

Southern Colorado Transmission Improvements

San Luis Valley – Calumet – Comanche Transmission Project

Siting and Permitting

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State) and Public Service Company of Colorado (PSCo), an Xcel Energy company, are jointly proposing to construct the San Luis Valley–Calumet–Comanche Transmission Project, which would be owned and operated by the two companies.

The proposed project would be constructed by the utilities and include the following components:

- Approximately 95 miles of new double-circuit 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the existing San Luis Valley Substation, north of Alamosa, to a new Calumet Substation near Walsenburg
- A new 230/345-kV Calumet Substation at a location six miles north of Walsenburg on property owned by Tri-State and expansion of three existing substations
- Approximately 45 miles of new double-circuit 345-kV transmission line between the proposed Calumet Substation and the existing Comanche Substation near Pueblo
- Approximately six miles of new 230-kV transmission line between the proposed Calumet Substation and the existing Walsenburg Substation
- Proposed communication facilities to support operation and maintenance of the transmission lines

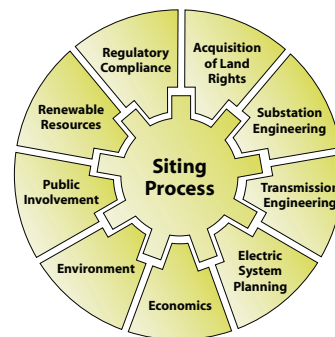
The project area was delineated based on the required transmission interconnections. The project area includes portions of the following Colorado counties: Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Huerfano, Las Animas, Pueblo, and Rio Grande.

Common Terms

- Corridor: An area to be evaluated for possible transmission line routes.
- Route: A specific alignment of the transmission line within a corridor.
- Opportunity: A favorable location for siting a transmission line. While opportunity areas are preferred for siting, they rarely extend the entire length of a route.
- Constraint: A sensitive area typically related to environmental resources or land use. Because of the complex nature of siting, constrained areas are often crossed by portions of a proposed route.

Siting Considerations

The utilities use an open and comprehensive process when siting transmission lines that considers electric system planning, economics, the environment, public involvement, regulatory issues, land rights, and engineering input.



Preliminary Corridor Identification Phase

- Step 1. Define the project area based on required interconnection points
- Step 2. Conduct an opportunity and constraint analysis
- Step 3. Identify preliminary alternative corridors from the analysis above, seek public input, and coordinate with agencies

Route Refinement Phase

- Step 1. Address specific concerns identified by the public, such as resource data, and refine, add, or delete preliminary alternative corridors and identify alternative routes
- Step 2. Conduct a comparative analysis of the alternative routes
- Step 3. Present the comparative analysis and alternative routes at public route refinement workshops for review and comment

Identification of Preferred and Alternative Routes

Step 1. Use public comments and stakeholder concerns from the route refinement workshops to make final adjustments to the alternative routes

Step 2. Update the comparative analysis to reflect the refined routes

Step 3. Identify a preferred route and a select number of feasible alternatives based on the comparative analysis

Step 4. Carry the preferred and alternative routes forward for analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act and other required approvals

Data Collection and Evaluation

Resource data were studied and mapped using a Geographic Information System (GIS). Data were analyzed in the following categories:

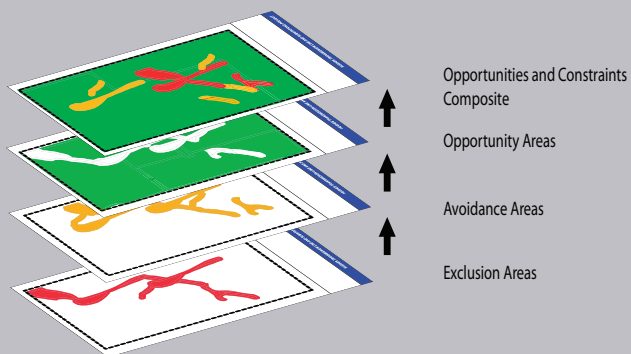
- Land use and jurisdiction
- Existing linear transportation and utility corridors
- Water resources
- Cultural and historic resources
- Biological resources

Opportunity and Constraints Analysis

Opportunity areas include existing linear facilities and associated corridors that may provide suitable opportunities for collocating a transmission line. These areas contain existing land uses that may be compatible with the project.

Avoidance areas include sensitive areas that could potentially incur environmental impacts or result in land use conflicts if directly affected by the project.

Exclusion areas include locations with the highest level of sensitivity, including those areas with regulatory or legislative designations or extreme physical constraints not compatible with transmission line construction and/or operation.



Project Approvals

Jurisdiction	Permit/Decision/Action
Federal	
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service	NEPA: Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1794 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106
Federal Aviation Administration	Title 14 CFR Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers	Clean Water Act, Section 404/Nationwide Permit 12, Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Consultation
State	
Colorado Public Utilities Commission	Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN)
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	Construction General Stormwater Permit and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Section 401 Water Quality Certification
Colorado Department of Transportation	Access Permits if necessary
Colorado State Historic Preservation Office	Determination of Compliance with NHPA Section 106
Local	
Municipalities and Counties	Land Use, Construction, and Crossing Permits