



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 4, 2016

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Underground Transmission Line & Substation Working Group (UTLWG) Alternatives Recommendations and a Adoption of a Resolution Opposing Above Ground Transmission Lines. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Consideration of the recommendations from the Underground Transmission Line & Substation Working Group (UTLWG) and a resolution opposing above ground transmission lines.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Adopt the recommendations (Attachment 1) of the UTLWG as the City's position on the project; and
2. Adopt the attached resolution in opposition to any above ground transmission lines connecting the Glebe substation to the Potomac River substation.

BACKGROUND: On June 11, 2014, Dominion Virginia Power (Dominion) presented to City Council at a Legislative Meeting its proposal to improve the reliability and capacity of its electrical system by connecting it with the PEPCO system at the Potomac River Generating Station site. The proposal would involve the construction of an underground 230kV line from the Dominion substation on South Glebe Road in Arlington to an expanded PEPCO substation to be constructed on the west side parking lot of the current Potomac River Generating Station site, where a PEPCO substation is currently located.

The City Council, in response to the initial proposal presented by Dominion in June 2014, established the UTLWG which finalized a Working Group Recommendations Memo on December 30, 2014. The memo was shared with City Council on January 22, 2015 in advance of a to-be-determined future Council meeting and public hearing. Dominion postponed the project prior to finalizing an alternative and filing with the State Corporation Commission (SCC) which is the final authority responsible for determining the need, route and environmental impact of all transmission lines at 138 kV and above in Virginia.

In February 2016, Dominion notified the City that updated forecast analysis reaffirmed its belief that a new 230kV line between the Glebe Substation and Potomac River Substation would provide the most effective solution to projected reliability and service demand concerns. Dominion also notified the City of its intention to file a formal application with the SCC in summer 2016. With this information, the City formally re-established the Working Group and Dominion attended a community meeting on March 23, 2016 to update the public on the status of the project

DISCUSSION: The Working Group held five meetings throughout 2014 to consider the project proposal and make recommendations to City staff, the City Manager and Council on proposed alternatives presented by Dominion in its initial proposal. Based on its deliberations, the Working Group's recommendations include (but are not limited to) the following:

- The City should oppose strongly all alignments it considered the most objectionable. These include:
 - All overhead line options;
 - The Mt Jefferson Park Trail and Mt Jefferson Park Trail Alternate Alignment;
 - The Mainline Boulevard Alignment.
 - The Route 1/Slaters Lane Alignment; and
 - The Commonwealth Avenue/East Glebe Road Alignment
- Dominion should consolidate the existing Potomac Yard North Substation with the Glebe Substation and install appropriate underground lines that connect the Potomac Yard North Terminal Station and Glebe Road Substation.
- The equipment needed to accommodate the new 230 kV line at the Potomac River Substation should not simply be an addition to the existing site. Rather, the substation should be re-designed to consolidate the existing substation with the new equipment, while minimizing its footprint and emphasizing a design that is compatible with the requirements of the Historic District, adjoining uses and buildings and with the intent of the Alexandria Waterfront Plan.
- Dominion should limit its submission to the SCC and prioritize the SCC's consideration of the proposed alignments to those that the Working Group has categorized as "least objectionable," subject to the limiting conditions stated below. They are, in descending order of preference:
 - a) CSX; CSX/DRCA Alternate
Limiting Condition:
 - Neither alignment will preclude or adversely impact siting or construction currently under study for the VRE expansion or the future Potomac Yard Metro, or the operation and efficacy of the future Potomac Yard Metro.
 - b) Four Mile Run/ Potomac River and Four Mile Run/Potomac River/GW Parkway Alternate
 - Every effort should be made to minimize loss of mature trees, wetlands and other vegetation.
 - Every effort should be made to minimize the interruption or closure of bike trail along the Parkway.
 - Every effort should be made to minimize any loss of public's use of the National Park lands along the Parkway.
 - Every effort should be made to minimize traffic impacts along the Parkway during and after construction.
 - c) GW Parkway Alignments (Metro/GW Parkway; GW Parkway)
Limiting Conditions: Similar to those applied to (b) above.
 - d) Potomac Avenue
Limiting Conditions:
 - Locate the entirety of the right-of-way within the existing roadway (western portion) of Potomac Avenue.
 - Locate the entirety of the right-of-way in a manner that does not impact the existing Potomac Yard Park, central median or street trees.
 - Locate the entirety of the right-of-way within the Potomac Yard retail center (Landbay F) in a manner that does not preclude the implementation of the North Potomac Yard Plan, including without limitation, planned development, transit way and open space - parks (Landbay E) and Landbay K extension in North Potomac Yard.
 - Minimize traffic and public safety interruptions.
- Dominion should make every effort to consider the most preferred alignment (i.e., CSX and the CSX/DRCA Alternative) before considering the next in the Working Group's order of preference, as listed above.

- The City should obtain from Dominion and Pepco, their pledge to take action to mitigate negative impacts on the City of Alexandria and its residential and business community arising from, or related to, the project.
- The City should identify, and obtain from Dominion and Pepco, tangible benefits for the City of Alexandria and its residential and business community.
- Dominion should perform a traffic analysis to demonstrate the extent to which the construction project will impair traffic flow during and after construction.
- Dominion should consider approved routes to the Potomac River Substation from the west, utilizing the existing railroad right of way.
- The City and the Working Group should continue evaluating environmental impacts including electromagnetic field (EMF) effects regarding the proposed transmission project.

The Work Group recommendations also note that the City should verify and continue to review the need for the project (as proposed by Dominion) is required by federal mandate or by health and safety concerns and is pursued with the interests of the City of Alexandria's residential and business communities in the forefront. It also notes that the City should perform independent due diligence, working with specialized consultants and outside counsel retained by the City, to develop strategies for the City's participation in the SCC process.

FISCAL IMPACT: Staff has acquired the technical services of consultants specific to Dominion's request to review the information and represent the City. The Working Group is led by staff from the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services and supported by a project team with staff from multiple departments. The technical review portion of the project budget is \$150,000 resourced from the FY 2016 operating budget. The majority of this funding will be used during the SCC process. The City Attorney's Office has returned outside legal counsel.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Recommendations Memo

Attachment 2: Resolution

Attachment 3: Presentation

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