



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

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www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Ray Steiger, P.E., Public Works Director
Rob Jammerman, Development Engineering Manager

Date: July 10, 2012

Subject: Puget Sound Energy Sammamish-Juanita Electrical Line Routing Report

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Council select one of two options regarding Puget Sound Energy's (PSE) route selection process.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

In the summer of 2011, PSE began a community involvement process to select a route for a new 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission main. On October 18, 2011, Jim Hutchinson, PSE Government and Community Relations Manager, shared information about the Sammamish-Juanita 115kV Transmission Line Project with the Kirkland City Council. Mr. Hutchinson explained the role of the Stakeholder Advisory Group, the various alignments under consideration, and the project schedule.

During the last 9 months the Stakeholder Group met to develop three route alternatives. In June, two open houses were held to gather public feedback on the proposed routes. At the July 3rd City Council meeting, a number of members of the community addressed the Council and requested that the Council provide input to PSE about which route they prefer prior to the next Stakeholder Group meeting on July 18th. The meeting is being held to consider the additional public feedback gathered since June, and decide upon the preferred route alternative.

At their July 3rd meeting, City Council directed staff to return with a summary of the route selection process, an identification of potential pros and cons of the routes through Kirkland, regulatory powers the City has in the permitting approval process for the route, and the City's ability to control PSE's selection of a route. This memo provides that information.

Selection process

One concern raised by a citizen at the July 3rd Council meeting is that the route selection process has not been transparent. PSE has attempted to make the route selection process very open and address a wide array of interests by forming a 16-member Stakeholder Advisory

Group; Kirkland is represented by two City staff and six community members. The three route alternatives were developed from a process that began with nearly 30 routes variations which were mapped using georoute modeling criteria that were agreed upon by the Stakeholder Group. The criteria included 35 different data sources that made up four main categories of *Built Environment, Natural Environment, Engineering Considerations, and Opportunities*. The 35 different data sources addressed things such as existing land use zoning, proximity to parks and schools, impacts on sensitive areas, available existing transmission corridors, access through commercial areas and along arterial type streets, and many other items. A full review of the Georoute Model Criteria can be found on the PSE Sammamish-Juanita 115kV website at: http://pse.com/inyourcommunity/king/ConstructionProjects/Final_120211.pdf

After the three route alternatives were agreed upon by the Stakeholder Group, PSE presented the routes to the community at two open house meetings in June. A postcard mailing was sent to over 4800 Kirkland and Redmond property owners that owned property within 500 feet of one of the proposed routes inviting them to the open house, or to visit the project website and provide feedback on the three route alternatives.

Attached is a copy of the *Summary of Online Questionnaire Results* prepared by PSE to show the trends and comments resulting from the questionnaire that was filled out by 314 citizens between June 1 and July 2. After reviewing the results, you will see that route alternative 3 is leading route choice with the community.

From staff's perspective, the process that PSE has undertaken to develop the three route alternatives and solicit feedback has been thorough, inclusive, and attempts to balance all of the interests agreed upon by the Stakeholder Group (see Figure A below for map of the three route alternatives).

