

South Hill 230 kV Electric Transmission Line and Substation Project
June 7, 2022
Community Meeting – Q&A

- So, we have a lot of players here tonight. Obviously, if not one of us can answer your question, we will write it down and get your contact information and we will get back with you. So, I have Hailey here with the microphone. So, if anyone has questions. Oh, here we go. Getting them started.

- Thanks. This will be real quick. The Northern route substation Unity Road. It's actually in the easement right on my property line. So, the question I have is two, or threefold. How big is that substation going to potentially be? How is it going to affect current property lines? Are there going to be things like security lights, security fencing, and then, and I don't know this, so I'm asking the question, how does it affect livestock? Is there going to be an effect?

- So, for the size of the substation, we're still in preliminary design, but looking including stormwater management, about 15 to 20 acres, and it would be under that existing 500 KV line and south. And yes, it will have security lights on the fence. It will have a wall fence. It won't be a fence, it'll be a wall, because of the 500 KV equipment in there. And it does have security associated with the high voltage or with the 500 KV.

- From what you said, local government has no input into it and no decision SCC makes the final tick.

- Yes, the SCC does ultimately select and approve the route.

- So, substations though are under the pure view of the locality. So, for instance, if we were to pick the Northern route, the Unity substation would have to go through local permitting, review and approval. But SEC-DQ coordinates through the SEC process. And then if there's any additional permits you need for the Army Corp, for instance, if we pass through a creek, wetlands, those sorts of environmental features we'll need subsequent permitting from those relevant agencies. But the jurisdiction for sure lies with the State Corporation Commission to verify that there is a need for the project. And then which route reasonably minimizes impacts.

- Unity Road is a gravel road with a limited weight bridge, right by where the proposed substation site will be. Are there any planned modifications to the road itself and or the bridge?

- The direction you're actually traveling? There's an 11-ton limit on that bridge.

- We haven't looked at the access to the substation yet, but if that were a road that we were going to use, we would do improvements on the road, and obviously look at the

weight limits and whatnot so that we weren't causing any issues. And if anything, we would improve the road.

- [Attendee] I actually want the reverse. I don't want it improved because people speed up and down it. So please don't pave that.

- Okay. Thank you.

- Okay, so you said that there's of course an increased amount of energy, I guess, that you're needing. So, is this from like homes, businesses? What is the root cause of some of this having to be done and the result?

- That's a great question. So that's due to data center growth in the area. So that's where those red circles were. That's the new load that's coming in the area.

- [Attendee] For Microsoft?

- For, yes, a data center customer.

- [Attendee] Can you tell me it was addressed last night, I believe one of our neighbors was concerned and she's not here tonight about the sound issues that will come from the Unity substation. Can you elaborate on that? Because I like to hear her cows and her goats. And I like to hear when somebody goes over that bridge, I've always lived on a dirt road. I don't want you modifying my road. There are three, 90 degree turns on that road. It's going to destroy where we live. Sorry. Can you elaborate more on the sound?

- [Panel Member] Sure. The primary source of sound coming into substations is going to be the large power transformers. As far as our specifications go, we work with manufacturers to keep the sound down as low as we can. Apart from that, because it's going to be a security fence substation that will help abate the sound additionally, and you can work with the county and make sure that they have appropriate requirements for sound abatement, and they can do tree plantings and other things around the perimeter substation to further abate sound. But modern transformers are much quieter than the older ones were.

- [Attendee] So when you say the sound, that means like the sound ordinance for the county.

- Yes.

- [Attendee] Is that what you're looking at or whatever the sound ordinance so that it stays within that limit?

- Yeah. So, with it being approved through the county, we would need to make sure that we are staying within all the requirements associated with that, as part of the approval.

- I may have this wrong. What's the amount of the decibel limit? What comes out from a standard substation?

- I think it varies depending on the voltage. So, off the top of my head, we don't have that because of course the transformers haven't been, but that's something that we can certainly provide or throughout the process and the design process.

- And if you fill out one of those comment cards with your question, we can look into the amount of transformers and get back to you too.

