

TRANSMISSION LINE SITING PROCESS

OPPORTUNITIES AND SENSITIVITIES MAPPING – PUBLIC COMMENT

Potential corridors for the proposed Bay Lake Project transmission lines were presented to local residents in May 2012. The corridor opportunities were identified using Geographical Information Software (mapping), aerial photography and by following co-location and other guidelines. During summer, ATC staff, contractors, and construction coordinators reviewed and evaluated the suitability of these corridors to narrow and refine them into preliminary routes.

Sensitivities

Sensitivities within the potential corridors were identified using a variety of information sources, including state, county and local land use data, public comments submitted by property owners, additional mapping data and in some cases, field verification. A partial list of sensitivity criteria is listed on the back.

Photography

Color aerial photographs of the potential corridors provided base imagery to overlay GIS data, including wetlands, soils, wildlife and other data. A limited number of field surveys also were performed, and ATC representatives noted any other human or environmental factors that might be affected by a proposed transmission line.

Comments

More than 850 households submitted comments by mail, phone, email or at open houses. These comments were reviewed, entered into ATC's database and evaluated for further action. Substantive and site-specific comments were used to verify GIS and other mapping data, which assisted in removing and adjusting the corridors. Many site-specific comments helped identify locations of residences, sensitive habitats, wetlands and other facilities and structures – even several small local airstrips and landing fields.

A multi-disciplinary team of engineers, land-use planners, real estate professionals and environmental scientists reviewed this enormous amount of data to eliminate some corridors and narrow the majority of remaining corridors from about 3,000 feet wide to 600-900 feet wide. (Actual right-of-way requirement is 100 – 150 feet.)

ATC will use comments and other input from the October 2012 open houses to further refine the preliminary routes as we begin to prepare our regulatory applications for filing with the the Michigan and Wisconsin public service commissions. All comments from the public will be included in the filing. ATC must submit at least two route alternatives in its application; ultimately, the regulatory agency determines the route if the project is approved.

EXAMPLES OF SENSITIVE AREAS:

- Existing residential areas or planned residential areas
- Prime farmlands and areas of ongoing agricultural activity, including center pivot irrigation systems
- Occupied buildings
- Population centers
- Wetlands
- Designated or registered national historic districts, memorial parks, wildlife areas, wildlife refuges, game management areas, forest and forest management areas
- Designated or registered state or national parks
- County parks and recreational areas, municipal parks, and parks owned or administered by other governmental subdivisions
- Mines, quarries and gravel pits
- Military reservation/installation
- Sensitive species occupied and potential habitat
- Scenic areas, including scenic travel routes
- Airport approach flight paths and VORTAC tower sites
- National wild and scenic rivers
- State-designated wild and scenic rivers
- Areas that are geologically unstable or highly erosive
- Waterfowl nesting or rearing areas
- Floodway/Flood plain
- Sensitive receptors including day cares, playgrounds, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, cemeteries
- Unique habitats (Oak Savanna, fen, prairie remnants, etc.)
- Archeological sites that can be spanned
- Wellhead protection areas