

SPANISH FORK TO MERCER 345 KV TRANSMISSION PROJECT NOVEMBER 10, 2024, VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Questions and Answers

Updated 11/25/25.

Rocky Mountain Power's virtual open house drew strong participation and generated numerous questions. Every comment submitted was carefully reviewed, and common themes and concerns were identified. Similar comments were grouped together, summarized, and addressed with the following responses.

General Questions

1. Will a copy of the Virtual Open House recording be available?

Yes, the recording of the virtual open house presentation will be available in the public outreach section of the project website (<https://www.pacificorp.com/transmission/transmission-projects/spanish-fork-to-mercer.html>). Additional materials available include the recording of the first virtual open house presentation and the associated question-and-answer document.

2. What is Rocky Mountain Power's approach to public outreach and engagement?

Rocky Mountain Power has actively engaged the community through a comprehensive outreach and engagement program. This included six public open houses, two virtual and four in-person — designed to inform communities in the project area and encourage questions and comments. In-person meetings were held in Goshen, Salem, Spanish Fork, and Genola on June 18, 19, 20, 25, and July 15, 2024, respectively. Notifications were sent via U.S. postal service to landowners and residents along the alternative routes and local businesses participated in these sessions. Additionally, the company conducted briefings with local governments, utilities, federal agencies, and developers to maintain transparency and coordination throughout the project.

3. Why aren't there more visual simulations available?

Photo simulations of existing and proposed conditions were prepared for only two representative locations along the preliminary preferred route: one at the Spanish Fork substation and another looking west toward West Mountain. Visual simulations are intended for illustrative purposes only. As the two locations selected were representative of the project, additional simulations were not developed.

4. How can I view a detailed map of the line to see its location on specific properties?

An interactive map is available on the project website at: (<https://www.pacificorp.com/transmission/transmission-projects/spanish-fork-to-mercer.html>)
The interactive map provides the opportunity for the viewer to zoom in and view the line in detail, including its placement relative to specific properties.

Routing Study Process and Permitting

5. Why is only one route currently being shown?

The route displayed during this virtual open house is the proposed alignment for the transmission line. As part of the routing study process, we identified several alternative routes. The alternative routes were evaluated and compared, and the route shown on the map is the route selected for the transmission line as a result of the study process and input from the public. The proposed route represents the most feasible and least impactful option based on those studies. If you would like to

learn more about the alternative routes that were assessed and why they were not selected, more information about the routing study process is available on the project website.

6. As an overview, what factors influenced the selection of the transmission line route and why were certain other alternative routes not chosen?

The route selection process was guided by physical constraints, land use considerations, cost-effectiveness, and overall grid reliability. Multiple alternatives were evaluated but dismissed due to significant challenges:

- **Alternative A (Highway 6 north of Spanish Fork):** This route was not feasible because Highway 6 lacks sufficient space for a transmission line. Existing homes, a railroad right-of-way, and a high-pressure gas line created physical constraints that made construction not feasible.
- **Alternative B (South through D.R. Horton development):** This alignment was constrained by existing and planned development, leaving insufficient space for the transmission line without major disruption.
- **Powerhouse Road:** Although considered, this route was dismissed because the corridor is too narrow and already hosts a 138-kV transmission line, making co-location impossible.
- **Southern Alternatives:** Routing farther south was evaluated but rejected due to excessive mileage, increased cost, and engineering complexity. These options would have added significant environmental and community impacts.
- **Following other existing infrastructure:** Also evaluated were routing options along existing linear facilities such as highways, railroads, roads, and transmission corridors. However, physical constraints and the inability to co-locate on existing transmission lines made these options unworkable. As a result, a new greenfield route was necessary, which crosses farm ground and residential areas to ensure the project can be built safely and efficiently.

To summarize the proposed route: The route over West Mountain was chosen after careful study and coordination with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Originally, the line was planned along the southern portion of the mountain, but it was shifted to go directly over West Mountain to respect existing land use agreements and reduce conflicts.

