

City of
Bellevue



MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 5, 2007

TO: Chair Robertson
Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Paul Inghram AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager 452-4070
pinghram@bellevuewa.gov
Lacey Madche, Legal Planner, 452-6134
lmadche@bellevuewa.gov
Nicholas Matz AICP, Senior Planner 452-5371
nmatz@bellevuewa.gov

SUBJECT: Public Hearings for Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Utilities Element for Electrical Facilities (05-114985 AC) and Land Use Code Amendment (07-132926 AC)

On December 12, 2007 the Planning Commission will conduct public hearings to receive testimony related to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for Utilities Element for Electrical Facilities and related legislative amendments to the Land Use Code to modify standards applicable to electrical utility facilities and substations.

BACKGROUND

This city-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) proposes:

Utilities Element map and policy amendments: Add four new policies (UT.72 - UT.75) under Non City-Managed Utilities - Additional Electrical Facilities; amend and add text under Non City-Managed Utilities – Electrical Service, Natural Gas Service; amend Figure UT.5 to create a new Figure UT.5 – Existing Electrical Facilities and a new Figure UT.5A – New or Expanded Electrical Facilities; amend Figure UT.7 to reflect current locations of PSE Gas Mains serving Bellevue, specifically in the Downtown.

This city-initiated Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) proposes:

Amendments to the Land Use Code: Amend E, L, and U Definitions at LUC 20.50.018 and .032 to amend the definition of Electrical Utility Facility, Local Utility System, and Utility Facility; amend LUC 20.20.650 Public Utilities – Design and Performance Standards; amend LUC 20.20.520(F)(2)(a) Landscape development; amend LUC 20.10.440 Land Use Charts; and create a new section LUC 20.20.255 Electrical Utility Facilities.

The November 21, 2007 staff report provides additional background information, discusses the public notice process, and analyzes the consistency of the proposal with the Comprehensive Plan Amendment decision criteria. Please **bring the November 21 staff report** to the December 12 Planning Commission public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public interest in a Comprehensive Plan amendment related to electrical facility siting and expansion began during the hearings and Council action for the 2004 seven-year GMA update of the Comprehensive Plan. Comments from interested groups such as the West Bellevue Community Association focused on identifying issues for discussion, discussion of the applicability of the 1993 electric System Plan and an emphasis on mitigating the impacts of Downtown commercial growth on neighborhoods. The City Council directed the development of a work program to address issues of neighborhood protection and the need of PSE to provide sufficient electrical energy to serve growing demand in its December 6, 2004 passing of Resolution No. 7107.

Communication with PSE regarding its long range plans for electrical service began in 2005.

Two multi-department staff teams began development work on program scoping, system inventories, early matrix identification, coordinating growth forecasts with a System Plan update and coordinating work products. This early work was presented for public comment with a September 2006 briefing to City Council.

Public comment opportunities included review of the project and potential amendments at Planning Commission study sessions on February 28, May 9, June 20, July 25, and October 24, 2007. A second Council briefing was presented on July 30, 2007.

The first of two community open houses was held in April 2007, where comments focused on reliability issues (the major December 2006 windstorm and resulting multi-day power outage was fresh on everyone's mind). Comments also raised concern that PSE's System Plan itself had not kept up with changes in siting technology. Some advocated for the city to take a more direct approach to electrical system planning and essentially prescribe acceptable and unacceptable facility locations. At the second community open house in October 2007 comment received concentrated on the proposed amendments and how they addressed community concerns, although it was commented that the city should conduct an independent third party review of PSE's System Plan. At that time, the reliability analysis had been separated into a parallel study track under a separate project.

Telephone inquiries and emails have also been received on the electrical facilities CPA; in general these comments have sought information on the CPA work program. They have also reiterated neighborhood mitigation concerns, and continued concern about the applicability of the current System Plan to respond to Bellevue growth.

