

Montour-Columbia 230 kV Rebuild Project

Introduction

A resilient transmission system helps us deliver safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity across the region. That's why we've invested in focused upgrades and have continued to innovate and advance our electric grid through transmission projects that help to improve reliability, protect the grid from extreme weather, spur economic growth and enable renewable energy interconnections.

We're planning to rebuild approximately 9.25 miles of 230 kV transmission line in the Montour and Columbia County area to improve reliability, protect the grid from extreme weather and reduce the frequency and duration of outages. The project will utilize an existing right-of-way corridor. The proposed project will help create a stronger, more resilient electric grid. One that enables the delivery of safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity across the region.

Frequently Asked Questions

PPL Electric Utilities Project Details

What are the specifics of this proposed project?

PPL Electric Utilities plans to rebuild approximately 9.25 miles of the existing Montour-Columbia 230 kV transmission line in Columbia and Montour Counties. The rebuilt transmission line will be offset within the already existing right-of-way area located in Derry and West Hemlock Townships in Montour County and Hemlock Township in Columbia County.

The new line will be built with stronger steel monopoles and wires. Upon completion of the project, the existing lattice towers will be removed entirely. To ensure reliability throughout the project timeline, the new line will be rebuilt by offsetting it within the existing 350-foot right-of-way by approximately 175 feet. By rebuilding the transmission line in the adjacent corridor, the existing transmission line can stay in service while the new line is being built. The existing transmission structures and conductors will be decommissioned upon the completion of the rebuild and there are no current plans to construct a new, secondary transmission line within the corridor.

What does the construction process include?

Construction will include installation of environmental controls and access roads, clearing of any trees in right-of-way and installation of new steel monopole transmission structures. Construction will also involve creating temporary work pads and pull pads, which will be used to install the new conductors. Once the new transmission line is built, the existing transmission line will be de-energized and removed. All disturbed areas will be restored upon completion of the project.

Why is this project needed?

The proposed project will help create a stronger, more resilient electric grid. One that enables the delivery of safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity across the region. Through targeted upgrades and rebuilds, like this project, PPL Electric aims to improve reliability, protect the grid from extreme weather and reduce the frequency and duration of outages in the region.

What townships will the transmission line run through?

The transmission line runs through Derry and West Hemlock Townships in Montour County and Hemlock Township in Columbia County.

What will these new transmission poles look like?

The transmission structures will be constructed of steel with a dark-brown protective coating and are designed to be stronger and more weather-resistant. Based on preliminary engineering, these monopole structures will range in height from approximately 90 to 180 feet, with an average height of approximately 140 feet. Actual pole heights will be determined during final engineering.

Will this project require additional right-of-way?

No additional easements are required to reconstruct the existing line in the adjacent corridor. The project will utilize an existing 350-foot right-of-way corridor. However, PPL Electric is working with some landowners in the area to sign new easement agreements with more modern and applicable language for the established corridor.

Why is the transmission line being moved within the right-of-way area?

The transmission line will be built in the already existing corridor adjacent to its current location as it will allow for the construction of the new line while the current line is still in use. This will prevent the need for any outages on the line. The new line will be offset within the 350-foot right-of-way by approximately 175 feet. The existing transmission structures and conductors will be decommissioned upon the completion of the rebuild.

Will my power need to be turned off for this work?

No. The project will not require outages on our distribution system, which provides electricity to residents and local businesses.

Will this project need to be approved by the Pennsylvania PUC?

Yes. The siting of this transmission line will require Pennsylvania PUC review and approval.

Are there any plans to build another transmission line within this right-of-way corridor?

There are no current plans to construct a new, secondary transmission line within the corridor.

When will this project be built?

If approved by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), we anticipate construction will begin in spring 2027 and conclude in spring 2028, taking about 12 months to complete the project and put the line in service.

Working with Property Owners

Will this project affect my property value?

We have no evidence that there is any long-term effect on property values from a project like this. Additionally, this project utilizes an already existing transmission line corridor.

Is it possible PPL Electric will use eminent domain?

No use of eminent domain is anticipated for this project. The existing easements provide sufficient right-of-way to complete the transmission line rebuild.

How is PPL Electric communicating with area residents and other stakeholders?

As always, we're committed to keeping landowners and communities informed throughout each step of the project. More information about the project can be found on our website at pplelectric.com/MontourProject.

In addition, we'll host an informational open house on Wednesday, July 16, 2025, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Bloomsburg Area High School located at 1200 Railroad Street, Bloomsburg, PA 17815, to share more details about the project and answer questions. Input received at the open house will be considered during project planning.