- You said the SCC picks the route, but if you have to build a transformer or something like that, the county has to approve it. What happens if the county doesn't approve it?

- So, it is a dual review, right? So, the State Corporation Commission can find the need and that the route reasonably minimizes impacts. But then we have to meet all the county justifications, all the ordinances that govern a site and a facility like this. And so, we have to prove to the county, that we can do that in accordance with their expectations. So, we do need to partner with the county and make sure that we're meeting their expectations.

- So, if the County doesn't want it. What happens?

- Well, we'll go through the public review process for them and let that suss it out. But I'm not quite sure what their perspective is we don't have any plans in front of them quite yet. And so, we'll have to go through that process. It's usually an iterative process, as well as we work with their planning staff, and understand what their expectations are, what sort of mitigation may be needed, whether that's additional plantings or setbacks or whatever the case may be. But we'll have to go through that process. Typically, that happens after the state corporation commission approves it, because again, they have to verify that the project's needed and then we'll go through the county process and the subsequent permitting processes with the other agencies.

- I don't know anything about electricity. Is this related to the proposed Laurel Branch solar project? 'Cause a lot's coming at us people right now. You know, this project, that project, that project and the whole little Southside, Virginia, my home, is going but is it related to the, okay. So, then where's the electricity generated that's going to be transmitted over these lines?

- So first, just to answer the question, this project is not affiliated with solar. It is separate from solar, but in terms of generation, our power is generated from many different sources. And so, it all feeds into the grid. So, it doesn't necessarily matter which source is closest.

- They're not 500 KV.

- For Unity substation, for the Northern solution, you we'd be tapping the 500 KV line, which is sort of the backbone of our system, which goes up and down all around the Commonwealth. It connects to a variety of generation sources all throughout the Commonwealth. Whether that's in Brunswick or Greenville or in Louisa County. We have about, 30 or 40 different.

- Okay. So just help my little mind understand something is going to get it to the substation. And then the substation is going to send it out to Mecklenburg. Is that yeah?

- The transmission lines. Yes, the transmission lines will go to the substation. The substation will step the voltage down to a lower, more manageable voltage. And then that is what feeds homes, residences, our data centers. Yeah.

- So, there'll be lines coming into the substation and lines going out of the substation.

- Yes.

- [Attendee] Okay.

- But the existing line is already in place, right. So, we would just be tapping that with a new substation as close to that line as possible. And then the new transmission line would come south about 10 miles. Or conversely in the Brunswick area, we have an existing substation that will expand and that would come west towards South Hill.

- [Attendee] I apologize for jumping in front of anybody if I did, but it's curious to me and it's part, I know you've just partially addressed it, but you have like a west, you call it, the Western option is called the Northern solution and you allude to Luisa, et cetera to the north. So actually, the Northern solution is connecting to something else. It's not only on the grid down here, but it's headed, there's a Northern demand, is what I'm trying to flesh out of you.

- No, the driver behind this project is the demand in Southside, Virginia. What Greg was referring to-

- [Attendee] Okay so-

- is down generation plants are all over our grid.

- So, we're talking about, I'm trying to say Wenjano, but that's not correct, but you've got a power plant on the upper James around Route 15.

- [Panel Member] Yes.

- Tell me the name of it. South End?

- [Panel Member] South End Yes. Yes.

- Is that it? Okay, all right. I don't know all your lingo and your secret language and all that kind of stuff, but everybody's got it. All right. That explains the Northern solution to me. Thank you. As Southerners, we sometimes take exception to those terms.

- [Panel Member] Apologies.

- [Attendee] Thank you.

- We just had to orient that the Northern solution was coming from the closest transmission line, which is that existing 500 kilovolt transmission line.

- [Attendee] I strive it to innocence. Okay.

- It's alright.

- [Attendee Thank you. I've heard a lot about Mecklenburg County and Brunswick County. Is there a benefit to Lunenburg County residents? Is the power being generated in Lunenburg County and shipped, being dispersed to other counties? Because we are basically, I know we are Southside Electric customers.