This alignment also considers approved leases, environmental requirements, and soil stability, including potential impacts from nearby mining operations. After reviewing all options, the proposed route provides the most feasible connection between the Spanish Fork and Mercer substations while minimizing environmental and community impacts. Minor changes, such as moving the line to the north side of 8000 South and routing along property lines near Salem Park, were implemented to avoid conflicts with development and reduce impacts on nearby homes. Soil integrity near mining operations also was considered to ensure safety.

Overall, the selected alignment balances technical feasibility, environmental stewardship, and community considerations while supporting long-term reliability for the regional power grid.

7. Was this project listed in Utah County's Plan?

Yes. Utah 2020 County's plan includes the Spanish Fork to Mercer project—approximately 50 miles of 345-kV transmission line—under anticipated future Rocky Mountain Power transmission projects (Utah County General Plan (2020)). The plan also notes that existing utility corridors and major highways are becoming congested, and new corridors must be analyzed and established to support future growth and demand.

8. How is the project team working with transportation and regulatory agencies?

Rocky Mountain Power is actively coordinating with multiple agencies to ensure the project aligns with ongoing and future infrastructure plans and meets all regulatory requirements. Two examples asked about during the virtual open house include:

- *Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and Utah County:* Our project team is working closely with UDOT and Utah County on current and planned road projects. This includes coordination on the widening of 8000 South from 3200 West to I-15 and improvements along SR 164. These efforts help avoid conflicts and ensure efficient use of shared corridors.
- *Army Corps of Engineers:* Before finalizing pole placement, we must meet specific requirements related to ground disturbance and environmental impacts. This process ensures compliance with federal regulations and protects sensitive areas.

9. Can the transmission line be adjusted on a property?

Yes. Small, strategic adjustments can be made to pole locations during the final design phase. This process, called micro-sitting, allows us to work with landowners to accommodate specific property features, such as driveways, irrigation systems, or planned improvements, while maintaining safety and engineering requirements.

Right-of-Way and Land Acquisition

10. What is the process for obtaining easements? What factors are considered during negotiations and determining fair compensation?

Compensation for right-of-way easements will be based on independent appraisals using market studies to determine the value of the easement on each property. Our goal is to negotiate a fair purchase price with each landowner.

Negotiations will begin soon. Land agents will reach out directly by phone or in person over the next few months as we move through permitting. While the timeline may adjust, we anticipate starting these discussions within the next three to four months.

The land agent will discuss and negotiate with property owners about the fair market value of the easement area. Factors considered during negotiations to determine fair compensation include:

- Property characteristics
- The length and width of the right-of-way
- The number of and placement of transmission-line structures
- Right-of-way clearing and construction practice.
- Access for construction
- Market data and independent appraisals for land and easements

11. How are existing water facilities addressed in land acquisition efforts?

Land agents will coordinate directly with landowners to minimize impacts on existing water facilities, including irrigation systems and water rights. Pole placement is planned carefully to ensure normal property operations continue wherever possible.

Environmental Considerations

12. Why is the transmission line routed through wetlands, wildlife habitat, and sensitive land uses, and how will you keep your commitment to protecting these areas?

Rocky Mountain Power understands concerns about and requirements to protect sensitive areas such as wetlands, wildlife habitats, and land uses. Placement of each pole is considered for site-specific conditions, including soil stability and terrain, to maintain safety—even in wetlands. Our commitment is to minimize impacts and protect the environment for future generations. While routing decisions must balance environmental considerations with technical feasibility and land use agreements, we take necessary steps to minimize impacts:

- **Compliance with environmental standards:**

We must comply with laws, regulations and polices, which, in the case of this project, include the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- **Surveys and mitigation measures:**

The following provides an overview of measures carried out by our team before, during and after construction of a project.

- Prior to construction –

- Surveys are conducted to identify areas that may need to be avoided or mitigated. Based on findings of the surveys, we identify appropriate measures to mitigate impacts where needed (e.g., add flight and/or perch diverters, or other protective measures to reduce risks to birds and wildlife).
- Construction schedules are planned to minimize disruption during critical wildlife periods.

During construction mitigation measures include

- Protective barriers to reduce disturbance to wetlands and wildlife.
- Topsoil preservation to maintain soil integrity for future vegetation recovery.
- Erosion control to reduce sediment runoff into waterways.
- Active monitoring to ensure compliance and address issues promptly during construction.

