

Warrenton Wheeler Gainesville 230 kV Reliability Project

Ad Hoc Information Session

May 16, 2013 – Fauquier County Government Center

On Thursday, May 16, 2013, Dominion and NOVEC convened an Ad Hoc Information Session for interested members of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) to further discuss some of the Parking Lot items reviewed during the second CAG meeting. Dominion also took the opportunity to review and receive input on the draft maps that had previously been sent to all CAG members. The meeting was held from 10:30 to noon at the Fauquier County Government Center in Warrenton.

Participants

- Lory Payne, Southern Fauquier Historical Society
- Wendy Wheatcraft, Fauquier County
- David Blake, Buckland
- Linda Wright, Buckland, Brentsville Historic Commissioner
- Sue Scheer, Citizens for Fauquier County, Auburn Battlefield
- Susan Russell, Citizens for Fauquier County
- Les Cheek, Citizens for Fauquier County
- Brenda Ross, property owner
- Kipp Hanley, Fauquier Times-Democrat
- Lou Emerson, Fauquier Now

Team members

- Carla Picard, Dominion Electric Transmission
- Liz Harper, Dominion Siting and Permitting
- Ronnie Bailey, Dominion Transmission Planning
- Bob Bisson, NOVEC System Development
- Patty Rusten, Natural Resource Group

Handouts

- Parking Lot Q&A
- Fact sheet – *Background: Electric System Reliability*

Meeting Background

Carla Picard opened the meeting and stated the purpose of the meeting was to spend time with interested CAG members to listen to concerns, answer questions and provide clarification about the need for the project. Dominion and NOVEC wished to help CAG members gain understanding so the CAG process can move forward to the stated purpose of the group – to gather community perspectives and input about local concerns regarding transmission line routing. Copies of the draft maps (previously posted on Dropbox for all CAG members to review) were provided so the group could provide feedback.

Carla explained that input can and will affect the outcome. Community members are not expected to endorse the route or any aspect of the process. Carla also reiterated that the project is about reliability, not capacity. Additional generation will not fix the problem. Any recommended route will require answers to support the recommendation and answers to explain why other routes were not recommended.

The group requested that the meeting begin with a review of the draft maps.

SCC Process

As the group reviewed the maps, Liz Harper answered questions and provided an overview of the State Corporation Commission (SCC) process. The highlights include:

- The SCC is responsible for analyzing and confirming the need for the project and determining the final route for the transmission line(s). The SCC has a public process that begins at the time the application is filed. The process frequently includes public hearings (conducted for the purpose of gathering public comment) held in local communities as well as evidentiary hearings. Evidentiary hearings are held in Richmond, conducted by a Hearing Examiner who acts as a judge, and include testimony from Dominion, the SCC Staff and other case participants. Both hearings result in a detailed report that includes a discussion about the public comments.
- The SCC has three commissioners who are elected by Virginia General Assembly and has authority over all transmission lines 138 kV and above.
- Dominion has a standard working practice with various state agencies to consider the potential for impacts from our electric transmission line and substation projects. Prior to the preparation of an SCC application, the company contacts state agencies and localities to inform them about the project and possible study area and to request any information concerning the area that would be pertinent to the routing study. Our consultants are currently gathering the data these agencies have available.
- Once routes are chosen, Dominion follows the guidelines prepared by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and prepares a preliminary “desktop” review of the project that is made part of the routing report included with the application submitted to the SCC for consideration. Archeological sites are included in a proprietary and non-public section of the report per Department of Historic Resources’ guidelines to protect those sites from public disturbance.
- Once at the SCC, the Department of Environmental Quality is responsible for evaluating the environmental impacts of the project and conducts a coordinated review among the different state agencies, including Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Department of Conservation & Recreation, Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, Department of Historic Resources and others. These agencies perform their own analysis and provide recommendations which typically become conditions of the project approval in the SCC’s Final Order.
- In general, Dominion will submit a proposed route and the alternatives that were considered for the SCC to review. For example, if Option B is proposed as the recommended option for this project, the application must include a complete record that shows the analysis of alternatives within the study area. The SCC expects that the applicant (Dominion) has looked carefully at every option.

