

Guest column: Ask questions about ATC power line project

Written by Mark Steuer, John Vander Leest and Brian Lee Danzinger

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This past year, American Transmission Co. began its initial research to reinforce the electrical transmission grid to Northeastern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This project, known as the Bay Lake Project (www.baylakeproject.com), would include the construction of new regional substations as well as the proposed installation of a 345,000-volt line and multiple 138,000-volt lines. ATC has presented a number of possible routes to connect these high-voltage lines to areas north of Green Bay, one of which includes a path along the U.S. 41 corridor, potentially impacting property and park space adjacent to the highway.

As is customary with the process, the routes being highlighted are merely options for discussion and an opportunity for feedback. No concrete decisions have been made to a specific route, and ATC has yet to submit an official application to the Public Service Commission. However, as public servants to the area, it is important that greater Green Bay residents become informed, build awareness, ask questions, and share any comments/concerns directly to ATC. While we understand the importance of reinforcing the electrical grid, it seems fair to say that other suggested routes in less-residential areas would be a better and more logical alternative. Some of the questions and issues that have surfaced in regards to high voltage power line installation along the Highway 41 corridor include:

- The proximity of the large-scale power lines to properties and homes
- The Highway 41 corridor is a very unique situation because homes and buildings are very close to the highway itself and the inclusion of power lines could encroach and impact yards. (Just a few specific areas of impact could potentially include Beech Tree Drive, Taylor Street, Ironwood Drive, Nelson Street, Biemeret Street, Sugar Maple Court, Park Place, Hilltop Drive, Pilgrim Way, Crown Court and others along the Highway 41 corridor)• Questions about the possible negative impact to property value and impact to commercial development along the Highway 41 corridor. This has not only been a concern to those who would be directly adjacent to the power lines, but has been a consideration to the greater neighborhood area.
- Concerns over potential detrimental impact that the high-voltage transmission lines could have to the aesthetic appeal of the newly completed Highway 41 project.
- Health uncertainties and questions related to the range and breadth of electric and magnetic fields. If people have specific questions, we encourage residents address and share them with ATC.
- Environmental concerns and impact to the parkland/wetland area bordering Highway 41, such as John Muir Park.

- Questions related to constant humming, hissing noise, sizzling, or crackling.
- Additional impact/hardship to the residents and businesses along the Highway41 corridor who have endured a substantial amount “construction fatigue.”

Again, this project is still in the exploratory phase and no official application or route has been submitted for final approval. ATC has provided some initial outreach and open houses, but we encourage neighbors to ask questions, learn more about the project, and contact ATC if you have constructive opposition/feedback to a possible route along the Highway41 corridor before a narrowing of their decision in March.

To contact ATC, residents can email them directly at localrelations@atcllc.com or visit <http://www.atc-projects.com/contact-us> and submit a comment through its website. Correspondence can also be sent to ATC-Bay Lake Project, P.O. Box 47, Waukesha, WI 53187-0047. To talk with a local ATC representative, call (855) 831-5853 or (920) 338-6550.

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