

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE



PLANNING DEPARTMENT
URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
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OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

December 13, 2018

PNM
Attn: Laurie Moye
2401 Aztec NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Project #2018-001757
SI-2018-00220 – Site Plan (approval of a project in Table 5 of the *Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation, 2010-2020*)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

For a linear electric facility, approximately 5 miles long, running south from the West Mesa Switching Station, crossing Unser Blvd. NW and Arroyo Vista Blvd. NW and proceeding west to the City limits, then running south through a portion of Bernalillo County and re-entering the City near the Westgate Dam drainage facility near 118th St. SW, and continuing south to connect to the Huning Ranch Switching Station in Valencia County, zoned NR-BP, NR-C, PD, NR-PO-A, PC, R-1B, MX-L. (H-10, H-9, J-8, K-7, L-7, L-8, M-8, N-8, P-8)

Staff Planner: Catalina Lehner

PO Box 1293

Albuquerque

On December 13, 2018 the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to APPROVE Project 2018-001757/SI-2018-00220, a Site Plan (approval of a project in Table 5 of the *Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation, 2010-2020*), based on the following Findings and Conditions:

FINDINGS:

- www.cabq.gov
- The request is for project approval of a linear electric facility, approximately 5 miles long, which consists of rebuilding and upgrading the existing WD 115kV transmission line in order to provide additional capacity to serve the southern Albuquerque metropolitan area. The existing wooden H-frame poles and single-circuit transmission line (WD) would be replaced with new steel poles and a double-circuit transmission line (WD2).
 - The request is Project #23 in the Facility Plan: Electric Systems Transmission and Generation (2010-2020) (the Electric Systems Plan 2010), a Rank II facility plan. Table 5 (p. 24) of the Electric Systems Plan 2010 contains a list of electric systems projects for the 2010 through 2020 timeframe. The request is known as the WD2 project.
 - The request is categorized as a site plan because that's the closest application category; there is no site plan for review. Rather, provided with the request are a siting study and a response to the standards for the location and design of transmission and substation facilities as found in the Electric Systems Plan 2010. Both are required for an electric system project.

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4. The request is in the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) process because the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan states that projects included in the Plan's list of proposed electric system projects for 2010-2020 are to be submitted to the EPC for review (see Table 1, p. 20).
5. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, the Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation (2010- 2020) (the Electric System Facilities Plan 2010) and the City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
6. The request furthers the following, applicable Comprehensive Plan Goal and policy in Chapter 5-Land Use:

- A. **Goal 5.6-City Development Areas:** Encourage and direct growth to Areas of Change where it is expected and desired and ensure that development in and near Areas of Consistency reinforces the character and intensity of the surrounding area.

The WD transmission line traverses both Areas of Change and Areas of Consistency. It is not really growth and development of land uses, but is part of the electric infrastructure system that serves the metropolitan area. The transmission line runs in easements through a business park, a drainage area, and mostly vacant land. It does not, in itself, result in additional traffic, noise, or population in the area. As such, it would not affect the character and intensity of the areas surrounding it.

- B. **Policy 5.3.7-Locally Unwanted Land Uses:** Ensure that land uses that are objectionable to immediate neighbors but may be useful to society are located carefully, equitably, and evenly.

Electric facilities, including transmission lines and the poles that support the lines, can be considered a locally unwanted land use (LULU) that may be objectionable to immediate neighbors but is useful to society. In this case, the request is for Project #23 (a rebuild and upgrade) as indicated in the Electric Systems Plan 2010. The Electric Facilities Plans contains design standards for the siting of transmission line corridors that help ensure that they are sited carefully, equitably, and evenly throughout the metropolitan area.

7. The request furthers the following, applicable Comprehensive Plan Goal and policies from Chapter 12- Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services:

- A. **Goal 12.1-Infrastructure:** Plan, coordinate, and provide for efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound infrastructure to support existing communities and the Comp Plan's vision for future growth.

The purpose of the Electric Systems Plan 2010, a Rank II facility plan, is to plan and coordinate the provision of electrical infrastructure in the metropolitan area. This facility plan supports the Comprehensive Plan's vision for future growth by providing a list of projects that will support development through 2020. The design standards for transmission facilities and substations contained in the Electric Systems Plan 2010 are

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intended to ensure that electric infrastructure is developed in an efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound manner. The request furthers Goal 12.1-Infrastructure.

