Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson
Ellen Nowak, Commissioner
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4822 Madison Yards Way
P.O. Box 7854
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August 30, 2021

Re: Application of American Transmission Company LLC, as an Electric Public Utility, for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Construct a New 138 kV Transmission Line from the Hooterville Substation to the Mount Horeb Substation to Interconnect a New Wisconsin Power and Light Company Substation Near the Village of Barneveld, Wisconsin and a New Mount Horeb Utility Substation Near the Village of Mount Horeb Located in Iowa and Dane Counties, Wisconsin

137-CE-194

To the Person Addressed:

On April 9, 2021, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission) received an application from American Transmission Company (ATC) for construction of the Barneveld Military Ridge Interconnection Project (project). (PSC REF#: 408849.) Commission Staff from the Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs completed an environmental review of the proposed project and prepared an EA to determine if an EIS is necessary. A notification of the Commission's intent to prepare an EA, including a solicitation for comments on the environmental aspects of this project, was mailed to landowners, local and regional media, affected municipal entities, the regional planning commission, and area legislators in the project area on June 2, 2021. (PSC REF#: 412847.)

Project summary and background

For this project ATC proposes to construct an extension of Y-36, a 69 kilovolt (kV) line, from the Wisconsin Power and Light (WPL) Hooterville Substation to a new, WPL-owned Barneveld distribution substation. The new extension is generally proposed to take advantage of the future 138 kV position on the Cardinal Hickory Creek (CHC) project structures and would be double circuited with CHC. The new 69 kV extension would then continue from the new Barneveld Substation to the existing WPL Mount Horeb Substation as line Y-209. The project also proposes a radial tap from line Y-209 into the new Mount Horeb Utilities-owned (MHU) Military Ridge Substation. The project would require substation upgrades at the Dodgeville Substation, the connection of communications circuits at Highland and Eden Substations to support system protection and IT infrastructure needs. Lastly, the applicant is proposing the addition of a fiber optic connection between the CHC line and Dodgeville Substation along the existing 69 kV line Y-138.

The project involves constructing a new 69 kV Transmission Line from the Hooterville Substation to the Mount Horeb Substation to interconnect a new WPL Substation near the

Village of Barneveld, Wisconsin and a new MHU Substation near the Village of Mount Horeb located in Iowa and Dane Counties, Wisconsin.

ATC and its corporate manager, ATC Management, Inc., W234 N2000 Ridgeview Parkway Court, Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188, propose to construct the project, which would be 100 percent owned by ATC. ATC has not entered into any contractual agreements related to this project with any developer to construct, finance, lease, use, or own transmission facilities.

Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act and Environmental Review

The proposed project is a Type II action under Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 4.10(2). It requires the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) to determine if an environmental impact statement (EIS) is necessary under Wis. Stat. § 1.11. The preliminary determination indicates that no significant impacts on the human or natural environment are likely to occur as a result of the construction and operation of this project. Therefore, preparation of an EIS is not required. Comments regarding this determination can be directed to the contact person listed at the end of this letter. The remainder of this letter describes the primary impacts of the project and summarizes the conclusions of the EA. To obtain a copy of the EA, please request a copy from the contact person listed at the end of this letter.

Project cost and schedule

ATC estimates that the project would cost $13,134,000 for the route with Option Y-135 and $14,102,000 for the route with Option Y-136. Pending Commission authorization, the project is scheduled to begin construction concurrent with the CHC project in the CHC Co-located Segment areas. ATC expects to begin construction in September of 2022. The project would be in-service by December of 2023.

Ownership of the proposed project

ATC and its corporate manager, ATC Management, Inc., W234 N2000 Ridgeview Parkway Court, Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188, propose to construct the project, which would be 100 percent owned by ATC. ATC has not entered into any contractual agreements related to this project with any developer to construct, finance, lease, use, or own transmission facilities.

Proposed facilities

The proposed project is mostly co-located with CHC from the Hooterville Substation to the Mount Horeb Substation, and would route through the Town of Brigham and the Village of Barneveld in Iowa County, and the Towns of Blue Mounds and Springdale and Village of Mount Horeb in Dane County. Fiber would be installed on the existing 69 kV transmission line Y-138 and this project segment is located within the City of Dodgeville in Iowa County. The proposed Barneveld Substation is located in the Town of Brigham in Iowa County. The proposed Military

Ridge Substation, which would be constructed and owned by MHU, would be located in the Town of Blue Mounds in Dane County.