- [Panel Member] Right.

- You're Dominion. So, is there a collaboration between the two? Is there any benefit to Southside customers?

- Sure. So, a few things. The co-ops across the Commonwealth receive transmission service from Dominion Energy. And so, you pay your utility bill to South Side Electric or Mecklenburg Co-op or Dominion Energy. All of which gets their power from Dominion Energy's transmission system. So that's just the orientation there. And we all, regardless of what county you live in, probably benefit from a generation facility and a transmission line that come out of your county and into your county. In this case, Lunenburg has that 500-kilovolt transmission line, which is the source of power for the energy demand in Mecklenburg. And so, for the time being, it is a source that comes through the county to that load in Mecklenburg. But that's not to say that the benefits can't be wide reaching in the future, whether that's to whatever extent Lunenburg wants to develop in this area. I know I'm not getting into that, same thing with Brunswick. If they want to develop the Western part of their county, this transmission facility is for the benefit of the community for whatever future development occurs. It's not a sole source just because the driver happens to be in South Side, but South Hill Mecklenburg. But at this time period, right now, it really is of the good neighborly grace of Lunenburg that we come through the county to serve the demands of the customers down in Mecklenburg.

- [Attendee] Have y'all looked into anything going on at the Mecklenburg Microsoft, where they're getting that power? Have y'all been coming down 58 into south here and leave us alone. We're getting comfortable. I mean, you tear that up anyway.

- To answer a broad question for you. There's a lot going on in Mecklenburg. And as you could see from the map, there's a lot that has happened, 'cause there's a lot of low growth in the Boyton area and it's expanded outwards from there. And we're trying to keep up with that low demand from the sources that are in this area. For a long time, of course, this was a more rural area. And so, the transmission facilities accommodated the needs of the county at that time. And that change is occurring, whether I know solar is a huge conversation in Southside, Virginia. That's changing the dynamic of the electric system down here. The new load that's happening in Mecklenburg and elsewhere is changing the load and what's needed from an electrical infrastructure down here. So, we're trying to reasonably minimize impacts with all these projects. We have good rationale for the starting point of these lines, but again, that's why we're here. We don't know everything we want to hear from you. We understand that people don't want it, all is fair in this room. We just want to make sure that the door is open so that we have that conversation and we're hearing your concerns. And if we can accommodate them, we'll try to do so.

- [Attendee] Are you going to be hiring any local construction or how's this going to benefit us with jobs or, let me just throw it out there. Internet? We need internet.

- [Panel Member] So I'll handle the internet question.

- [Panel Member] Yeah, we have these at the front.

- [Panel Member] Oh, okay. So, there's two components to internet questions. So, we are not an internet service provider, right. But we have a program across the Commonwealth, so do the co-ops to sort of bridge the gap to extend service towards more underserved areas. And so, we have that program. It was a pilot program for the last two years. We just got approval to move that sort of statewide. And so, we're moving that in more and more communities. We have some information upfront about broadband. I know Mecklenburg and South Side Electric; both have programs to extend or close that gap. So that's sort of separate from this project, but certainly a concern and an initiative from us. As far as suppliers, I think we are looking for whatever sort of resources in the area. We have a lot going on here. I know Heather, the project manager, has gotten a few contacts for construction firms down here. Whether that's siting and grading or environmental controls or pallets for environmental protection for access. So.

- You're going to come just looking at your map, within a couple of hundred feet of my property line on my farm. If you take the Northern route, you're going to be supplying all this power to everybody. Two years ago, South Side Electric, they just don't service you. I was out of power for almost three weeks because of an ice storm. And that's I want you just to understand, that's the frustration that we feel in Lunenburg County. You know, we've got all of the, they mentioned internet. I know that they are in the programs that the federal government just did. They provided funding for that. I can't even get

internet. I mean, I just want you to understand the frustration that we feel with South Side Electric in particular.

