesthetics
- Most protective of health and safety
- Least impact to mature vegetation

Discussion of evaluation factors

Penny invited the committee members to share their thoughts about the evaluation factors. She asked if they found the evaluation factors a valid representation of the values in the South part of the project area, and if there was anything to change or add. They had the following comments and questions, which Penny answered.

C: One of the factors that seems to have dropped out from workshop #1 is “maximizes utility corridors.”

A: That factor was used in the North and Central sub-areas. However it was not mentioned as frequently in this sub-area; therefore, it wasn't used.

C: Health and safety have to be weighted as the most important evaluation factor. This is the perspective of the people I represent who live close to the Olympic Pipeline.

A: For the purposes of the workshop, the evaluation factors were not weighted. However, as the Community Advisory Group moves forward, evaluation factors will be weighted.

Q: Are there any calculations made in terms of construction time for each of the different route options?

A: The North Sub-Area Committee suggested construction impacts as another evaluation factor. PSE estimates an 18-24 month timeline for construction. The company will have a better estimate when the route is determined.

C: I'm assuming that whatever route is recommended needs to be checked with the Department of Ecology.

A: It is my understanding that the Department of Ecology will be involved as PSE goes through the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) process.

C: I appreciate all the information you have provided, but we have not had enough time to digest it. It seems that we are rushing through the public comment period.

A: This committee is not asked to give any recommendation. For tonight, we are only asking that you weigh in on three things: 1) the evaluation factors; 2) key points that the Community Advisory Group needs to consider from the South sub-area; and 3) areas that the advisory group should further explore.

C: The community is also concerned with property rights, inverse condemnation, required permits, and easements that are not available or provided. This should be another evaluation factor. At the

Bellevue City Council meeting, it was made clear that we need to take a step back and look at other sources of information so that we know that have all concerns from the community.

C: We are given narrow options and narrow data. Filling out spreadsheets along specific guidelines is alarming to me.

Workshop # 2 – Penny led the group through the activities and results of the second workshop, which focused on scoring the route segments. At the workshop, PSE presented data that had been requested at workshop #1 and also shared representative visualizations. Using the data, participants were asked to score each segment individually using the evaluation factors. The scoring exercise was also repeated at the tables as a group.

Results: Penny presented the results of the averages of the individual and group scores. She explained that darker colors in the chart signified higher average scores, and that a score of 1 meant a segment least meets the evaluation factor while a score of 5 meant a segment most meets the evaluation factor. She explained that no weighting was introduced, and just the raw scores were averaged.

Discussion of workshop #2 scoring

Penny facilitated the committee members in a round robin to gather their feedback about the scoring results from workshop #2. The answers below were provided by Penny.

Q: Are these scores represented equally?

A: These scores are not normalized. They are based on raw numbers.

Q: How is this valuable?

A: Their value is up to you. Some say it is helpful information.

C: We discussed this very point at the other Sub-Area Committee meetings. There were a different number of attendees at the three different workshops. Compared to the South, more people showed up at Central and fewer showed up at North. Without being normalized, the scores are not directly comparable, so we shouldn't look at them as such. Also, many people commented on only one segment. We should take this into account.

C: The fundamental problem was that there was no explanation of the data that people used to do the voting, nor an explanation of what the categories meant. There was a lot of data and no time to digest it. I don't see how this can be used as a legitimate tool.

C: My table did not do the scoring exercise, but we added undergrounding as an evaluation factor and evaluated the segments based on that.

A: Those scores were not added up because it was not a factor listed on the worksheet. However, the fact that undergrounding was written in is reflected in the workshop summary notes. This is the information that was generated. The results are not statistically valid, but we never intended they would be. What you do with this information is up to you.

Key themes and messages to the Sub-Area Committee

In addition to assigning numbered scores, several individuals and groups wrote comments on the scoring worksheets from workshop #2. Penny summarized the key themes from these comments:

- Preferred alternative is to underground or submerge under Lake Washington.
- Preferred alternative is to use the Seattle City Light corridor.
- Data provided is insufficient to score the segments.
- Photo simulations are misleading and not representative.

Last, workshop #2 participants were asked to draft key messages to the South Sub-Area Committee with their table groups. Penny presented the key messages organized by table group, and invited the Committee to take a few minutes to look over these messages in the workshop #2 summary.

Discussion of key points for the Community Advisory Group

After a short break, Penny led the Sub-Area Committee members in a round robin to elicit what they considered as key points for the Community Advisory Group to consider. Penny answered questions as they arose.

- C: Health and safety should be the most critical evaluation factor. Property values are important, but health and safety are much more significant.
- C: Aesthetics and the general impact to the area where the line would be sited are very important. In other words, what is the experiential effect on the character of the surroundings.
- C: The concern in Liberty Ridge is that both segments (L and M) are coming through our neighborhood. Segment N has towers that are not carrying electricity. If Segment M is selected, we'd like to see the Segment N towers taken down. We won't need them if we have new transmission on Segment M.
- C: Health and safety are most important. The Olympic Pipeline presents an opportunity for disaster. This is of paramount concern to my community. Several homeowners are also concerned that the width of the current easement is not adequate to support the 230 kV line.
- C: Based on what we've seen tonight, the SCL response needs to be clarified in regards to what kind of leverage can be applied.
- C: On Segment L, a huge factor is the need for clear-cutting all trees along the railroad right-of-way, from Coulon Park along Lake Washington Blvd. up to Ripley Lane to the Lake Lanes Community. This would remove the vegetated noise barrier between the neighborhood and the freeway, and would destroy the corridor as a pleasant space for public and residential use. The alternatives of undergrounding or submerging the line or sharing the SCL corridor need to be kept on the table. We need to encourage the advisory group members and alternates to keep their neighborhood and city councils fully informed about what's going on in this process.
- C: I have not gone to any place or talked to any person in the City of Renton that supports the loss of the iconic lakefront. We need to continue to focus on undergrounding options, the cost of them, and who really should be required to pay for them.
- C: I am concerned about the lack of data. I'm keen on understanding data around three areas: 1) the Shoreline Management Plan and the permits and reviews from the Department of Fish and