Other opportunities for public comment included city staff meetings in May 2007 with specifically-identified interest groups including area residents with past electric utility expertise, and a May 2007 meeting of the Lake Hills Community Association, where city staff briefed members on the CPA work. Finally, staff have also been able to direct information inquiries to the city initiatives Website for electrical facilities planning contains Introductory, Documents, and Review and Involvement sections.

The East Bellevue Community Council held courtesy public hearings on December 4, 2007 on the proposed electrical facilities CPA and LUCA. Community councilmembers asked questions

and discussed the amendments, but did not offer any comment for the Planning Commission's consideration. No members of the public attended or commented on the proposal.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

As detailed in the November 21 staff report, this proposal satisfies the decision criteria for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Following the December 12 public hearing and consideration of the public comment and analysis in the staff report, staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment and **APPROVAL** of the related amendments to the Land Use Code.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

We request that you conduct and close the public hearing, discuss the proposal, ask questions of staff and reach a recommendation.

ATTACHMENT

1. Public comment

Public Comments

Matz, Nicholas

From: Hansennp@aol.com
Sent: Saturday, November 24, 2007 10:42 AM
To: Matz, Nicholas
Cc: Noble, Phil; Ellen Kerr
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Utilities Element Related to Electical Facilities 05-114985AC

Reference: http://www.bellevuewa.gov/pdf/Land%20Use/ElecFac_Uilities_Element_Final_Review_Staff_Report.pdf

I believe that the existing PSE transmission Lines in the 136th Corridor are 115 KV lines. Please check and if true, revise figure UT.5.

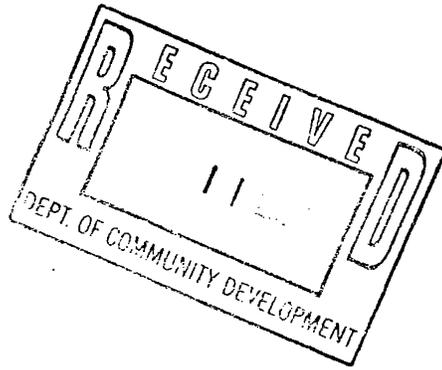
In Figure UT5A (New or expanded Electrical Facilities) a dotted line shows a new transmission line in the 136th Corridor. This gives the appearance that a third line will be placed in this corridor. Is this true? if not, please revise to be more explicit. Since no siting evaluation has apparently been conducted, it seems reasonable not to show any particular corridor since others might be more appropriate such as the 405 corridor that is not impacted by trees or residential environment. Also ,I notice that there isn't any revision for long term planning for under grounding existing service lines to improve facilities in older neighborhoods. When and how can this be considered?

Norm Hansen 861-7333

Check out AOL Money & Finance's list of the [hottest products](#) and [top money wasters](#) of 2007.

West Bellevue Community Club

c/o 508 98th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



June 9, 2007

Lacey Madche
Planning & Community Development
Bellevue City Hall
450 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

Re: Electrical Utility Facility Land Use Code Amendment

Dear Lacey,

Our neighborhood is grateful for the work that has already been put into the modification of the standards for locating electrical substations in the community. The past expansion of the Lochleven station is a superb example of those challenges presented in locating stations in residential neighborhoods and because of that experience we are well aware of the issues. In general our comment is that there still is a major component missing that needs to be completed prior to the adoption of any changes to the code. This missing component is a long-range study that forecasts the demand potential and identifies the related infrastructure to meet that demand potential. This should include a transparent analysis of the redundancy and reliability components incorporated into the analysis. Mapping of the demand should also be included to evaluate where the impact for expansion is being generated. Our specific comments on the current language are:

Policy UT-7X

On the surface, the tone of the language sheds a positive spin on the intent of the Policy. However, the specific wording will result in failure to achieve what we believe is intended in the Policy. Some examples are:

"Work with Puget Sound Energy to" should be replaced with "Require that Puget Sound Energy implement ..."