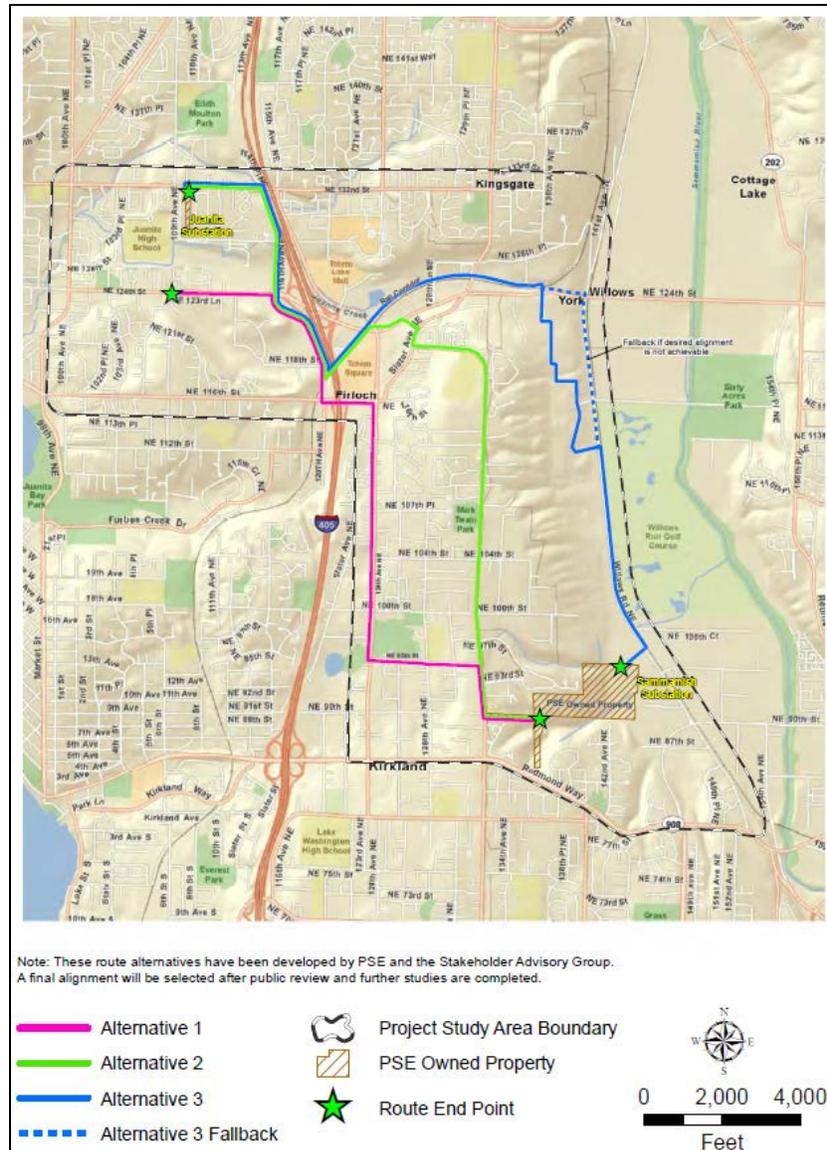


Figure A. PSE Sammamish-Juanita 115kV Transmission Line potential routes

Route Opportunities and Challenges

Because of the myriad uses along the corridors and concerns ranging from the natural environment to property rights, all of the alternative routes present opportunities and challenges that may be considered.

Alternative 1 - 124th Ave NE:

Opportunities:

1. Significant portions of the line could be overbuilt above existing distributions lines – this means reduced vegetation impacts because of the existing presence of overhead lines.
2. Potentially the shortest total distance of the three routes.
3. Avoids Totem Lake Mall area.
4. Avoids environmentally-sensitive areas.

Challenges:

1. Fronts along the highest number of residential properties.
2. Proximity to an elementary school (public concern).
3. Proximity to the existing Seattle City Light transmission lines approximately one block to the east of 124th Ave. NE.

Alternative 2 - 132nd Ave NE

Opportunities:

1. Significant portions of the line could be overbuilt above existing distributions lines – this means reduced vegetation impacts because of the existing presence of overhead lines.
2. Avoids environmentally-sensitive areas and follows the railroad corridor, which avoids some residential areas.

Challenges:

1. Fronts along second highest number of residential properties.
2. Requires property (rights) acquisition to locate a portion of the line through an established commercial property.
3. There are already a number of poles and lines (electric and communication) along both sides of 132nd Avenue NE.

Alternative 3 - Willows Road

Opportunities:

1. Allows avoidance of most residential areas.
2. Uses a portion of the former rail corridor where PSE already has property rights.

Challenges:

1. There is an established City of Redmond 'view corridor' along a portion of Willows Road.
2. Requires easements from a number of property owners (for preferred route 3 alternative – not for fallback route alternative that extends all the way along Willows Road to NE 124th Street).

Regulatory Powers

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) was granted the right and privilege to use the City rights-of-way for the distribution and transmission of energy through a Franchise Agreement approved by Ordinance 3493 in May 1998. Under the agreement, PSE has the authority to locate "facilities" within "every and all of the roads, streets, avenues, alleys and highways of the City, together with City-owned general utility easements abutting and appurtenant thereto" "Facilities" includes poles (with or without crossarms), wires, lines "and all necessary or convenient facilities and appurtenances thereto."

The Franchise does state that the rights and privileges granted PSE are subject to the applicable ordinances and codes of the City. No specific rules or regulations are identified except the Public Works Policies and Standard Plans with respect to "location, relocation, erection or excavation."

PSE will be required to secure right-of-way permits from the Public Works Department under Kirkland Municipal Code Chapter 19.12. Should construction of the new 115 kV transmission

lines involve work in critical areas such as wetlands, buffers, or streams, sensitive area, critical area, or buffer modification permits may be required. The construction of transmission lines greater than 55 kV exceeds the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) categorical exemptions from threshold environmental determination and Environmental Impact Statement requirements. This means the project will require SEPA review and completion of an environmental checklist and the provision of other environmental information.

The City's Comprehensive Plan has acknowledged PSE's long-range plans, through the year 2022, for a new 115 kV line along the eastern and northern City boundaries to connect to the Sammamish substation in Redmond. (*see City of Kirkland Comprehensive Plan, XI. Utilities, p. XI-9*)

The Zoning Code does permit a "public utility" use in each zone of the City with different required review processes for the different zones. The Planning Department has not considered the Zoning Code applying to utility lines within rights of way.

City Council's Options

Two apparent options are available for Council consideration to advance the City's position or route selection:

Option 1: Direct City staff stakeholder members to provide City Council preference/feedback on route selection at the July 18th meeting; or,

Option 2: Allow the route selection process to proceed as scheduled and provide feedback to PSE during the ensuing community outreach phase.

