



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

Colorado's Power Pathway 345-kV Transmission Line 1041 and Location and Extent ASl25-001 and LE25-003

Planning Commission Public Hearing

May 19, 2026



Applicant: Public Service Company of Colorado (Xcel Energy)

Project Proposal: Construct a 345 kV transmission line

Project Location: Located along E. Quincy Road and east of the Colorado Land Board property

Staff: Case Engineer – Sue Liu

vacant,



Process



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- Reviewed through the Location and Extent – PC makes a decision.
- Reviewed through the 1041 Regulations for a Major Electric Facilities of a Private Utility – PC makes a recommendation to the BOCC.
- Must comply with the 1041 Regulation approval criteria in Section V, Parts A and C.



Project Details



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- The Eastern Plains region in Colorado is one of the best areas for wind and solar energy, but presently doesn't have a way to connect to the state's grid system.
- The Colorado's Power Pathway project (Pathway) will support Xcel Energy's Clean Energy Plan, which the applicant estimates will deliver as much as an 85 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and add approximately 5,000 megawatts of new wind, solar, and other resources.
- Pathway is Xcel Energy's efforts to meet the Colorado's legislature's statutory clean energy targets as well as Colorado's growing electricity needs.
- Pathway consists of five segments. This application is part of Segment 5, which starts at the Harvest Mile Substation and extends to the proposed Sandstone Substation to be located in El Paso County.



Project Details



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- The proposed transmission lines are to connect to the Harvest Mile Substation.
- Approximately 18 miles of new 345-kV double circuit electric transmission line (one mile in the City of Aurora).
- Proposing temporary construction areas that are needed for the construction of the transmission line.
- Steel poles will be weathering steel in a brown or rust color.
- Typical height is 105 to 140 feet tall, with a maximum of 199 feet.
- Typical span between poles is 950 feet but can go up to 1,400 feet.
- Beichle Laydown Yard is proposed at the northwest corner of E. Quincy Avenue and S. Brick Center Road. Reviewed through a temporary use permit with the Zoning Division.
- The maximum number of 95 employees, working a 12-hour shift, Monday through Saturday.
- Portable toilets and bottled water will be used.
- Low-flying helicopter exercises occur over Colorado State Land Board property. Applicant moved the alignment further to the east to avoid any conflict.



Comprehensive Plan

The proposed transmission line complies with the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

- *Policy PFS 6.1 – Continue Collaboration with Utility Companies in the Development Review Process*
- *Policy PFS 7.1 – Continue Collaboration with Service Providers to Ensure an Adequate Level of Service is Provided to Existing and New Development*
- *Policy NL 5.1 – Implement Actions to Create a Countywide System of Connected Open Space, Public Parks, and Trails*
- *Policy PFS 12.2 – Consider Utility Needs to Support Growth and Development of the Region*
- *Policy PFS 12.3 – Require Land Use Compatibility when Siting Local and Regional Utility Facilities*
- *Policy NL 2.1 – Require New Development to be Compatible with Existing Residential Neighborhoods*
- *Policy EH 1.2 – Encourage Environmentally Friendly Businesses and Jobs in Arapahoe County*
- *Policy NCR 6.2 – Encourage the Development and Use of Alternative Energy Sources*
- *Policy T₃ GM 1.1 – Retain Agricultural Uses in Tier 3*

Referral and Public Comment



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- Referral comments received.
 - Applicant working with Bennett-Watkins, Aurora Fire Rescue, and Sable Altura Fire District.
 - Colorado Army Aviation Support Facility/Buckley Space Force Base - COARNG wants to be notified before and during the construction of the transmission line.
 - Arapahoe County Open Spaces Division-applicant agrees to work with the County on traffic control on Quincy. This division does not want to pursue a trail within the transmission line easement at this time.
 - Arapahoe County Public Health Department - had concerns regarding the impacts the easement may have on existing water wells and OWTS. Also, concerns in easement proximity to two landfills.
 - Colorado Parks and Wildlife commented on wildlife and how to reduce impacts.



Referral and Public Comment



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- Referral comments received.
 - CORE- indicated that the proposed access routes are within CORE transmission easement. Applicant is working with is agency to prevent conflicts.
 - Public- One comment from the public. Wanted the alignment moved further east away from Box Elder Creek and the training exercise by Buckley.



Neighborhood Meeting



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Neighborhood Meeting – held on March 18, 2025, a neighborhood outreach meeting was held at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds. A total of 7 people attended the meeting, and the only comment received is as follows:

“I appreciate the experts they had on hand to answer all the questions. Great to see the private sector working so proactively to get information about the future expansion and needs of Colorado. Thank you!”