Discussion items

- *Does Dominion conduct “balloon” tests to determine the visual impact?*
No, because there are newer techniques that provide a better visual analysis than a balloon test. Dominion uses Truescape to conduct the visual analysis and their process includes surveying and photographing existing areas, creating models of structures and current topography to produce a 3D presentation, or a visual simulation. These presentations are displayed at public open houses and posted on the website. Dominion will bring examples to the next CAG meeting.

- *What requirements does the VDHR have for mitigation?*
The applicant and the VDHR work through a process that can begin before the application is submitted but the SCC needs to finalize the route before the process can be completed. The SCC Final Order will also include conditions that need to be implemented as part of the approval. In some cases, mitigation can be something not necessarily connected to the project, but within the region around the project.
- *Is the public hearing before or after the SCC determines the route?*
There is frequently more than one hearing and the hearings are always before the route is chosen. That is the purpose of the hearing – the public comments and concerns are taken into account in the SCC’s investigation into the application. From the time the application is submitted, it can be six to nine months until the public hearing(s).
- *Do the Commissioners attend the local hearings?*
If the Commission determines that a local hearing is warranted, the local hearing is conducted by the Hearing Examiner and some of the SCC support staff. Some of the Commissioners have attended some of the recent local hearings, although it is not normal for the Commissioners to attend the local hearings or the evidentiary hearing (in Richmond) in person. The Hearing Examiner is responsible for creating a detailed report that covers all of the comments offered at the hearings.
- *Are there any other federal permits involved?*
A permit from the Army Corps of Engineers is required for crossing wetland areas or constructing some types of foundations in wetlands. A Section 106 review is always part of a COE permit approval, but the route will determine the involvement of the COE.
- *This project would cross Cedar Run – what about wetlands?*
We already have existing lines that cross Cedar Run. We mitigate those impacts, sometimes through purchasing wetland points.
- It was recommended to have an expert attend a future CAG meeting to discuss adverse effects, particularly the effects on historical and battlefield resources. Dominion will have a cultural resource expert available at the next meeting.
- An SCC process flowchart is available on the WWG project website. Dominion will bring copies for the next CAG meeting. Dominion will also provide an example of a Final Order for another project.

Map Review

Liz Harper reviewed the maps (listed on the constraint table) with the group. The following comments and recommended changes/additions were made by the participants:

- Add additional substations (Nokesville, Vint Hill, Bristers, etc.) to the maps
- Clarify the legend information on map A4
- Re-designate an area on map A3 that is currently shown as forested area but is now a housing development
- Ensure the study area boundary is consistent on all maps
- Verify historical/cultural/battlefield information with DHR

- Use ABPP (American Battlefield Protection Program) information to depict battlefields on maps
- Contact Prince William County for registered historic sites and historic high sensitivity areas maps
- Contact the National Park Service for information about LWCF easements to include on future maps
- Include VDHR easements
- Combine maps C1 and C2

Several of the participants agreed to provide information to the Dominion and NRG team for the maps. The group also agreed that the C1/C2 map would be sent to a small group for review prior to re-posting the maps on the Dropbox site. The small group includes Linda Wright, Wendy Wheatcraft, Ray Utz, David Blake, Sue Scheer and Lory Payne.

Project Need

Carla Picard reviewed the three reliability issues, Warrenton, Wheeler and Gainesville, followed by a discussion and Q&A:

- *Is the 300 MW limit (for Gainesville) a law or regulation? If it is a state law, why doesn't NOVEC need to comply?*
The criteria are federal standards that apply to transmission owners that tie into the regional grid. NOVEC's transmission lines do not. NOVEC is a distribution cooperative and does not own any networked transmission facilities.
- *What is the difference between distribution and transmission? A CAG member offered a comparison to the capillary system.*
The utilities agreed – the transmission system delivers bulk power like the primary artery, and the distribution system (like capillaries) is made up of many, many smaller lines that make sure the electricity reaches each and every customer.
- *Where does the power come from for NOVEC's substations?*
All of the electric co-operatives are served by Dominion's transmission system. NOVEC does not have any transmission in Fauquier County; all transmission lines serving NOVEC distribution stations are located in Prince William County.
- *There is a new 800-home development proposed by Brookside but the feeling by some at the meeting is that there won't be that many homes. Does that affect the growth projections for the project?*
Yes, our distribution planning considers developer projections and plans in its growth projections.
- *Have you considered the impact to the FAA facility located in the Vint Hill area?*
We routinely coordinate with the FAA during the application process and will coordinate with them on this site also.
- *Will this project ship power to New Jersey?*
No. This project provides redundancy for Fauquier County and western Prince William.