Mount Horeb, Hooterville, Dodgeville, Highland, and Eden facility improvements are proposed to be primarily located within the existing property and within the fenced areas.

The work at Mount Horeb would include removal of a capacitor bank and re-termination of Y-175 and Y-135/Y-136, along with the termination of the new Y-209. Mount Horeb Substation improvements would include installation of various outdoor substation equipment including, but not limited to, circuit breakers, switches, and voltage transformers. Work within the control house would include, but is not limited to, relay panel changes, system protection and IT improvements. Underground fiber would be installed from within the substation to a transmission structure outside the substation.

Transmission line routes and segments

The proposed project involves constructing a new 69 kV transmission line from the Hooterville Substation to the Mount Horeb Substation to interconnect a new WPL Substation near the Village of Barneveld, Wisconsin. A new MHU Substation is proposed near the Village of Mount Horeb located in Iowa and Dane Counties, Wisconsin.

After evaluation of different route options between the Hooterville and Mount Horeb Substations, ATC concluded a single common route segment was optimal and appropriate between the Hooterville Substation and County Highway JG south of the Village of Mount Horeb. The entirety of that common segment is adjacent to an existing four-lane highway (Highway 18-151) which is also the CHC Co-located Segment. Segment F is also a common route segment; however, ATC would only be replacing structures to support the addition of fiber to this existing line and stringing the fiber optic cable.

Where the common route ends south of Mt Horeb, ATC has proposed two options for routing into the Mount Horeb Substation (see figure below). One option, known as the Y-135 option, routes the project 69 kV line as Y-209 line along the existing Y-135 line into Mount Horeb Substation (Segments D1 and D2). The other option, the Y-136 option, is underbuilt on CHC for a few more spans and then routes Y-209 along the Y-136 line into Mount Horeb Substation (Segment E and CHC Segment S13D). Both of the route options identified for connecting the new line between Highway 18-151 and the Mount Horeb Substation are existing 69 kV transmission lines. In addition to being existing utility corridors, these two transmission line ROWs have sufficient width to allow for construction of the new line.

The footprints of associated facilities

The substations with ATC equipment which are associated with this project are Mount Horeb, Barneveld, Hooterville, Dodgeville, Eden, and Highland. The scope of work is not expected to

increase the existing footprints at Mount Horeb, Hooterville, Dodgeville, Eden and Highland. The Barneveld Substation site would be developed by WPL.

Transmission line configuration

Tubular steel monopoles would be predominantly used on the common routes and for the Y-135/Y-136 route options except segment F which would use wood structures. The tubular steel monopoles would have a galvanized or weathering steel finish. Single-circuit tangent and small angles would typically be in a delta configuration, except where there is limited ROW available or clearance limitations, in which case a vertical configuration would be utilized. Single-circuit medium angles, large angle, and dead-end structures generally could be either a vertical or delta configuration, depending on ROW or clearance limitations. Double-circuit tangents, angles, and dead-end structures would generally all be in a vertical configuration.

Proposed project ROW

The proposed project routes would share existing ROW by either partially overlapping or completely overlapping with the ROW of existing transmission lines, public roads and highways, and the CHC Co-located Segment. The common route segment would predominately share ROW with the CHC transmission line except for portions of segments A1, A2, B, and C which will require a new 80 foot ROW or overlap with substation property. Segment F would be designed to fall within the existing 69 kV transmission line ROW. For both the Y-135 (route segments D1 and D2)/Y-136 (route segment E) options, the project would share ROW with the existing infrastructure.

Easements and ROW Sharing

ATC reviewed the existing easements along the proposed route segments and determined that the existing easements are sufficient to support the planned design and construction, except where there are easement gaps, or where the route goes off alignment to tie into the substations along the route.

Staging areas and temporary workspace

ATC has proposed three laydown areas to provide temporary workspace during construction of the proposed project. ATC would stage substation materials at the Mount Horeb, Barneveld, Hooterville, and Dodgeville Substations.