- [Panel Member] Okay. Great. Appreciate that. And we have interactions with the co-ops all the time. As they learn about our plans to extend the transmission grid, they're able to revise their plans and maybe they're able to add in new substations and new circuitry, so that they can have more operational flexibility. I know on our distribution side, that's what we do as well. And so the more transmission that is in a neighborhood or in a community, the co-op has more options to tie in the circuits as well.

- [Attendee] The frustrating part is, that I'm going to have that power, 200 feet from my property.-

- [Panel Member] Right.

- I'm not going to have any power at my house.

- [Panel Member] Understood, understood.

- This is a yearly thing-

- [Panel Member] I understand.

- I mean, it's not something that's, and the whole infrastructure and South Side Electric in this area is just data-

- [Panel Member] Right.

- And

- [Panel Member] No, we understand.

- That's a frustration we feel here in Lunenburg and we're not getting any benefit from this.

- [Panel Member] Understood. And we can certainly talk more with the co-ops to see, what their other plans are in the area. Now that they know that more transmission will be built.

- I wanted to clarify something. I think you said earlier, when you had one of the maps up, you said that these were like the proposed options, and I guess I want you to restate what you said. So right now, we're looking at one, but we know that the other one's going to have to be done. So, like how quickly after this one is completed, will you be looking at the next one?

- So, the second source will be needed by summer of 2028, based on projected load growths right now. We will continue to get those and monitor that to see if that changes the date. But as of right now, that's where we're at.

- [Attendee] So it's going to be like a continual thing that we'll be having.

- Well, yes, possibly, but that's why Roxana talked about, it's not sort of one or the other, but it could be both. So, we didn't want to give the false impression that if we picked another option that one area could not have a transmission line and then in a year or two we're back in front of you.

- [Attendee] Yeah.

- And so, we wanted to make sure that you guys knew that this is probably an evolving process. And.

- [Attendee] One of your lines is like you said, the yellow line. I think that's the, the number one right now that you're looking at,

- The Unity Road, right?

- [Panel Member] So the yellow accidentally are the two routing alternatives are the Northern solutions.

- [Attendee] Okay. But then whichever one you use, the next time the other one will be used or.

- [Panel Member] No. So, we have that Northern solution from proposed unity that has the orange and yellow routes. We do not have a preferred route between those two right now. But one of those will be built. And then when we said the second source, we meant from the Eastern solution, and then it'll be one of those options.

- [Attendee] So the SCC is the one that will decide which those two routes will be.

- [Panel Member] Correct.

- Gotcha.

- Yeah. And all the numbers are on them. It just referencing like routes. They're just numbers, it doesn't refer to a preference for each route.

- Not really a question, just a statement. I'm Taylor Newton. I'm the director of planning and economic development for Lunenburg. The questions y'all have had about broadband. You can also bring to me, because the county has received funds from the state to get broadband, to unserved and underserved areas. So that's a project that's in

the works. After the meeting you're more than welcome to come up to me. I've got my cards and I can talk to you.

- Thank you.

- [Attendee] What's the construction like for this. How much traffic 'Cause I'm just looking at the line. 'Cause we also have a proposed solar project, right at the same, really close area. And that has construction going on and this is a farming community, not a construction site.

- [Panel Member] Right.

- So that's a really great question and certainly that it will come. So, we'll figure out once the route is approved and we know what we need to build, then we'll work on access. So how are we going to actually get from the main roadways over to the right of way. After of course we purchase the easements from property owners. So, we'll work with farmers. If it's cattle, or timber or crops, we'll have an understanding of, A - what are the impacts? And if it's crop damage, we'll pay for crop damage. If it's a time of year that the farmer would prefer us to go on, we'll try to phase the construction accordance to how they work the crops. If it's livestock, we'll work on gating to protect the livestock. We also use usually it's gravel at construction entrances and then big wooden pallets to protect sort of the soft land.

- [Attendee] And trucks?