- *If Dominion constructs a 230 kV line within an easement, can that be upgraded later to a 500 kV line? (Can Dominion do anything it wants after the initial construction is complete?)*
 Upgrading or building a new line at 500 kV (even in the same corridor) would require SCC approval, again moving through an application and public notice process. Dominion's rights are limited to the specific language in the easement agreement between Dominion and each property owner along the right-of-way. Dominion will bring additional information regarding easement rights to the next CAG meeting.
- *Is this project needed just because of the Warrenton Training Center facility expansion?*
 No. The need for this project was inevitable and includes residential, commercial, and governmental projections. The timing is the only change as a result of customer projections.
- *Can we get copies of the charts [that were reviewed in the first and second meetings]?*
 Yes, they are located on the project website:
<https://www.dom.com/about/electric-transmission/warrenton/index.jsp>
- *What created those drops in demand (on the historical chart)?*
 Anomalies in the historical demand for electricity can be caused by economics as well as operational needs – shifting power flows from one area to another to accommodate variances on the system at any given time. The important thing is to look at the trend over a longer period of time, which shows consistent growth.
- *What about using solar energy as a solution?*
 Dominion is participating in a number of solar projects across the state, and we offer net metering. NOVEC Solutions is now selling and leasing solar energy systems. However, generation, from solar, Remington, or the new Fauquier landfill, will not resolve the problem of having a backup in place for when electricity cannot reach the Warrenton Substation. Incidentally, the landfill, which is scheduled to produce up to 2 MW of power, is served by this line. So if the line is out, the facilities used to generate power at the landfill would not be able to run.
- *There is a lot of growth in the Bealeton, Morrisville, Catlett areas. Are the energy demands of the southern end of the county part of the project need? Will Dominion need another substation in that area?*
 Yes, there is visible growth in the Bealeton area and others. Dominion is looking into the future possibility of adding a distribution substation in Opal to help serve the growing areas between Warrenton and Remington. The Opal Substation would be fed by the Remington-Warrenton line – another reason that this project is critical.
- *Can the Opal substation be part of the solution?*
 No, the Opal Substation would take electricity from the existing transmission line, not provide any sort of redundancy.
- *Can one of the substations [in southern Fauquier] be upgraded to support this project?*
 We looked at more than a dozen different alternatives for solving the problems that have been identified. We reviewed those alternatives in the first meeting. The maps showing those alternatives and the cost comparisons are available online.

- A CAG member noted that Fauquier County updates the growth assumptions every year and relies on county historical information and industry projections; there is growth occurring on every street in every home, mostly due to the increased use of electronic equipment.
- *The underground presentation used at the second meeting of the CAG showed installation of one type of conduit. Can Dominion do a double installation of conduit to plan for the future?*
Yes, we have on other projects.
- *The City of Manassas has installed computers in underground lines that quickly and easily detect problems. Can the same technology be used for underground electric transmission lines?*
There is no fault location equipment available today that provides enough confidence to begin excavation without doing further fault location testing, as described by Dominion’s engineering group in the “Parking Lot” question and answer document. A similar question was raised in the second CAG meeting.
- A CAG member suggested Dominion should consider changing the way they’ve done things (electric transmission) in the past.
- A CAG member advised that Fauquier County is changing from a rural culture to an urban culture.
- *Is the cost of underground construction the reason why Dominion doesn’t propose that as an option?*
Cost is definitely part of the reason why underground is not typically proposed. Recall that the role of the SCC is to seek cost-effective solutions for the common good. The new law that was passed in 2010 restricts the SCC’s ability to approve an agreement between a utility and a locality for underground construction when an overhead option is available.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at noon. Carla stated that a meeting summary would be completed and posted on the project website with the meeting handouts so that the other CAG members and interested stakeholders could access and review the documents.