Access roads and off-ROW access routes

For the CHC co-located segments (the Common Route), ATC has stated that “off-ROW access routes were identified in the CHC CPCN Application and/or additional routes will be reviewed and notifications submitted in accordance with Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 111.71 or 112.073.”

For the portion of the project that is not concurrent with the CHC ROW, ATC has identified three locations where access outside the project ROW may be required based on a preliminary field review of the project corridor. These off-ROW routes would provide access to the existing ROW along the Y-136 Option.

Summary of potential environmental and community impacts

Overall, the level of environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project are expected to be low and mostly temporary (occurring primarily during the construction phase of the project). Potential impacts from the project are expected to be in line with similar electric transmission line construction projects previously approved by the Commission throughout the state.

The proposed project would result in some new environmental impacts in the project area. The majority of impacts are anticipated to be temporary in nature and comparable with the type of impacts that have been seen in similar construction projects undertaken throughout the state. These impacts include an alteration of the land use in the immediate vicinity of the project, which may also result in an increase industrial appearance of the area's immediate project infrastructure. The existing vegetation and land cover is expected to be altered by construction and maintenance activities associated with the project; however, the majority of these impacts are not expected to be permanent or result in a significant loss of habitat

ATC has identified 98 homes and 8 apartment buildings that occur within 300 feet of the project if the Y-135 Option (mostly along Segment F) is the final selected route. If the Y-136 Option is selected, 164 homes and 9 apartment buildings would occur within 300 feet of the project (mostly along Segments E and F). Most of the proposed transmission line would be located in non-residential areas. Anticipated impacts to residences include noise and dust production, an increase in local road congestion, and impacts to some residential driveways. Such impacts are anticipated to be temporary – occurring primarily during the construction phase.

Noise would be intermittent and not out of the ordinary for general truck traffic. Most truck and equipment noise would be from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Most trucks would leave the designated laydown yards each day during this time. When undertaking construction activities around residences, ATC and its contractor would be cognizant of the residents and would limit work hours in that area, specifically during the early morning hours.

ATC and its contractor would be performing drilling operations for the installation of the transmission structures, and would not be creating large spoil piles in relation to this work. Dust impacts would be minimized in the residential areas. In addition, ATC and its contractors would clean up daily any dirt or mud that may be tracked onto private driveways, access roads, local roads or the highway. Construction work would generally occur Monday through Friday during daylight hours. Weekend work is also a possibility. No night work is anticipated at this time.

ATC has stated that when undertaking construction activities around residences, they would be cognizant of the residents and intend to limit work hours around residences, specifically during the early morning hours. Construction vehicles would use public roads to access the ATC ROW. There may be occasions when construction vehicles are parked on roads during construction. ATC would minimize the number and amount of time vehicles are parked on the roads. All current traffic control measures would be adhered to while equipment is on a public roadway. The only driveways ATC and its contractor anticipate using are driveways on which ATC receives specific landowner permission to travel or park equipment. ATC would ensure residence driveways are not blocked with equipment.

Conclusion

The project as proposed in the application and subsequent filings, including use of the stated construction methods and implementation of the mitigation plans, is not expected to cause any significant environmental effects. No significant impacts on the human environment that would warrant the preparation of an EIS are expected if this project were constructed using some combination of the currently proposed routes and substation sites. Thus, preparation of an EIS, as described in Wis. Stat. § 1.11, is not required for this project.

Copies of the EA are available upon request, either in electronic or paper format (for a paper copy, an address must be provided). Requests for a copy of the EA should be made to Adam Ingwell at the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin by telephone at (608) 267-9197, by e-mail at adam.ingwell@wisconsin.gov, or by regular mail directed to the Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7854.

Comments on the finding of no significant impact for this proposed project should be made to Adam Ingwell at the address above, by email, or through the Commission's web comment form. Go to the Commission's web site at http://psc.wi.gov , click on "File a Comment" button. On the next page, select the "File a comment" link that appears for docket number 137-CE-194.

All comments must be received by Friday, September 17, 2021.

Sincerely,

Adam Ingwell
Environmental Affairs Coordinator – Supervisor
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs

AI:ARG:kle:pc DL:01826725