- B. Policy 12.1.1-Infrastructure Design: Encourage design of visible infrastructure (surface and overhead) that respects the character of neighborhoods and communities and protects significant natural and cultural features.**

In support of the Comprehensive Plan, the Electric Systems Plan 2010 contains standards for the location and design of transmission facilities and substation facilities. These standards, which include siting constraints for excluded areas and environmental considerations, aim to minimize siting impacts to help ensure that the character of neighborhoods and communities is respected and that significant natural and cultural features are protected. The request furthers Policy 12.1.1-Infrastructure Design.

- C. Policy 12.4.5-Facility Plans: Develop, update, and implement facility plans for infrastructure systems, such as drainage, electric transmission, natural gas, and information technology that benefit from cross-agency and public private coordination.**

The request is to implement an electric transmission project in the Electric Systems Plan 2010, a Rank II facility plan dealing with electric infrastructure. The project description was updated in July 2018 (see History section of this report) to specify a different end location. The request furthers Policy 12.4.5-Facility Plans.

- 8. The Electric System Plan 2010 contains "Standards for the Location and Design of Transmission and Substation Facilities". The WD 2 transmission line project complies with the following, applicable design standards:**

- A. Design Standard #5: Angles in lines shall be avoided or minimized wherever possible to avoid installing guy wires and/or larger diameter electric transmission structures.**

The WD transmission line angles between Ladera Dr. and Atrisco Vista Blvd., before it proceeds southward to cross I-40. The angle shown is about 110 degrees and the angle of the route alternative is about 90 degrees. Neither would cause the installation of guy wires for support. Double-circuit tangent transmission structures will be used for the entire project. Some larger diameter transmissions structures will be used at angled portions of the line and line terminations in order to support the weight.

- B. Design Standard #8: Wherever possible, the height of lines and the size and number of electric transmission structures shall be addressed when considering land use and visual impacts.**

The height of lines, size, and number of electric transmission structures is addressed in the siting study. There are no areas of exclusion (environmentally sensitive areas) in the project area. Most structures will be double-circuit tangent structures that are 72 feet high. Double-circuit tangents used for angles and terminations will be 85 feet high. Approximately 50 structures will be installed and approximately 38 will be removed.

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- C. Design Standard #9:** Generally, the height of transmission structures is as follows: 40kV (50 to 80 feet); 115kV (80 to 100 feet); 230 kV (100 to 130 feet); 345 kV (110 to 130 feet); 500 kV (120 to 150 feet). New transmission facilities shall be designed and/or selected to minimize visual impacts. The material, color, texture, and shape of transmission structures should be compatible with the surrounding environment.

The transmission structures for the WD2 project will mostly be 72 feet high, with the structures used at angles and terminations being 85 feet high. The poles will blend reasonably with the surrounding environment, part of which is characterized by existing transmission lines. The WD2 structures are made of steel (material), dark brown (color), smooth with ribbing (texture), and similar to existing poles (shape).

- D. Design Standard #10:** Transmission lines crossing other transmission lines shall be minimized.

The WD line crosses two other transmission lines (both 354 kV) in the large utility easement that runs with the Ladera drainage ponds. At some point, the WD line has to cross these lines in order to continue southward and serve the southwest mesa area. Additional crossings of transmission lines, in excess of those that exist, are not proposed. Crossing lines is avoided as often as possible.

- E. Design Standard #17:** All new transmission facilities, and upgrades of existing facilities, shall be, as much as possible, designed and constructed to minimize maintenance of the corridor grounds. When new development encroaches upon existing facilities, ownership and maintenance of the utility corridor shall be explicitly identified. Where possible, maintenance by the public sector shall be minimized as much as possible except where the corridor identified for public uses.

The rebuilding and upgrading of the WD transmission line was designed (and will be constructed) to minimize maintenance of the corridor grounds. The WD line runs in a large, existing electrical easement that contains other transmission lines and utilities and is already maintained by the property owner. PNM will continue to maintain its transmission facilities, including the WD2 line.

9. The siting study required by the Electric System Plan 2010 was provided with the request.
10. Minor conditions of approval are recommended to provide clarification and respond to comments.
11. Several neighborhood organizations were required to be notified: the Tres Volcanes Neighborhood Association (NA), the Las Lomitas NA, the Ladera West NA, the Westside Coalition of NAs (WESCONA), the Orchards at Anderson Heights Subassociation, Inc., the Route 66 West NA, the Anderson Heights Master Association, Inc., Westgate heights NA, and the South West Alliance of Neighborhoods (SWAN). The applicant notified them as required and also notified property owners within 100 feet of the subject site as required.
12. The applicant attended SVAC's September meeting, SWAN's October meeting, and WESCONA's October meeting, and held three open house meetings: one north of I-40, one south of I-40, and another for the Ladera Business Park. There is no known opposition. As of this

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writing, Staff has not received any comments.

