

# TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECTS - ROUTING AND SITING PROCESS

## DETERMINING THE LOCATION FOR NEW ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINES

We know the process of identifying potential routes for new electric transmission lines is a sensitive one. We follow a careful and deliberate process that provides guidance for identifying and analyzing options for siting and routing transmission lines. Through input we receive from government agencies, the public, communities and landowners, we consider options that are appropriate for the location and issues associated with a particular project. Be assured that we are committed to finding a balanced solution, and following a fair and inclusive process.

## ROUTING CRITERIA

When building new power lines, Wisconsin law requires co-location with existing facilities and infrastructure where it is feasible. The process begins by identifying a broad study area. Then potential corridors are identified that may be suitable for a transmission line and, in accordance with state law are prioritized in the following manner:

**Primary opportunities – utility corridors:**

- Existing transmission and other electric lines
- Pipelines

**Secondary opportunities – transportation corridors:**

- State and federal highways
- Railroads

**Tertiary opportunities:**

- Recreational trails

**New corridors:**

- Establish new corridors using section lines and/or property boundaries when feasible

## BALANCING ROUTING CONSIDERATIONS

Developing routes that might be suitable for transmission lines requires a balanced look at a variety of factors. Landowner and community input is always taken into consideration and the impacts of available alternatives are evaluated. Transmission line routing may involve trade-offs between a particular set of advantages and disadvantages. ATC looks for routes that balance community input with environmental impacts, constructability, current and future land use, project cost and specific electric system needs. We will propose routes that address electric system needs for all customers in an area and also reduce local impacts to the extent possible.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

At ATC, we use an open and interactive approach that involves gathering information and public feedback at four distinct phases of project development.

### Phase 1: Study area

We begin with a study area that identifies end points (substations – new or existing) for the transmission line. We gather data on environmental sensitivities, roads, railroads, pipelines, utility corridors and environmental areas. It is during this phase that the project is introduced to the public.

### Phase 2: Potential corridors

In accordance with Wisconsin law, we identify many potential corridors after reviewing the study area. These corridors (can be several hundred feet wide or more) between the end points may be suitable for a transmission line route, but have not yet been thoroughly evaluated. These corridors represent opportunities to rule in or rule out possible transmission line routes that require further evaluation, and are presented to the public for discussion and input. Corridors that are not identified at this phase still may be added later. It is important that many possible corridors are explored.

### Phase 3: Preliminary routes

The preliminary routes represent those that are “still on the table” and include more defined route possibilities. The preliminary routes have been evaluated more thoroughly and are likely to be considered for the project. As part of the route refinement process, new line segments that were not considered in previous phases may be added to the project map.

### Phase 4: Alternate routes (or “proposed routes”)

These are the routes that have been identified as the best solutions based on environmental and land use considerations, suitability for construction, public acceptance, cost and electric system needs. These routes are formally presented in our regulatory application to the Public Service Commission for authorization to construct the project. We are required to submit at least two possible routes. These routes are thoroughly characterized with supporting environmental, engineering and construction information, all of which is publicly available. At each of the four stages, we contact local officials, community organizations, landowners and the news media to provide the latest developments of the project and offer opportunities for public feedback. Once the PSC receives ATC’s construction application, the PSC will evaluate whether the project is needed, hold a public hearing and decide where to site the line. The PSC route decision may or may not be the route that we recommend and may include some additional changes to the route.

***In the route development process, new information may require us to add new route segments to our project map or to reconsider a route segment that had been eliminated earlier. For this reason, we encourage all landowners to follow project developments until completion of the regulatory review process. Our routing activities and decisions are available at open house events, on our website and through local news outlets.***



ATC is a member of the Green Masters Program, a recognition and assessment program for Wisconsin businesses interested in improving and being recognized for their sustainability initiatives

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