The paragraph

"Discussion: Where feasible, electrical facilities should be sited within the area requiring additional service. Electrical facilities primarily serving commercial and mixed use areas should be located in commercial and mixed use areas, and not in areas that are primarily residential. Further, the siting and design of these facilities should incorporate measures to mitigate the visual impact on nearby residential areas. These considerations must be balanced with the community's need to have an adequate and reliable power supply."

should be replaced with

"Discussion: ~~Where feasible, electrical~~ New electrical facilities ~~should~~ must be sited within the area requiring additional service. New electrical facilities primarily serving commercial and mixed use areas ~~should~~ must be located in commercial and mixed use areas, and not in areas that are primarily residential. Further, the siting and design of these facilities ~~should~~ must incorporate measures to mitigate the visual impact on nearby residential areas. These considerations must be balanced with the community's need to have an adequate and reliable power supply."

West Bellevue Community Club

c/o 508 98th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

The language as presently written leaves open to future interpretation what is meant by the words "Where feasible". A simple statement by PSE that "it's too expensive" can predictably drive a determination that it will be better to expand a residential substation to serve downtown electric load growth rather than building a new substation underground or within a new enclosed structure within the downtown core. The words "should", rather than "shall" or "must" dilutes any meaningful strength if the intent of these statements, and must not be used in this language. As written, the proposed language will, with certainty, result in every future decision regarding the siting of new or expanded electrical facilities being aggressively challenged by the residential communities, and with no clear, sensible and reliable long-term electric system plan for the City.

Figure UT.5a

As presented, the so-called "plan" is completely inconsistent and "flies in the face" of the written words of the proposed Policy UT-7X. There could be some growth in electrical peak demand in some of the residential neighborhoods that surround the downtown core. However, with unquestionable certainty, most of the growth of electric demand will be in the downtown core. It's happening at the present time, and, perhaps following a short slowdown cycle, it will continue in the future until the entire downtown core is fully developed.

All of the substations, with the exception of Center and North Bellevue substations are located in residential areas. Figure UT.5a shows targeted expansion at Lochleven and Clyde Hill substations, when expansion of these substations to serve growing downtown load growth should not happen. Worse, with the clear knowledge that most electric load growth will happen within the downtown core, no substation is shown on Figure UT.5a within the downtown core.

Given these facts, a sound, reliable electric system plan to serve the downtown core can and must be developed now, rather than being left for the future. All of the information to develop a proper long-range plan to serve the future downtown core is available at the present time. At different times, and at different meetings, City staff and some Council members have assured that a needed comprehensive long-range electric system plan will be implemented. What is presented in Policy UT-7x and in Figure UT.5a fails to meet this requirement.

We cannot support the current policy as proposed as it does not with certainty direct the impact of increased demand for electricity to the areas that have created the demand. If appropriate policies and planning are not instituted during this process, the opportunity to appropriately site needed facilities in the CDB may be missed. We would support an effort that addresses these issues and embrace a revised policy that does not negatively impact the neighborhoods surrounding the CDB.

Sincerely,



Douglas W. Leigh
President
West Bellevue Community Club

Matz, Nicholas

From: Madche, Lacey
Sent: Thursday, November 08, 2007 4:29 PM
To: Inghram, Paul; Matz, Nicholas; Stroh, Dan
Subject: FW: Electirical Utility Facility Land Use Code Amendment

From: Renay Bennett [mailto:renaybennett@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 08, 2007 4:21 PM
To: Madche, Lacey
Cc: Stannert, Kyle
Subject: Electirical Utility Facility Land Use Code Amendment

November 8, 2007

Lacey Madche
City of Bellevue
Planning and Community Development
450 110th Ave. NE
Bellevue WA, 98004

Hi Lacey,

I am writing to let you know that I am concerned with present language in the proposed policy regarding the siting of electrical substations.

The proposed language does not address substation expansion as it pertains to neighborhood protection.

It appears that the policy is written by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to facilitate their desires, while leaving neighborhoods to take the negative impacts that new or expanded substations would bring.

Any new policy must have language that requires PSE (or whatever energy agency there may be in the future) to have new or expanded facilities in areas where there is additional energy usage required.