What does PPL Electric plan to do with the rights to the current corridor?

All rights will be retained by PPL Electric for future use in the 350-foot-wide corridor once the new transmission line is constructed and the current lattice towers are removed. There are no current plans to construct a new, secondary transmission line within the corridor.

Other Questions

What value does the transmission system provide to customers and the community?



What is a transmission line?

Transmission lines carry electricity at high voltages across long distances to efficiently connect power plants with areas where customers need the power. Transmission lines are similar to interstate highways in the interconnected electric system.

What is a switchyard?

A switchyard houses electrical infrastructure, including circuit breakers and protective devices, required to safely control the flow of high voltage power across transmission lines.

What is a substation?

A substation houses electrical infrastructure — including circuit breakers, protective devices and transformers — required to safely control and transform the flow and level of high voltage power across transmission lines.

What is EMF and does have any effect on health?

Electric and magnetic fields or electromagnetic fields (EMF) are invisible areas of energy that form around electrical devices, including power lines, household appliances and common electronics.

Current scientific evidence reveals no health consequences from exposure to low-level electromagnetic fields (EMF). We've compiled thorough science-based information to help customers understand more about the topic and we invite them to visit our website for more information at pplelectric.com/emf.

Could this line be built underground?

The vast majority of PPL Electric's transmission system is above ground. We consider a host of factors in siting transmission lines, including costs and potential impacts to the community and the environment, which are paid for by customers. Building a transmission line underground can be up to 10 times more expensive than overhead construction. There are several reasons for this:

- It takes multiple underground lines to equal the capacity of a single overhead line.
- Underground lines require more earth disturbance for trenching.
- If damaged, underground lines can take substantially longer to repair, a delay that could seriously affect reliable electric service.
- If the underground line is placed within a roadway, there are often other underground utilities that must be avoided.

Underground lines are not invisible — they require a surface right-of-way stripped of all vegetation and trees and manholes for access. Because of these issues, underground transmission construction typically only makes sense in areas where there is no viable above-ground route.

Some transmission lines make an audible “buzz.” Will that be the case with this line?

The buzz that you may hear from transmission lines is caused by small electric discharges on the surface of the wires known as “corona.” This harmless phenomenon is most noticeable on humid days when water droplets form on the transmission lines. PPL Electric will make every effort to minimize any audible noise during the engineering phase of the project.

Open Space and Environmental

Will this project have any adverse impact on the environment?

We will work very hard to minimize any impact on the natural environment. Our track record shows that we work cooperatively with regulatory agencies, obtain all required permits and meet all environmental requirements and regulations under the terms of our permits.

What happens if there are wetlands in the area where this work will be completed?

PPL Electric has an excellent record of building projects in a way that is extremely sensitive to environmental issues, and we will address wetlands in a manner consistent with all applicable regulations. This includes trying to avoid putting poles in wetlands and instead placing them on either side of a wetland and spanning it with the wires.

If you disturb any current wetlands, are you going to build new ones elsewhere?

PPL Electric plans to meet Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations that exist for conducting work in wetland areas.

Will PPL Electric Utilities need to cut down trees to build this project?

Yes. There will be tree removal within the existing easements to expand the corridor to a full 350-foot width to rebuild the 230 kV transmission line.

Why does PPL Electric Utilities use herbicides to maintain its right-of-way?

Herbicide use is an effective vegetation management technique that minimizes the physical impact on a power line right-of-way while enabling us to maintain safe and reliable electric service.

All herbicides are applied selectively by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture certified contractors working on the ground with hand-held equipment or with all-terrain vehicles.

Compatible species are preserved as much as possible since they provide natural competition for tall-growing species of trees. This low-growing plant community also provides ideal habitat for wildlife that feeds on saplings of many of the tall-growing species. The combined effects of plant competition and wildlife activity help minimize the herbicides needed to ensure safe and reliable electric lines.

What effect will herbicide application have on wildlife and the environment?

We will apply only products that have been approved for use on utility right-of-way by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These products have undergone significant testing to ensure that, when used according to labeled instructions, they pose no threat to you, wildlife or the environment. In fact, some of the materials we use are the same as those

commonly used by homeowners. There are significant, well-documented benefits resulting from the selective herbicide application techniques we use. Ideal wildlife habitat is created within these right-of-way corridors.

Other Resources

- [PPL Electric Utilities Montour-Columbia 230 kV Rebuild Project Webpage](#)