

Merritt Area Transmission Project

Community Open House Summary Report

October 28, 2010

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the feedback received on the Merritt Area Transmission (MAT) Project during the first community open house conducted by BC Hydro on October, 28, 2010. Comments, questions, advice and ideas were received regarding the Project and the transmission line alternatives being considered. Information collected during the open house will assist BC Hydro in the selection of a preferred alternative for the Project.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Merritt's electricity is supplied by a 69 kilovolt (kV) transmission from the Highland Substation, north of Merritt, to the Merritt Substation. BC Hydro's October 2009 load forecast determined that over the next 30 years significant electrical load growth is anticipated in the Merritt area. Contributing to this growth are new developments such as a wood pellet plant, hotels, residential subdivisions and a resort south of Merritt in the Coquihalla corridor. In order to meet this new demand upgrades to the transmission system and the Merritt Substation will be required by the fall of 2013.

BC Hydro received funding approval from the BC Utilities Commission in June 2010 to study alternatives and recommend a solution to meet the future electricity needs in the Merritt area. After a preliminary investigation of potential alternatives three feasible alternatives have been identified. All three alternatives include upgrading the Merritt Substation to 138 kV.

Alternative 1A: Upgrade the existing 37 km transmission line between the Merritt Substation and the Highland Substation from 69 kV to 138 kV and upgrade the Highland Substation.

Alternative 1B: Build a new 35 km 138 kV line between the Merritt Substation and the Highland Substation mostly along an existing BC Hydro right-of-way and upgrade the Highland Substation.

Alternative 2: Construct a new transmission line (approximately 27 km) from the Nicola Substation to the Merritt Substation mostly along an existing BC Hydro right-of-way and add a new 138kV connection to the Nicola substation.

LOGISTICS

NOTIFICATION

Notification of the open house was provided by way of:

- Advertisement* in local newspapers:
 - Merritt News
 - Merritt Herald

- Notice (flyer)* posted in the community
- Ad on radio station CKMQ (Q101)
- Letter from BC Hydro to all potentially affected property owners
- Information on Project website

Copies of the newspaper ad and notice are attached as Appendix A.

* **CORRECTION:** There was a typographical error in the legend on the map of Alternatives in the newspaper ad and notice: Alternative 2 was incorrectly described as “Alternative 1C”. Unfortunately this error was not caught before the ad and notice went to print.

EVENT DETAILS

The open house was held at the Merritt Convention and Civic Centre, 1950 Mamette Avenue on Thursday, October 28, 2010 between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

The open house was an informal, drop-in format allowing visitors to learn about the project at a pace reflecting their own level of interest and expertise, and to engage in dialogue with the eight members of the BC Hydro Project team present.

A series of display panels (see Appendix B) provided details on the following topics:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • The Transmission Grid | • Fish and Aquatic Studies |
| • Project Need | • Wildlife Studies |
| • Project Description | • Heritage Resources Studies |
| • Project Map | • Socio-economic Studies |
| • Project Schedule | • Vegetation and Soils Studies |
| • Information and Consultation | • Next Steps |

A set of orthophoto maps of the study area were also displayed.

A comment/feedback form was provided for visitors to complete at the event or submit to BC Hydro at a later date.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

A total of 58 visitors attended the open house and 25 people left comments. The following feedback was received through comment forms, emails and faxes.

Comments on Alternative 1A:

- I live on the shore of Nicola Lake. At present the power line runs on the hill at the back of my house and there is a road cut into the hill for servicing the power line. No problem with upgrading this existing power line as it is out of sight and safe from highway traffic. I will strongly object to the line running in front of my house along the #5 highway. Running a new line along the highway will result in problems with servicing the line and danger of traffic hitting the poles and not to

mention having such an eyesore in front of my house just makes no sense. Please use the existing route and be safe.