Post construction mitigation measures include:

- Revegetation and vegetation management to restore disturbed areas and maintain healthy plant communities.
- Invasive species management to prevent spread of non-native plants.
- Long-term monitoring to track recovery and effectiveness of mitigation measures.

- **Strategic routing and micro-siting:**

We work with agencies to place poles to avoid sensitive areas wherever possible or identify appropriate measures to minimize the effects. Similarly, we work with landowners to place poles to avoid or minimize impacts on structures and land uses, such as agricultural operations. Although some wetlands cannot be completely avoided due to physical constraints, measures will be identified to satisfactorily minimize impacts with the intent that the project is built responsibly, with environmental protection as a priority.

13. What environmental studies will be conducted before construction, and what regulations guide Rocky Mountain Power's compliance?

Before construction begins, the project team will conduct thorough environmental reviews to protect sensitive plants, wildlife, and habitats.

Integral to the routing study, we compile environmental and land use data from applicable agencies with jurisdiction in the project area, review the data from planning tools such as the Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system to identify sensitive areas that should be avoided or where measures to mitigate impacts will likely be required. This information supports evaluation of each alternative route, comparison of the alternative routes, and selection of a proposed route. Prior to construction, we will conduct on-the-ground surveys to refine the boundaries of the sensitive areas and determine the area-specific conditions to support the identification of measures to mitigate impacts (examples of mitigation measures are listed in the previous question). In doing so, we must comply with all federal and state regulations and with local ordinances including those from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state wildlife agencies, and environmental departments. This includes compliance with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty, and air and land quality standards.

Our goal is to minimize environmental impacts and protect natural resources while delivering a reliable transmission line for the region.

Electric Transmission and Engineering

14. Will the new line connect beyond Utah or include more circuits in the future?

The line will remain a single-circuit 345-kV due to federal regulations. While the power grid is interconnected nationwide, this project is focused on strengthening local service, and most of the power will serve the Wasatch Front.

15. Can the Spanish Fork to Mercer transmission line connect to a different substation instead of Spanish Fork?

Federal regulations require multiple backup power resources and contingency plans to balance load across the system, promote transmission system reliability and resiliency and continuity of service to customers, which is why the Spanish Fork to Mercer transmission line is necessary. Enhancing power grid resilience, such as replicating a critical transmission line, improving system performance, reliability, and resilience. If one line fails, the redundant line can take over, thereby preventing service interruptions. The new Spanish Fork to Mercer will line help prevent grayouts, blackouts, and brownouts by improving overall grid stability.

Note: Grayouts are partial power losses or low voltage that can affect equipment performance. Brownouts occur when voltage drops, causing lights to dim and appliances to malfunction. Blackouts are complete power outages that disrupt homes, businesses, and critical services.

16. Will this project limit future development of other utilities?

No. Spanish Fork is the critical link between southeastern and northern Utah; it is an essential part of tying the grid together.

17. Could building a power-generation plant replace the need for this new line to improve reliability and capacity?

No. Building a new power plant and constructing the Spanish Fork to Mercer transmission line are unrelated. A new generation plant would increase the power produced. The Spanish Fork to Mercer transmission line is the critical link between southeastern and northern Utah, it is an essential

component of tying together and improving performance of the existing transmission grid whereas building a new power plant would increase the amount of electricity produced.

18. How are the poles designed and maintained in consideration of drainage and terrain?

Transmission line poles are designed to accommodate site-specific conditions. Typically, pole foundations are designed to accommodate existing grades. Drainages are spanned; poles are not placed in drainages. The poles will be galvanized or self-weathering steel, which minimizes maintenance and the transmission will be subject to regular inspections.

19. Why can't the line be placed underground?

Overhead, high-voltage transmission lines are a reliable, low-cost, easily maintained and established method to transport high-voltage bulk electricity. Unlike lower-voltage distribution lines, which deliver electricity to residences and business, high-voltage transmission lines are not frequently installed underground because of several factors, including cost, which are passed on to the ratepayers. Underground transmission lines require insulated underground cables and large concrete duct banks with large manholes along the length of an underground line, increasing building costs ten times or more.