Wildlife, EPA, and others that will have to occur around Segment L; 2) easements that are not acquired along Segment L yet, and would require inverse condemnation; and 3) the requirements for logistics and the impacts to get construction equipment down through the pinch points of the corridor. We are custodians of the Eastside. If we are looking at short-term solutions and not thinking about the legacy of power lines, shame on us. Also, PSE has said that the local communities have to pay for undergrounding. That was a recommendation made by PSE. I'd like to see PSE take that stipulation out. It is not fair or equitable. Any time we want to be good custodians, it has to come out of our pockets. We've got a lot of wealthy businesses here – Amazon, Microsoft, Boeing, for example. We can have participation from them, not just homeowners.

- C: We need to evaluate each route segment individually and as objectively as possible with the data that PSE has gathered and continues to gather. It is fair to say that routes are pitted against routes, neighborhoods against neighborhoods. We need an objective evaluation. If no route passes, it is incumbent on PSE to look at other alternatives such as undergrounding, submerging, or other routes entirely.
- C: I would suggest that the advisory group keep the consideration period open for more optimal route solutions than the current proposals to emerge, particularly undergrounding or submerging. It has been said that surface installation is less expensive, but that doesn't take into consideration the unspoken cost of that installation to people directly impacted. It has been questioned whether this is an appropriately sized increase in capacity, and whether the drivers of the size of the transmission lines lie beyond this region. We need brighter solutions that are less impactful. SCL's SnoKing- Maple Valley corridor has capacity for the 230 kV line. This needs to be considered.
- C: In my view, Segments L and M are the most environmentally sensitive of the whole project. They cross the most environmentally sensitive areas. We should be looking to mitigate or create new environmental areas when one of these routes is built. Construction impacts should be considered. Undergrounding has extremely high impacts. At places like May Creek or Lake Boren, we may have to come up above ground. Segment L may be the segment of least residential impact. We need to have the carbon cost calculations of undergrounding versus overhead. Undergrounding has an extremely high carbon cost. This may not be reflected in the \$20-28 million per mile cost estimate.

Committee dialogue:

- C: We're never going to have enough data to make a completely informed decision. We are going to have to guess what is best. The timeline doesn't matter. We will never have all the data we want.
- C: I agree that this is not a decision just for now, but one that will last for decades. We must ask that the Community Advisory Group, the community, and PSE view the decision in that light. We should be thinking about future generations, not just the most cost effective option.
- C: To correct a Sub-Area Committee member, Segment L is very well populated. The homes are 10 feet apart from each other and are 50 feet off the centerline of the railroad tracks. One issue for homes along the east side of this segment is that they would be in the fall line of the towers, making them incapable of getting a FHA loan.

- C: I was thinking of an underground solution along Segment L. This would be less impactful.
- C: I agree that an underground solution in this area would be of interest.
- C: We can be effective at identifying problems that can be mitigated. Mitigation is not that difficult. For example, parking is a temporary problem that can be mitigated.
- C: The choice of who is on the Community Advisory Group was based on what PSE could find for communities. As an alternate, this is the first time I've had a seat at the table. There are more communities like mine along the waterfront that are not represented and that didn't know anything about this process. I can't say we have an equitable experience for the Eastside.

Discussion of recommendations to the Community Advisory Group for further consideration

Penny asked the committee members if they had any specific recommendations for the Community Advisory Group to explore further, focusing on the data and results of the workshop series.

- C: The Community Advisory Group should consider any factors relevant to an environmental impact study that they aren't already looking at. These should be added to the evaluation factors list to consider prior to going for permits.
- Q: There was dissatisfaction with the photo simulations. They were not representative. However, we appreciate the offer to have the photographer come out to our neighborhoods. When will that happen?
- A: PSE is moving forward on photo simulations. They've gotten through the first wave, but will have more to do.
- C: The Community Advisory Group is made up of only one residential representative per jurisdiction. We should give consideration to expanding the advisory group to include more neighborhoods.
- C: I attended the Central Sub-Area workshops. There was not enough time to go through the scoring exercise. We didn't even know where segments were. We needed twice as much time.
- C: We need written confirmation from SCL. We also need more information about the cost of undergrounding. We have only received PSE's information. We would like a third-party opinion.
- C: I would like to see submarining added to the "more information needed" category. I would like the Community Advisory Group to explore the bigger picture of how we get energy and where it goes. BPA and the Columbia Grid have a wealth of information on their websites about energy sources and demand. I encourage advisory group members to go to those websites.
- C: We are going at a headlong pace, and the opportunity for citizen input is on a compressed timeline. It would be wonderful to adjust the timeline for more input. It would be nice to have future generations look upon this as exemplary collaboration.
- C: I want advance information on what the process is going to be going forward. We've been given general statements, but that doesn't tell us much about the process. The more we can get that information up front, the more we can intelligently do our job.

Wrap up and next steps

In closing, Penny reminded the South Sub-Area Committee that they as a body were not tasked with coming to a decision between routes, as it is too complicated for their one meeting together. She observed that one take away from the workshop scoring process could be that there are no easy answers.

Summaries of all three Sub-Area Committee meetings will be provided to the Community Advisory Group at its next meeting on June 4, at the Old Redmond School House. She thanked the Sub-Area Committee and members of the public for attending and for their time and energy spent devoted to their involvement in the process. Penny additionally reminded the Sub-Area Committee that the meeting summary would be posted to the project website when completed.