CONDITIONS:

1. **Siting Study:** Provide maps of the alternative corridors considered and the chosen corridor as part of the siting study.

2. **CONDITION FROM NMDOT:**

NMDOT is requesting that the NEW transmission proposed be permitted through the NMDOT when within state R/W in particular at I-40, Central & 118th and NM 500 and 118th. Owner shall schedule an appointment with Nancy Perea 505-206-1069 or nancy.perea@state.nm.us as to coordinate the utility submission and potential impact in reference to the installation.

3. **CONDITION FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT:**

The planned transmission line route appears to be very close to Atrisco Terrace Open Space. PNM must contact City Open Space if there is any encroachment on that property. The developer shall take steps to prevent disturbance of soil and vegetation on the adjacent Major Public Open Space during construction. Pursuant to the IDO [5-2(H)(2)(a)(11)], the developer is responsible for mitigating any disturbance that does occur.

APPEAL: If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so within 15 days of the EPC's decision or by **DECEMBER 28, 2018**. The date of the EPC's decision is not included in the 15-day period for filing an appeal, and if the 15th day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, the next working day is considered as the deadline for filing the appeal.

For more information regarding the appeal process, please refer to Section 14-16-6 of the IDO, Administration and Enforcement. A Non-Refundable filing fee will be calculated at the Land Development Coordination Counter and is required at the time the appeal is filed. It is not possible to appeal EPC Recommendations to City Council; rather, a formal protest of the EPC's Recommendation can be filed within the 15 day period following the EPC's recommendation.

You will receive notification if any person files an appeal. If there is no appeal, you can receive Building Permits at any time after the appeal deadline quoted above, provided all conditions imposed at the time of approval have been met. Successful applicants are reminded that other regulations of the City Zoning Code must be complied with, even after approval of the referenced application(s).

Sincerely,


David S. Campbell
Planning Director

DSC/CL

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cc: PNM, Laurie Moye, 2401 Aztec NE, ABQ, NM 87107
Tres Volcanes NA, Thomas Borst, 1908 Selway Pl., NW, ABQ, NM 87120
Tres Volcanes NA, Rich Gallagher, 8401 Casa Gris Ct., NW, ABQ, NM 87120
Las Lomas NA, David Skowran, 8116 Corte De Aguila NW, ABQ, NM 87120
Las Lomas NA, Nancy Griego, 8024 Corte Del Viento NW, ABQ, NM 87120
Ladera West NA, Shariesse McCannon, 2808 El Tesoro Escondido NW, ABQ, NM 87120
Ladera West NA, Karen Buccola, 7716 Santa Rosalia NW, ABQ, NM 8720
Orchards at Anderson Heights Sub. Inco., Cindy McCormick, 2823 Richmond Dr. NE, ABQ, NM 87107
Orchards at Anderson Heights Sub. Inc., Arina Caster, 2823 Richmond Dr. NE, ABQ, NM 87107
Route 66 West NA, Cherise Quezada, 10304 Paso Fino Pl., SW, ABQ, NM 87121
Route 66 West NA, Paul Fava, 505 Parnell Dr., SW, ABQ, NM 87121
Anderson Heights Master Assoc. Inc., Giezell Edison, 2823 Richmond Dr., NE, ABQ, NM 87107
Westgate Heights NA, Eric Faull, 1335 El Rancho Dr., SW, ABQ, NM 87121
Westgate Heights NA, Matthew Archuleta, 1628 Summerfield P., SW, ABQ, NM 87121
SWAN, Johnny Pena, 6525 Sunset Gardens SW, ABQ, NM 87121
SWAN, Jerry Gallegos, 5921 Central Ave., NW, ABQ, NM 87105
Westside Coalition of NAs,, Harry Hendriksen, 10592 Rio Del Sol NW, ABQ, NM 87114
Westside Coalition of NAs, Rene Horvath, 5515 Palomino Dr., NW, ABQ, NM 87114
South Valley Coalition of NAs, Marcia Fernandez, 2401 Violet SW, ABQ, NM 87105
South Valley Coalition of NAs, Rod Mahoney, 1838 Sadora Rd. SW, ABQ, NM 87105
John Dubois, jdubois@cabq.gov