

# The Pueblo Chieftain

## NEWS

# Black Hills transmission line put on hold in Pueblo West

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Published 12:13 p.m. MT Dec. 14, 2021

After a concerned resident cautioned there could be code violations, the Pueblo West Metro Board on Dec. 13 tabled an easement decision for Black Hills Energy's future electric transmission line.

The board is considering a resolution approving easements for electric and communication lines for Black Hills Energy as the utility company works toward constructing an electric substation to serve future growth in the community.

Pueblo West resident Melvin Manrose alleged code violations, reporting that a 115-kilovolt transmission line "needs a 125-foot easement" and the company should not use the narrower easement that was proposed. Pueblo West Economic Development Specialist Tyler Purvis indicated the right-of-way easements, as presented, would range between 55 and 60 feet wide.

Manrose also urged the board to give the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed easements, especially "people who live along that line," he said. He also suggested that Black Hills "should pay for it."

"They have raised rates four times in the past year and will have another raise in rates coming in January. They should pay fair-market value for the easement," Manrose said.

The metro district on Sept. 13 approved easements for Black Hills Energy to access and construct the electric substation. Black Hills agreed to pay \$300,000 for those permanent easements.

The substation will be located on the west end of the old airport property which runs parallel to East Industrial Boulevard. Of the 329-acres that make up the old airport

property, a roughly 5-acre site will be used north and east behind the Armor Storage facility at 517 E. Industrial.

The site was selected because it is located near the company's existing transmission line, is easy to access and is not close to private residences. The substation is needed, "to help facilitate future growth and the needs for the community," Purvis said.

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In the transmission line design process, Black Hills officials determined that they could change the height of transmission line poles from 97 feet tall to 70 feet tall if additional easements were acquired.

The proposed resolution states that the district "believes that reducing the visual impact of the transmission lines is in the best interests of the district and the requested easement locations are reasonable and fitting to the scope of the project."

Pueblo County OK'd the proposal through its 1041 land use permitting process, Purvis said.

However, Pueblo West Metro Board Member Kim Swearingen said she would like some clarification on the easement width issue raised by Manrose before she can give the resolution a "yes" vote.

"We should definitely get some clarification on that. Are we following the recommended guidelines," questioned Jami Baker-Orr, board member.

The board unanimously agreed to table the resolution until its Jan. 10 meeting.