

Engineering

The old line being replaced is 69kilovolts. What will be the voltage of the new line? How much of this upgrade to the existing line is driven by all the solar planned for the valley?

The wood pole structures, equipment and components of the 69-kV Alamosa to Antonito Transmission line that were installed more than 60 years ago need to be replaced. The line will be rebuilt with new fire-resistant steel structures that are built to current Xcel Energy design specifications for this type of line. The new transmission line will more effectively meet current and future customer energy needs, improve overall electric service to homes and businesses in Alamosa and Conejos counties and mitigate fire risk from extreme weather events. The purpose of this project is to address the current and future energy needs of the community.

Did Xcel Energy consider undergrounding this transmission line?

Undergrounding electrical lines is a common topic. The primary issue with burying lines is cost, but there are other significant issues, such as operation and maintenance. Unlike lower-voltage distribution power lines which deliver electricity to homes and business, higher-voltage transmission lines are not frequently installed underground because of several factors, including primarily cost. Underground transmission lines require insulated underground cables and a concrete trench with truck-size manholes along the length of an underground line. An underground transmission line would result in a much wider area of disturbance with concrete installed along the entire route. The visual impact of an underground transmission line can be greater than overhead transmission lines since all vegetation would need to be removed in the right of way. Who benefits and who pays for undergrounding is an important issue which sometimes involves third-party cost sharing. While underground transmission lines are expected to have fewer weather-related outages, underground lines can still fail. And when outages occur, it takes an average of 8 to 10 days to repair an underground line, instead of hours to repair an overhead line. Also, the lifespan of underground lines is estimated to be about half that of overhead lines.

If a line is on my property will trees need to be removed?

Xcel Energy will meet with landowners to discuss if any trees within the easement may need to be removed.

Routing

Was a route going through La Jara considered?

While not formally evaluated in the Routing Study, routes through La Jara, either along U.S. Highway 285 or along the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad (SLRG), were assessed for feasibility. Neither of these routes were advanced for detailed analysis due to lack of adequate space and because more residential and commercial properties would be impacted compared to other route alternatives evaluated.

If you were able to adjust the proposed line around La Jara by going back along the current transmission line, why can't the entire proposed line follow the current transmission line?

The Modified Proposed Route incorporates solutions to unique issues, while also recognizing community preferences. The existing electric transmission line is critical to providing reliable service to customers and cannot

be taken out of service while being replaced. Public feedback indicated a preference for locating the new line along the HWY 285 corridor. Following alongside HWY 285 enables some overlap with the highway right-of-way, which reduces impacts to adjacent private property. Since the line could not be located along the HWY 285 corridor through La Jara, placing the new transmission adjacent to the existing transmission line reduces new impacts to the community.

Why aren't you following the railroad from Antonito to La Jara instead of through private land?

Since fall 2021, we worked with communities, landowners, and other stakeholders to identify potential new route options, including locations along the railroad. After extensive evaluation, conversations with railroad officials, and review of federal regulations, we concluded the railroad is not a viable option due to issues concerning construction and operational safety and required access for maintenance or outage restoration.

Easements, Property Value and Compensation

What is the effect on property values and how is compensation determined? Am I paying taxes on land I cannot use?

Landowners are typically given a one-time payment based on fair market value for the right-of-way on their land. Values are based on the appraised land value and market study data from recent sales of similar properties to determine fair and appropriate compensation for the right-of-way. Xcel Energy is only buying an easement interest and is not purchasing the right-of-way in fee. Most of the land will still be usable for the same purpose after construction of the transmission line, particularly in agricultural settings. After receiving compensation for the easement, the landowner continues to own the land and pay property taxes on it.

What if I am not interested in selling my property?

A Siting and Land Rights representative from Xcel Energy will negotiate with property owners based on the fair market value of the right-of-way area. In addition to compensation for the right-of-way, the landowner is also compensated for crop damage and/or physical damage to property resulting from the construction and/or maintenance of the transmission line. If a landowner believes that the compensation offered is not adequate, they are encouraged to contact the land rights agents to discuss their thoughts and negotiate further.

If my property is adjacent to the proposed route, and I haven't been contacted, does that mean it is on 'the other side of the road' and I'm not affected by the easement? Or are easement requests still pending for route at this point?

If the right-of-way is proposed on your property, you will be contacted in the coming months.

Can we build on the new proposed increase in land easement or am I losing the land under the new easement requirements?

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) requires electric utilities to meet stringent requirements designed to keep our electric system safe and reliable, including standards for maintaining proper clearances. We must keep a certain amount of distance around transmission lines clear of anything that may make contact or near-contact with a transmission line. No structures or buildings are allowed within the right-of-way and incompatible vegetation must also be removed. Most of the land will still be usable for the same purpose after construction of the transmission line, particularly in agricultural settings.

Health Concerns

What about EMF health risks – isn't there a link between transmission lines and different kinds of cancer?

Electric fields are created by voltage – the higher the voltage, the stronger the field. Anytime an electrical appliance is plugged in, even if it isn't on, an electric field is created in its vicinity. These fields are easily blocked by walls, trees, and even your clothes and skin; the farther away you move from the source of the electric field, the weaker it becomes. Find more information and resources on [Xcel Energy's Transmission EMF fact sheet](#).

Other

If I have a specific question on the routing on or around my property, how do I get a zoomed-in layout to see exactly where the transmission line and poles are relative to my property?

If you were unable to attend the recent in-person open houses, you may call the project hotline at 1-855-839-8865 or email alamosatoantonito@xcelenergy.com to request a detailed map.

If we didn't attend the open houses, because we do not live in the Valley, what is the best way to get all the available information?

The content provided during this virtual open house is posted on the project webpage including the Questions and Answers session. If additional information is needed or you have specific questions, call the project hotline at 1-855-839-8865 or email alamosatoantonito@xcelenergy.com.

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