- Proposal 1A will likely serve the valley the best given mining opportunities West of Lower Nicola.
- Let's go with route 1A so that access/dependability is maintained.
- Priority:
 - Upgrade of existing line 1A to 138kV (NOW)
 - new line in existing r/w 1B
 - new line in existing r/w 2
 - Single poles though town
 - "ONLY ONE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY!"
- 1A is the one that I think should be used.
- The most logical one would be 1A.
- At the present time I see no problem with 1A that runs across my place.
- Use existing R/W NOT down Voght Street. Do this project ASAP! We need the power.
- I live in the Parkview subdivision and would like to see the power line 1A moved to a new location using the existing walkways by central park
- As a stakeholder in the project, the only alternative that we can support is Alternative 1A – upgrading the existing 37 km transmission line between the Merritt Substation and the Highland Substation from 69KV to 138KV and upgrade the Highland Substation. Alternative 2 is completely unacceptable to Coquihalla Developments Corporation as it goes through our hay fields and Alternative 1B would impact our forest land resource significantly.
- Our home is located on an existing Hydro right of way (not in use). I favour route 1A because it would not be near our home and therefore not devalue our property. Our neighbourhood consists of all newer homes and power lines that close would be inappropriate.
- Power from Highland Valley Substation following existing lines to Merritt Substation will provide the shortest connection to the power grid if Tolko proceeds with its co-gen plant. Route 1A is by far the better way to provide Merritt power increase
- Please take into consideration the following (regarding Parkview subdivision):
 - Alternative 1A: Using the existing right-of-way to cross our properties would appear to result in excessive infringement on our residences. The objective of converting the line from 69kV to 138kV would likely require greater spacing between lines as well as higher pole heights. This spacing requirement would lead to line locations closer to the edge of the right-of-way than with the current situation which has lines "stacked" in an up and down formation. Maps of the right of way indicate a width of only approximately 10 meters, which we assume was the requirement for a 69kV transmission line. Can you confirm that this 10 meter R/W is adequate for a doubling of the Voltage and for the increased spacing which will be required? We currently have residents in our complex complaining of such effects as radio reception, and have doubts that doubling the voltage in such a restricted R/W will have no impact. We also wish to mention that alternatives seem to exist to crossing Vought St. at the current location. The present site of the line could be re-routed along the Rotary Park eastward toward the current Police Station. This would locate the line over areas of Park and existing Walkways, which may be preferable

to over the Parkview complex as well as the now heavily populated areas south of Vought Street.

- Alternative 1B: Our concerns depend on route selection of the segment of the line on city property.
- Alternative 2: We have no concerns.

Comments on Alternative 1B:

- Build 1B (80% length) then cut into existing 1A, upgrade portion of 1A to the substation, will not damage the view from the lake or from highway 5. And the north entrance of the city.
- My suggestion would be to alternate 1B and not come through Parkview subdivision.
- We would like to see alternative 1B.
- Our preference would be alternative 1B, mainly because it has the least effect on the population.
- 1B as far as I can see is the best as I live in Parkview and we do not need any more lines (Power lines).

Comments on Alternative 2:

- Oppose option #2 (Nicola Lake). Access and weed control and development problems with the existing line on lots 11B, 195, sec 31, etc. Prefer use of Highland Substation where right of way is secured and less population density. With an organic farm on Nicola Lake I am opposed to any pesticide preventers on the property (posts). The beauty of Nicola Lake is at risk with Hydro lines. Hope to continue working relationship with Hydro and not entertain any transmission line (option 2) on Nicola Lake. Thanks.
- There was confusion between alternative 2 and 1C, which are one and the same. 1C was in the newspaper. I do not want the alternative 2 at all. I do like the 1B option or 1A.
- Power from Nicola Substation will impact those along Vought Street, a large business (Extra Foods) and all those living along Forksdale Ave

Other comments:

- I was wondering: since pulsing DC is by far more efficient transmitting...? Would not the cost of modification be offset by the improved efficiency? By choosing a frequency that is enhanced by the Tesla effect, possibly even greater payoff?
- Thank you for hosting the community open house. We are of the opinion this work is required and you have a "right of way". Please do what you need to do.
- We thank you for the opportunity to give input and look forward to being kept informed as the project progresses.
- As Merritt grew during the 60s and 70s more power was required. The route chosen from HLD to Merritt was cleared and prepared for the transmission line. Hydro lands people were not able to convince one of the owners near Mamatte Lake to grant an easement, and the demand seemed to stabilize; the project was put on hold. Now, with Merritt growing again, a new line will soon be necessary. Unfortunately, the town has grown up around the substation, making the entrance to the town more difficult. No matter which way the line comes from. I am not sure if easements were acquired through the ranch lands or into the town. In any case, the town entrance will be the more problematic.

- I was unable to attend the Open House, but I want to express my opinion about this development. I live in the Parkview Adult Community. A powerline runs through our community - in fact, some houses are very close to it. Although I have heard via television that there is no scientific proof that proximity to powerlines causes cancer, I really believe in the anecdotal evidence in many cases. I have heard stories of many cancer cases in people who live close to or under power lines. I know of someone who lived in the area of Rosisle, Manitoba. In the last ten years or so, there have been at least nine cases of cancer in the area near to the powerline. Eight are dead. There were cases of lung, stomach, bone and other cancers and one case of leukemia. There are other similar stories. People have said they can feel the current when they walk underneath powerlines, and you can certainly hear them. Because of these health reasons, and because an increase in the power would lower the property value of the homes in this community, I strongly alternative, in spite of the fact that this would be more costly.
- I attended the open house for the upgrade of the Merritt Transmission line proposal. It was well done with many maps and knowable people on hand to explain the options. I own a home which borders the hydro right of way in the Parkview Strata complex. I am very concerned with the danger of the higher power transmission lines above the house. This will drastically affect property values with these houses and I just do not want that nor can I afford to lose the value of my house. Regardless of the safety issue people strongly believe that living beside high voltage power lines is definitely so very detrimental to ones health and therefore the value of the property drops.