While some countries and states have successfully undergrounded high-voltage lines, this approach is not practical and is not standard practice in the United States. In the United States, when transmission lines are installed underground, they typically are installed from short distances. Rocky Mountain Power does not have underground transmission lines greater than 138 kV and this project will be a 345-kV transmission line. Undergrounding at this scale poses major technical challenges.

Burying transmission lines results in more impact on the environment than placing them overhead. Benefits and costs of undergrounding are important issues, since the benefit gained from undergrounding the line may be limited while the cost is shared. 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 eight to 10 days to pinpoint the problem and much longer to repair than an overhead line, rather than hours to repair an overhead line. Crews trained specifically in construction and maintenance of underground transmission are limited and would have to be imported from elsewhere. Also, the lifespan of underground lines is estimated to be about half that of overhead lines. With a few notable exceptions, our nation's utilities have found that building cross-country transmission lines underground is cost-prohibitive.

20. Will this line support data centers, and will the system need to expand for future growth?

The Spanish Fork to Mercer transmission line was planned to meet current demand and reliability needs across Utah County, Salt Lake County, and northern Utah. Data centers have added load in recent years, and system needs are evaluated as they arise. While we cannot speak to specific custom, any future expansion would be based on ongoing studies and regulatory processes.

21. Do transmission lines cause noise pollution, and will anything be done to reduce it?

Transmission lines can produce a humming or hissing sound, especially during wet weather like rain or mist. This happens when water droplets collect on the power line conductors, slightly reducing the insulating properties of the air and releasing a small amount of energy as audible noise often heard as humming, hissing, or crackling. However, the noise levels from operating power lines are generally well below local noise regulations. Like electric and magnetic fields, the sound decreases as you move farther away from the line. We take noise safety seriously in the design and construction of transmission lines, working to minimize sound impacts as much as possible.

Health and Safety

22. What online resources are available regarding effects of electric and magnetic fields (EMF) from transmission lines on human and animal health?

Research on the possible health effects of EMF exposure has been ongoing for more than 40 years and has been reviewed by numerous government, health, and scientific organizations around the world. The conclusions of these organizations generally have been consistent — none of the agencies have concluded that exposure to EMF at the level we encountered in our everyday lives, including from transmission and distribution lines, are a cause of any adverse health effects. Likewise, research has not found that EMF causes adverse effects on livestock, wildlife, or crops under or near power lines. The following links provide access to reputable resources for more information regarding EMF.

- **American Cancer Society:** <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/radiation-exposure/extremely-low-frequency-radiation.html>
- **Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI):** <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241572385>
- **Health Canada:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-risks-safety/radiation/everyday-things-emit-radiation/power-lines-electrical-appliances.html>
- **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIH):** Visit <https://www.niehs.nih.gov> and type “EMF” in the search tool
- **U.S. National Cancer Institute:** <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/radiation/electromagnetic-fields-fact-sheet>
- **World Health Organization:** <https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/radiation-and-health/non-ionizing/emf>

Also available on our project website is an information sheet regarding EMF, which can be accessed at:

https://www.pacificorp.com/content/dam/pcorp/documents/en/pacificorp/transmission/EMF_Questions_Answers.pdf

23. What restrictions apply within the 125-foot right-of-way, and how is safety ensured under energized lines?

Easements allow uses like crops, pasture, parks, trails, streets, lawns, underground utilities, and low level landscaping, as long as they do not create hazards. Buildings, trees, sheds, or structures over twelve feet are generally prohibited. For safety, we work with each property owner to confirm permitted uses and enforce restrictions that prevent risks beneath energized lines.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE NOT ANSWERED DURING THE VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Other

24. How will this project conflict with the timing of the Benjamin interchange EA? Why is this project being rushed before the UDOT EA?

Rocky Mountain Power is working in coordination with the Benjamin Interchange project team on the routing of the transmission line at the project, to insure there is not conflict between the timing of the two projects.

