

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

### SUBJECT

On Monday, January 21, the City Council will hear a presentation by Puget Sound Energy on the Energize Eastside project, intended to bring new higher capacity electrical transmission lines to the Greater Eastside. City staff will provide information on the City's role and policy framework, and an overview of the permit process.

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### POLICY ISSUES

#### State law and regulations

The City has the authority to regulate land use and, under GMA, the requirement to consider the location of existing and proposed utilities and potential utility corridors in land use planning.

#### Comprehensive Plan

The City must also plan for the provision of utilities consistent with the goals and objectives of its Comprehensive Plan, taking into consideration the public service obligation of the utility involved.

*“Puget Sound Energy (PSE) builds, operates, and maintains the electrical utility system serving the City of Bellevue. The city is part of a larger service area called the “Greater Bellevue Area” which is roughly the area between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish. PSE’s goals are to meet future customer needs for electrical service, enhance system reliability, and maintain safe facilities....*

*Several new system facilities including transmission lines and substations will need to be constructed to meet the projected increased demand for electrical service and to enhance reliability. Bellevue’s knowledge-based economy is part of a community lifestyle that requires and expects sufficient and highly reliable electrical service.”*

*Utilities Element, Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, pp. 104-105*

### DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

<u>      </u>	Action
<u>  X  </u>	Discussion
<u>  X  </u>	Information

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

### **Puget Sound Energy and Energize Eastside**

PSE is underway with Energize Eastside, a project to site and build approximately 18 miles of new 230 kV transmission lines<sup>1</sup> from Redmond to Renton. Vice-presidents Andy Wappler and Booga Gilbertson will make a presentation to Council on this project. PSE will discuss the extent of electrical facilities serving the Eastside; how growth and growth forecasts will strain their ability to deliver adequate electrical power; and how current efforts will not close the gap between existing facilities and demand. PSE will also provide details on their community outreach, an effort that has been underway since October 2013.

### **Policy and Regulatory Framework**

The City's role as a decision maker in this project ends with its permit authority over the State Environmental Policy Act review and conditional use permitting that will be necessary to permit this project in Bellevue. It starts, however, with an understanding of City policy and the regulatory framework under which PSE has built out its utility system to serve Bellevue. The City's responsibility is to ensure that Bellevue will have utility capacity to adequately serve the land use plan (Overview: Utilities Element).

Major utility system projects built by PSE under this framework were the Lakeside to Center (1997) 115kV transmission line and the Bridle Trails substation rebuild (1996).

In 2004, the city adopted a GMA-compliant Utilities Element in the Comprehensive Plan update. After this effort, City Council directed staff to explore additional compatibility requirements.

Then, in 2005, the Lochleven substation was proposed for upgrade. Although the proposal was consistent with PSE's System Plan, the proposal initially provided a bare minimum of mitigation. The neighborhood considered it an outcome incompatible with their community.

In response to community concerns, Sensitive Siting Designations were adopted into the Utilities Element in 2008, and implementation standards were adopted into the Land Use Code in 2009. The purpose of these standards is to regulate proposals for new or expanding electrical utility facilities and to minimize impacts associated with such facilities on surrounding areas through siting, design, and other requirements. These standards are both procedural (demonstration of an alternative siting analysis/ and conducting community outreach for proposals relating to new or expanding electrical utility facilities) and substantive (design standards and landscaping).

While it is critically important to meet growing demand for electrical service and further develop the reliability of Bellevue's electrical system, the 2008 policy and code amendments codified how important it is to ensure that new and expanding electrical facilities are sensitive to neighborhood character. Both the new Ardmore Substation (built) and the Lake-Hills Phantom Lake 115kV transmission line (currently under permitting review) were subject to the increased scrutiny of the alternative siting analysis process put in place in 2009.

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(1) - 230Kilovolt transmission lines are high voltage overhead lines transmitting electricity from generating sources to transmission substations or between transmission substations

The 2011 Electrical Reliability Study furthered this work. It included recommendations to amend the Land Use Code to allow PSE more flexibility in vegetation management and to ensure cooperation between the City and PSE in facility permitting of capacity projects deemed necessary to provide adequate electrical supply and reliability. The City Council will be briefed at a future date on the other work program implementation recommendations of this study.