Our discussion with the Hydro people as well as the City of Merritt Alderman and Mayor was to move the line to the parkland beside the Parkview Strata. This would cut out the two right angle bends and have a shorter and more direct line to the existing poles on Voght Street and up to the Merritt Substation. This existing line is the only one that runs over a residential area in the City. The Mayor was in full agreement to move the line to the park area. As she mentioned there's no body living in that area so it should not be a problem.

The residents in that seniors complex are all so very worried about the possibility of the high voltage lines beside there homes and it would be so very comforting to us all if Hydro would put there fears to rest and announce the park route that would bypass there homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns with this proposal and again please announce the new safer route for the high voltage line.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The information and feedback gathered at the October 28th open house will assist BC Hydro in making a decision on the preferred alternative before the end of 2010.

A second open house will be held early in 2011 to provide information and gather feedback on the preferred alternative.

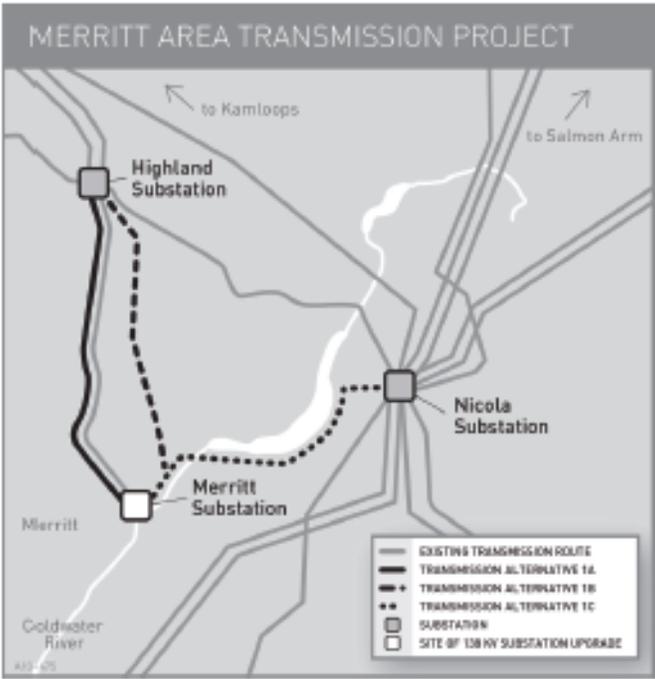
Newspaper Advertisement

You are invited: BC Hydro Open House

MERRITT AREA TRANSMISSION PROJECT

To address the growing demand for electricity in the Merritt area, BC Hydro is proposing to upgrade the Merritt Substation and upgrade an existing transmission line or construct a new transmission line. Several alternatives are being considered to meet the future electricity needs of Merritt by Fall 2013.

BC Hydro invites you to learn more about the project, to share your knowledge of the area and to communicate your thoughts and ideas as we plan a route for the proposed transmission line.



DATE: October 28, 2010
TIME: Drop in any time between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm
LOCATION: Merritt Convention and Civic Centre, 1950 Mamette Avenue

Your views are important to us.

For further information about the open house and to view a map of the alternatives please visit transmission.bchydro.com/projects/merritt or call 1 866 647 3334.

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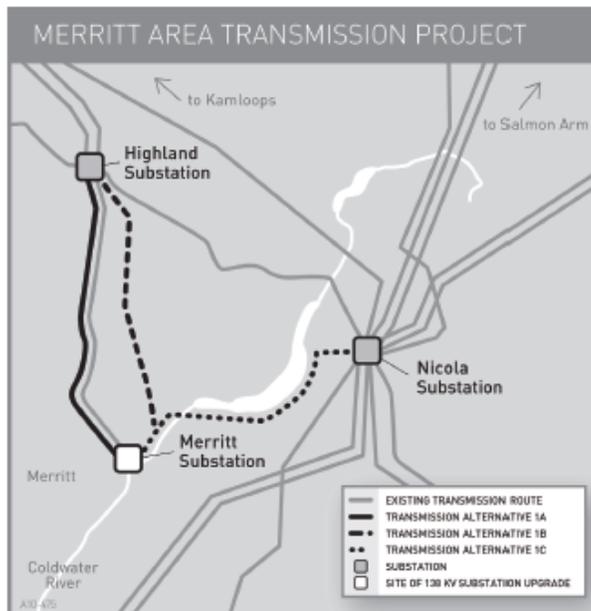
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Community Notice:

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