Condition of Approval – L&E and 1041



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L&E Condition:

1. Prior to the signature of the final copy of these plans, the applicant must update the Location and Extent Plan Set consistent with comments received from Public Works and Development staff as transmitted to the applicant on March 16, 2026, and add reception numbers to the Plan Set as per the email dated April 23, 2026.

1041 Conditions:

1. Prior to the signature of the final copy of these plans, the applicant must update the Location and Extent Plan Set consistent with comments received from Public Works and Development staff as transmitted to the applicant on March 16, 2026, and add reception numbers to the Plan Set as per the email dated April 23, 2026.
2. Colorado Army National Guard (COARNG) shall be provided advance notice of all construction dates and construction-related ground activities on the specified property as soon as reasonably possible. Notice shall be provided to Greg White, Aviation Safety Officer, at 720-250-1601. Specified property: State of Colorado property (south and east of the Aurora Reservoir) and portions of the transmission line along E. Quincy Avenue that is north and adjacent to the State of Colorado property.
3. Transmission Pole 694 is within 100 feet of an existing water well and therefore requires protection. A protective construction fence around this well to prevent damage during the construction of the transmission line is required.
4. As defined by the Clean Water Act, if Waters of the United States are impacted, inclusive of wetlands, a CWA Permit 404 shall be obtained prior to construction.
5. No surface occupancy and no ground disturbance (year-round) within 500 feet, where reasonably possible, of the ordinary high-water mark of all of Box Elder and Coal Creek's surface waters shall be allowed. Where occupancy or ground disturbance outside the 500-foot buffer is not reasonably possible, then the applicant shall install appropriate stormwater and sediment control according to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Stormwater Management Plan and/or Arapahoe County Grading Erosion Sediment Control Plan to protect the creek and any associated wetlands from erosion and sedimentation.
6. If grading or construction is to occur on the project between January 1 through April 30, the applicant shall conduct a survey to determine if Pronghorn are present. The results of the survey shall be submitted to Colorado Parks and Wildlife ("CPW") and the Planning Division for their review. If Pronghorn are present, no construction and grading is permitted during those dates, unless CPW advises the County that the survey results do not support the need to limit construction or grading.



Condition of Approval – L&E and 1041



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7. If grading or construction is to occur on the project between December 1 through April 30, the applicant shall conduct a survey to determine if Mule Deer are present. The results of the survey shall be submitted to CPW and the Planning Division for their review. If Mule Deer are present, no construction and grading is permitted during those dates, unless CPW advises the County that the survey results do not support the need to limit construction or grading.
8. The applicant shall conduct a pre-construction survey to determine the presence of burrowing owls following CPW's protocol for vegetation clearing activities resulting in ground disturbance between March 15 through October 31. The survey results shall be submitted to CPW for their review. If burrowing owls are found, the applicant shall coordinate with CPW to determine appropriate avoidance buffers or monitor active nest sites until determined to be inactive.
9. If grading or construction is to occur from March 15 to June 15, the applicant shall conduct a survey to identify and locate swift fox den sites in the construction area within the swift fox overall range. The survey results shall be submitted to CPW and the Planning Division for their review. If a den is identified and located, no human encroachment, surface disturbance, or construction within 0.25 miles of an active maternal den unless CPW advises the County that the survey results do not support the need to limit said activities.
10. If grading or construction is to occur from April 1 to August 15, the applicant shall conduct a survey for Mountain Plover Nest Sites. If active nests are identified and the applicant cannot restrict human disturbance within 300 feet of the nest through the seasonal restriction, then disturbance may be allowed if CPW advises the County that the survey does not support limiting such activities.
11. Prior to construction, if vegetation clearing cannot occur during the nonbreeding season of raptors, migratory birds and burrowing owls (September 1 through April 15), the applicant shall conduct surveys per USFWS and CPW guidance to identify avian nesting activity and determine appropriate avoidance buffers or monitor active nest sites until determined to be inactive. If construction activities must occur inside CPW recommended buffers of an active raptor nest, a qualified biologist will be assigned to monitor the active raptor nest during project construction to ensure nesting raptors do not become disturbed and abandon their nest.
12. Transmission lines shall be installed consistent with Avian Power Line Interaction Committee standards, and bird diverters shall be installed within 0.25 miles of any lake, drainage, or riparian area and within the raptor nesting buffer for all active nests.



Conclusion



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- Based on the findings in the staff report, staff is recommending approval for the L&E and 1041 applications.