25. Why was the Timp Nebo Conservation district also not involved by Rocky Mountain Power in this project?

Rocky Mountain Power researched all special interest groups and consulted with local jurisdictions to connect with all potential stakeholders.

26. Utah state code requires that you post notification in the newspaper regarding the open houses, NOT JUST THE PROJECT. That did not happen. Respond to that publicly please.

Utah state code requirements must be followed on projects that do not have a federal permitting component. Though this project has a federal permitting component, our process aligned closely with Utah state code. Our public outreach notifications included the following:

- 90-Day Notice of Intent letter to affected entities that have land use authority.
- 60-Day Notice of Intent letter to affected entities and property owners
- Notice of public workshop meetings (open houses) mailed out to affected entities and property owners.

For notifications purposes of the November 10 Virtual Open House, newspaper advertisements and radio announcements were published in addition to a mailed notice to affected entities and property owners.

Routing Study and Permitting

27. Why did Rocky Mountain Power not involve the Utah County Agriculture Protection Advisory board? As per state code and federal regulations

Rocky Mountain Power researched all special interest groups and consulted with local jurisdictions to connect with all potential stakeholders.

Right of Way and Land Acquisition

28. How will Rocky Mountain Power address financial impacts for property owners near the transmission line?

Rocky Mountain Power understands concerns about property values and tax implications. Our approach focuses on fairness and transparency:

- **Compensation for Easements:** Property owners whose land is directly used for the transmission line will receive compensation based on independent appraisals and market studies.
- **Property Value Concerns:** We do not provide compensation for perceived changes in property value for homes near the line that are not directly impacted by an easement. However, we work hard to minimize visual and physical impacts through careful routing and design.
- **Greenbelt Tax Considerations:** If the project affects a property's ability to meet greenbelt requirements, we will review those situations individually and work with landowners to address rollback tax implications as part of negotiations.

Our goal is to maintain open communication and ensure fair treatment for all landowners throughout the process.

Electrical Transmission and Engineering

29. Can you do a smaller transmission line in order to keep the impact lower on the neighborhoods it will pass by?

The height and span of the poles and conductor of the transmission line is determined by the necessary voltage (in this case 345 kV).

30. Where is the next substation going to be built?

There is no planned additional substation as part of this project.

31. What is the minimal amount of space you need? Your ideal is 125 ft. What is the bare minimal?

125 feet (62.5 feet from centerline on each side) is what is needed to safely access and maintain the line.

32. does this change when you are sharing right of way with other utilities?

The easement width needed for a transmission line is determined by voltage. A wider right of way is needed for corridors that are shared with other transmission lines. PacifiCorp will coordinate where necessary with other utility companies to co-locate within the same corridor.

Health and Safety

33. What is the cancer risk to those near the lines?

Research on the possible health effects of EMF exposure has been ongoing for more than 40 years and has been reviewed by numerous government, health, and scientific organizations around the world. The conclusions of these organizations generally have been consistent — none of the agencies have concluded that exposure to EMF at the level we encountered in our everyday lives, including from transmission and distribution lines, are a cause of any adverse health effects. Likewise, research has not found that EMF causes adverse effects on livestock, wildlife, or crops under or near power lines. The following links provide access to reputable resources for more information regarding EMF.

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- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241572385>
- **Health Canada:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-risks-safety/radiation/everyday-things-emit-radiation/power-lines-electrical-appliances.html>
 - **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIH):** Visit <https://www.niehs.nih.gov> and type “EMF” in the search tool
 - **U.S. National Cancer Institute:** <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/radiation/electromagnetic-fields-fact-sheet>
 - **World Health Organization:** <https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/radiation-and-health/non-ionizing/emf>

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34. What is the safe distance for a home from this power line?

The 125 foot easement (62.5 feet from centerline on each side) is what will be acquired for Rocky Mountain Power to safely access and maintain the line. Structures can safely be located outside of this easement.

35. You are installing poles which have homes within both the pole and cable fall zones. How do you justify putting homes and people at risk?

Rocky Mountain Power is required to meet federal, state and local safety regulations, including easement width, in order to operate the 345 kV line. It is common for transmission lines to be located near residential structures, as indicated in the following pictures.