- And so, then it's going to be heavy duty trucks and then it'll be sort of, as you go, depends on how the construction phasing works. We haven't gotten to that point yet, but you may have like a series of trucks that do the foundations and poles and then you'll have a series of trucks that do the wire. So, it's going to be iterative, but we haven't gotten to that construction schedule yet. But certainly-

- Yeah, of course. And then like we do try to have a construction meeting. So, when we're about to start construction, everybody will understand what that phasing looks like.

- [Attendee] I mean, if everything happens, it kind of looks happen at a very similar.

- Yes. So, all these projects are overlapping, whether it's in the chase city area or over here, yes. We're going to have a lot of construction going on in the Southside area. Sure.

- [Attendee] So you mentioned purchasing the easements, have you already been in contact and communication with those folks that you're plan? "Hey, we're planning on maybe doing it through your properties. We would like to talk to you about the easements."

- No, sir. We have not. We will wait until we file with the Corporation, and they choose the preferred route and then we will go about having those conversations with the property owners.

- [Attendee] Does the property owner have to sell, is it a.

- So, think of this very much as, so the question was, do property owners have to sell. And so, the answer is we want to make sure that we're working out a real estate negotiation, that's beneficial to you and of course, to the project. And so, we would like to work with individual property owners on that real estate negotiation. We have third party appraisals come in; they have a whole series of criteria in which they evaluate a property. We would present you an offer. And that is the starting point. If you guys have a counteroffer, it is a conversation much like selling land. Of course, if we can't come to a reasonable negotiation and compromise, then we do have other means to get that easement. But our first preference is to work on a real estate deal with you all.

- [Attendee] What did you say are the means to that?

- So, if we can't come to a mutual agreeable real estate deal, we do have condemnation authority. And so, we will go through the court system to work on that. Of course, through the court system. It's again, it's a settlement of purchase of easement. It's just that the court decides what that number is versus us working out it individually.

- [Attendee] It's not a domain or anything.

- It is called domain, but it's not, it's still worked out of a purchase agreement. It's just that the courts decide what that number is.

- Yeah. Those of us that have history and Southside remember picket, I don't want to say that.

- [Panel Member] And just to add on to the easement, just because the easement is purchased by Dominion, it doesn't mean it's not usable. There are just restrictions under the line on what can and can't be done under the line, but it is still your property. Yes. We know we may be on your property, but we do try to avoid homes. And if we miss that at all on any of these, please point that out to us. And that is something we will adjust.

- How high are these walls that you're going to build around this?

- So around unity substation, which is the wall that we were talking about, that would be a 20-foot-tall wall around the substation. But that would shield your view shed of the equipment inside.

- Sorry. You have great visuals. I just want to personally see, because I live on Unity Road. I was looking through this slide here where you showed, it could be this color, it could be that color. I could care less about the color. I just want to see what the substation will visually look like, because I have what's going to be on Unity Road, 30 years from now as we're suffering through the solar panels. I just want to know what are they going to have to look at? Because my plan was my children to live near me and now my property will be not as good as it used to be. So, I would like to personally see before our county jumps into this, what will these? Because I have never lived around streetlights and I don't know about these security lights myself. Will they look similar to Gary's substation or.

- Gary's substation is a lower voltage. So, I don't want to draw that comparison to you and make it wrong. If you leave your contact information on one of those sheets up front, we do have the ability to do renderings and simulation photos based on what it would look like from your property with our proposed substation, that is a 500 to 230 KV station. So, we can work with you to get you a visual that you can look at. But if you could provide your information to the girls before you leave, that would be great.

- And then certainly with the next round of open houses, we'll have more photo simulations. Again, we are really in the preliminary stages of line design and substation design. And so, when we get a little bit further along, we'll have better renderings for these meetings.

- To add to the lighting. They are dusk to dawn lights, so they're not on all the time. And they're security driven too. So more on like the intrusion or anything is when they're triggered, on. And so, you won't have major spotlights.

- [Attendee] Sort of like a .

- No, it would have to hit the fence, but

- [Attendee] Very intelligent security.

- Thank you for coming tonight. Again, really encourage you to stick around and view the board as we have all our subject matter experts here. And please sign up for GeoVoice. Thank you for coming.