Why is there no long range plan to put these stations in the downtown? Now is when they should be looking at this. During the Downtown Implementation Plan, I was a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee and asked specifically for this be included. Sadly, it was not.

The Bellecrest Board and the Surrey Downs Board do not support this policy as it is currently written and respectfully request that language requiring substations, where the new or expanded, to be sited or expanded in the areas that the energy usage is required.

Sincerely,
Renay Bennett, President
Bellecrest Neighborhood Association

Electrical Facilities Comprehensive Plan Amendment Community Open House

October 24th, 2007

4:30 - 6:00 PM

Bellevue City Hall, Room 1E-109

Tonight continues the opportunity to talk with city staff and other community residents about the siting and expansion of new electrical facilities serving Bellevue and its neighborhoods.

Siting and Expansion of Electrical Transmission Facilities

Bellevue does not operate its own electric utility. Puget Sound Energy is an investor-owned utility that builds, operates, and maintains the electrical utility system serving Bellevue. However, the city has influence over electrical facility siting through local plans and regulations, so the city is developing new Comprehensive Plan policies and regulations to guide the siting and expansion of these facilities serving Bellevue.

With this effort (Resolution No. 7107), the City Council seeks to balance two equally important objectives:

- Protection of residential neighborhoods from the visual impacts of electrical facilities; and
- The needs of Puget Sound Energy to provide sufficient and reliable electrical energy to serve the community.

Existing Electrical Facilities Policy

Bellevue implements the GMA requirement for utility elements in comprehensive plans by including a schematic of Electric Transmission Facilities at Figure UT.5 in the Utilities Element, and of PSE Natural Gas Mains at Figure UT.7.

The Utilities Element Overview section notes that:

"The Utilities Element contains policies and maps that guide the siting of utility facilities in the city. The main purpose of this element is to ensure that Bellevue will have utility capacity to adequately serve the Land Use Plan. Policies also address the quality, reliability, safety and regulation of the services provided. Other policies address environmental impacts, facilities location and construction, economics, and aesthetics in design and landscaping."

In general, existing policies that are relevant to electrical facilities address jurisdictional coordination, aesthetic and ROW compatibility, soliciting early community input, energy conservation, and the state of research on electro-magnetic fields (EMF).

Implementing these policies addresses Utilities Element Goal 3:

"To facilitate 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.”

For non-city managed utilities, policy defers to the serving utility the implementation [timing] sequence of utility plan components. For the planning, siting, and construction of electrical facilities, systems, lines, and substations, the Utilities Element requires that the electrical utility strike a reasonable balance between potential health effects and the cost and impacts of mitigating those effects by taking reasonable cost-effective steps.

Existing Electrical Facilities Land Use Code Regulations

The city regulates electrical facilities land uses as:

- regional utility systems—system transmission lines of at least 115kV, or which serve a geographic area greater than Bellevue
- local utility systems—any system that is not regional
- utility facilities—substations and similar facilities located on a specific site and necessary for the operation of a public utility.

Regional utility systems and utility facilities are permitted through the conditional use permit (CUP) process; local utility systems are permitted by right. There are also specific site and system standards for utility facilities and regional utility systems, respectively, in the Land Use Code (20.20.650).

What are Electrical Utility Facilities?

The electrical system consists of two groups of components:

- **Transmission** facilities, including regional system facilities that bring power from the generating source to utility facilities and the local utility system.
- Utility **distribution** facilities that distribute power from the transmission network to individual homes and businesses through switching and distribution substations, and the local utility system.

Next Steps

Your involvement continues to guide updates to city policies as the electrical facilities policy review continues through Planning Commission study and hearings. Meeting dates and times will be continue to announced on the city's web site:

October 24, 2007 – Planning Commission study session
December 12, 2007 – Scheduled public hearing
First quarter, 2008 – Possible City Council review and action

For More Information

Please provide your name and contact information on the sign-in sheet, or contact:

- Nicholas Matz, nmatz@bellevuewa.gov 425 452-5371
- Paul Inghram, pingham@bellevuewa.gov 425 452-4070