Under the first option, City Council could direct City staff to recommend one of the three alternatives, or a hybrid of the alternatives. Feedback from Kirkland residents addressing the Council at their July 3 meeting proposed a hybrid of Alternative 3 which includes the commercial ending of Alternative 1 (i.e. NE 124th Street west of I-405) as an option. The most recent update on the PSE project website notes that this hybrid alternative will be discussed at the July 18 Stakeholder Group meeting.

Attachment – Summary of Online Questionnaire Results

Sammamish-Juanita 115 kV Project

Summary of Online Questionnaire Results

Overview

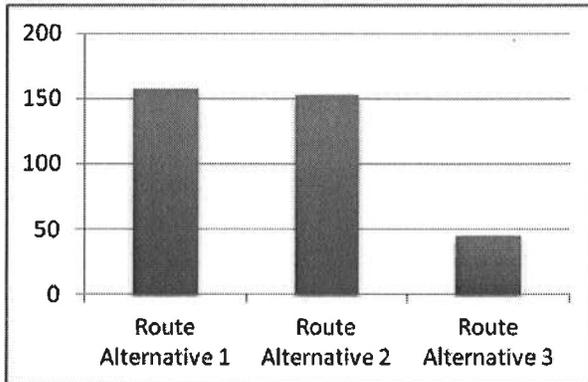
To enlist feedback from the community on the three route alternatives for the Sammamish-Juanita 115 kV Transmission Line Project, Puget Sound Energy administered an online questionnaire between June 1 and July 2, 2012. The questionnaire included maps of the three alternatives, followed by a series of questions about each route.

A total of 314 online questionnaires were submitted.

Response summary

A summary of what we have heard can be found below. Please note some respondents did not provide responses for all questions.

Q1. Please indicate which of the three route alternatives is closest to your residence or business.



Q2. Rank the three route alternatives based on which one you believe should be considered the preferred route, using 1 for your first preference and 3 for your third.

	Most preferred	Second choice	Least preferred
Route Alternative 1	44	108	159
Route Alternative 2	13	172	126
Route Alternative 3	254	31	26

Common themes from the open-ended questions included:

- Recommendations to:
 - Combine alternatives and consider new route paths
 - Avoid residential areas, playgrounds, parks, wetlands and schools
 - Use commercial and industrial areas to reduce impacts to residential areas
 - Underground the line

- Concerns about:
 - Health
 - Electric and magnetic fields (EMF)
 - Community impacts
 - Existing lines
 - View impacts
 - Environmental impacts
 - Property values
 - Project design
 - Construction and traffic impacts
 - Safety
 - Cumulative impacts for property owners already impacted by existing lines
 - Noise
 - Tree removal and trimming

We thank the community members for sharing their thoughts, questions and concerns about the three route alternatives. The advisory group will soon receive a complete package of all public comments from those who asked for their comments to be shared, and will take the feedback into consideration when selecting the preferred route at the July 18, 2012 advisory group meeting.

Sammamish-Juanita 115 kV Project

Hello Interested Community Member,

Thank you for your interest in Puget Sound Energy's Sammamish-Juanita 115 kV Transmission Line Project. We have a few project updates to share with you.

Community Meetings on the Three Route Alternatives – June 20 and June 23

Join us for a community meeting to discuss the remaining route alternatives and provide your input! Each meeting will include a presentation by PSE and a facilitated question and answer session. Both meetings will cover the same information, so please choose the date that is most convenient for you.

Wednesday, June 20, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Presentation at 6:15 p.m.

Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center, Auditorium

[\[16600 NE 80th Street, Redmond\]](#)

Saturday, June 23, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Presentation at 10:15 a.m.

Evergreen Hospital, Surgery and Physicians Center's Room TAN 100/TAN 101

[\[12040 NE 128th Street, Kirkland\]](#)

During the meeting you can learn about the challenges facing the local electric system and how PSE plans to address those challenges with a new 115 kilovolt transmission line. You can also learn about the public involvement process, discuss the route alternatives, ask questions, and provide comments.

We want your feedback on the route alternatives to help us understand additional community concerns or information that should be considered as we develop the preferred route.

How Can I Learn More?

We encourage you to join the conversation about siting the new transmission line. To learn more:

- Review the project [newsletter](#) for an overview on PSE and the advisory group's selected route alternatives.
- View the [route alternatives map](#).
- Tell us what you think – complete the route alternatives [questionnaire](#).
- Ask questions about the project via email at info@sammjuan115.com.
- Participate in one of the June community meetings, described above.
- Visit the project [webpage](#) to review project information and next steps.

- Attend and observe advisory group meetings. Meeting information is available on the project webpage.
- Request PSE give a project briefing to your neighborhood group or organization.

PSE encourages you to stay involved in the project and welcomes your comments. If you have any questions, please email info@sammjuan115.com or call the PSE project manager, Barry Lombard, at 425-456-2230.

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