## **Community Involvement**

The City has an equal responsibility to assure that community input is solicited on the siting of proposed facilities which may have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding community (Policy UT-51). The City has already engaged with PSE on working with affected communities to identify a process solution for identifying a proposed alignment. The City is doing the following:

- Established an interdepartmental strategic planning group under DSD leadership to identify and provide resources to PSE and to our neighborhoods on issues related to Energize Eastside, electrical reliability implementation, electrical facilities policy in the Comprehensive Plan update, and expectations of permitting review.
- Worked with our neighborhood associations to facilitate representation on the Citizen Advisory Group formed by PSE for Energize Eastside. On December 18th, 2013, PSE met with neighborhood leaders to discuss who might best represent Bellevue's neighborhoods to serve on the CAG. The neighborhood associations represented included leaders from Bridle Trails, Lake Hills, Wilburton, Sunset, Somerset, and Newport Hills. Three primary and three alternate representatives were selected from Bellevue neighborhoods to serve on the CAG.

The first CAG meeting will be on January 22, 2014, at 5:30 pm at the Red Lion Hotel. Bellevue staff will continue its support to neighborhood representatives in their role on the CAG, sub-area committee members, and neighborhoods who all have an interest in this project.

- Forming direct city staff relationships with PSE staff tasked with Energize Eastside, to align the City's planning policy interests with those of PSE and the CAG.

The PSE schedule reflects that the 230KV line in service by the end of 2018. PSE is continuing its early outreach at this time through the following actions:

- The Kirkland City Council received a briefing on December 10, 2013.
- Renton's official city web site notes the project under its Spotlight News Page coverage.
- The *Puget Sound Business Journal* covered the project in a December 4, 2013, article titled "Bigger Electrical Transmission Lines Coming to Eastside".
- *The Seattle Times* published a December 4, 2013, article describing the project rationale under a headline of "PSE Plan for Eastside: 18 miles of new capacity power lines".
- Both local community papers, like the *Bellevue Patch*, and community groups, like the Bridle Trails Community Club, are aware of the project, (e.g. December 2013 BTCC online newsletter)

Bellevue is also beginning its coordination with other jurisdictions and governmental entities in the planning and implementation of such multi-jurisdictional utility facility additions and improvements (Policies UT-9, UT-33, UT-48). This will be reflected in permitting cooperation between jurisdictions, as well as the likelihood of Bellevue serving as the lead agency for State Environmental Policy Act review of this project.

## **Next Steps**

Providing electrical reliability to support current and future needs of Bellevue residents and business owners requires a holistic cross-departmental approach and ongoing coordination with PSE. Tonight's briefing focused on the "Energize Eastside" project that is currently being introduced publicly through PSE's early outreach efforts. Future presentations are planned to engage Council in electrical reliability discussions that will include:

- Status of the Electrical Reliability Study and work toward addressing its recommendations;
- Status of the Comprehensive Plan Update work related to maintenance and expansion of electrical Utility facilities; and
- Action to make a final decision on the Conditional Use Permit requested by PSE to introduce a transmission line connection between the Phantom Lake and Lake Hills Substations. *(Please note that this is a Quasi-Judicial permit action and, as such, is governed by the "Appearance of Fairness Doctrine" which requires decision-makers to discuss the permit in public session and to disclose publicly when any communications have occurred outside of a formal Council meeting.)*

PSE staff will be present to answer questions regarding the Energize Eastside project. Bellevue staff will be present to describe the City's role in the project, and the policy and code framework that establishes the permit process and community outreach required to site or expand electrical facilities.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

N/A

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

N/A

### **ATTACHMENT(S):**

1. Utilities Element Goals statements
2. Utilities Element Figure UT-5a – New or Expanded Electrical Facilities

# Utilities Element

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## **GOALS:**

- 1. To promote and encourage the development and maintenance of all utilities at the appropriate levels of service to accommodate the City of Bellevue's projected growth.**
- 2. To promote and encourage the provision of reliable utility service in a way that balances the public's concerns about safety and health impacts of utility infrastructures, consumers' interest in paying no more than a fair and reasonable price for the utility's product, Bellevue's natural environment and the impacts that utility infrastructures may have on it, and the community's desire that utility projects be aesthetically compatible with surrounding land uses.**
- 3. To process permits and approvals for utility facilities in a fair and timely manner and in accord with development regulations which encourage predictability.**
- 4. To encourage new technology that improves utility services and reliability while balancing health and safety, economic, aesthetics, and environmental factors**

