

Creekview Interconnection Project



Q. What is being proposed for this project?

- A new We Energies substation, called Creekview — located 1 mile southeast of the Village of Eden, Wis., along County Trunk Highway F.
- A new, 138,000-volt transmission line from the new We Energies substation, connecting to one of two existing ATC transmission lines — either west of the proposed substation site, which would be 6.5 miles in length — or east and north of the proposed substation site, which would be 9.3 miles in length.

Q. Why is this project needed?

To ensure continued reliable electric service and alleviate voltage issues.

Q. What is the schedule for this proposed project?

- Project introduced to the public.....Spring 2014
- Environmental field review..... Summer 2014
- Submit application to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin February 2015
- Receive PSC decision (anticipated) Fall 2015
- Start construction (transmission lines)..... Fall 2016
- Expected in-service for substation and transmission line..... June 2017 (West route), January 2018 (North route)

Q. Can the transmission line be placed underground?

American Transmission Co. is required to explore low-cost options when proposing new transmission lines, which is typically overhead construction. Construction, environmental issues, operational challenges and costs generally rule out underground transmission lines for most projects.

Q. What are the roles of the PSC and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources?

The PSC is the regulatory agency that reviews and approves major utility projects in Wisconsin. ATC must submit an application, which generally includes at least two route options, along with all the documentation required for the PSC to review the project and render a decision. The Wisconsin DNR also fully participates in the review of the application. This review can take up to a year depending on the type of project. The PSC will notify affected individuals when the review process has started and will schedule public hearings so that the public may offer formal comments on the project.

Q. What is this project going to cost and who is going to pay for it?

Depending on the route selected, the estimated cost of this proposed project would range from \$19 - \$26 million. Costs associated with electric utility projects are built into the rates paid by electricity users. The transmission costs associated with construction, operations and maintenance are shared by 5 million electric customers throughout ATC's service area and typically make up approximately 7 to 10 percent of the monthly bill.

Q. How are transmission line routes identified and selected?

We consider options that are appropriate for the location and consistent with routing criteria under state laws. Transmission line routing involves trade-offs between a variety of factors. The route options that are most promising balance community input with environmental impacts, constructability, current and future land use, project costs and specific electric system needs.



Q. How do you build transmission lines in areas where distribution poles already exist?

In some areas, we may consider the use of steel poles approximately 70 to 100 feet high, placed between 500 to 800 feet between structures along the west route – and 500 to 1,000 feet between structures along the north route. The longer spans on the north route are required to match the existing 345-kV H-frame structures. Shorter poles are placed at the mid-point between the taller poles to support the distribution wires, which are placed below the transmission wires. In some cases, we may consider working with the local utility to bury the distribution line to minimize the overall impact of the lines.

Q. Do the lines make noise?

The sound level of a 138-kilovolt transmission line in the right-of-way is low to unnoticeable, depending on weather conditions. In general, sparking or buzzing sounds on transmission lines are more likely to occur around higher voltage lines (345-kV). For the Creekview Interconnection Project, the sound may be audible directly underneath the line but the volume is well below other typical background noises such as traffic, wind or a normal conversation.

Q. How much land is needed for an easement for this transmission line?

The amount of land needed for the easement will depend on the route selected by the PSC. If the western route is selected, ATC would need approximately 55 feet on private property for a route that is adjacent to a road because such a route takes advantage of existing road right-of-way. For routes on private property that are not adjacent to a road, ATC would need a width of approximately 100 feet. If the northern route is selected, the new 138-kV transmission line would share the existing right-of-way with the 345-kV line. New easements would be required for the east-west portion running from the existing 345-kV line to the We Energies substation location. Right-of-way width is determined by engineering requirements for safe clearances. We compensate landowners when an easement is needed on private property.

Q. Will you need to remove the trees?

Incompatible or dense woody vegetation within the easement is removed to allow construction crews to work safely and to allow the transmission line to operate reliably and safely once it's completed and placed in service. We will discuss any vegetation removal plans with landowners in advance.

Q. What can I expect during construction?

Construction plans are included in our application to the PSC and finalized following project approval from the PSC. Affected landowners will be notified in advance of construction activities with details about the schedule, hours, equipment and vehicles associated with the construction.

Q. Will the project impact my property value?

Research suggests little negative impact on residential property values, except where the transmission line is within 200 feet of a residence. In those circumstances, the studies find an average effect between 1 and 10 percent of the property value, depending on the specifics of the property. According to a 2014 SNL Financial article on transmission lines and property values, "studies also suggest the impact of transmission lines on the value of homes tends to dissipate over time with the use of landscaping or other shielding techniques." If your property is impacted by this project, an ATC real estate representative will contact you after PSC approval to negotiate an easement to build and maintain access to the line. At least one, though possibly two appraisals will be ordered by ATC so that the value of the easement strip can be fairly and accurately paid to the landowner.

Q. What is the next step in the process?

ATC is required to identify at least two route alternatives in its application, which will be sent to the PSC in February 2015 under docket number 137-CE-177. The PSC will conduct a public outreach process, review the application and determine a decision on the project need and route. If the project is approved, the PSC ultimately determines the project necessity, and which route will be constructed.



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Information current as of June 2017

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