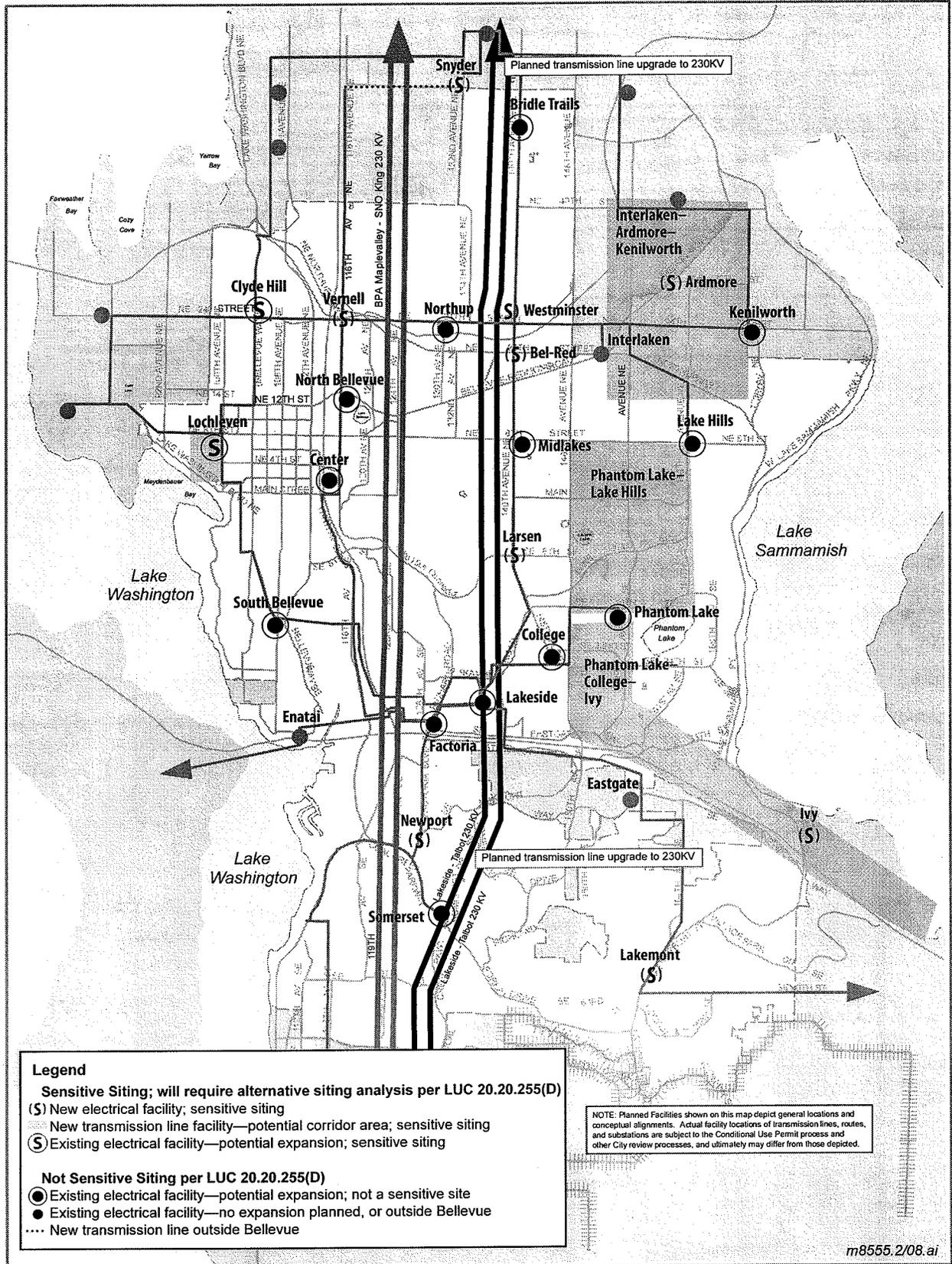


FIGURE UT.5a

New or Expanded Electrical Facilities

