

A Major Reliability Improvement Project: Introductory Round One Consultation – What We Heard & Round Two – Alternative Route Siting Process

Bipole III is a major transmission line project that will significantly improve the reliability of the provincial transmission system.

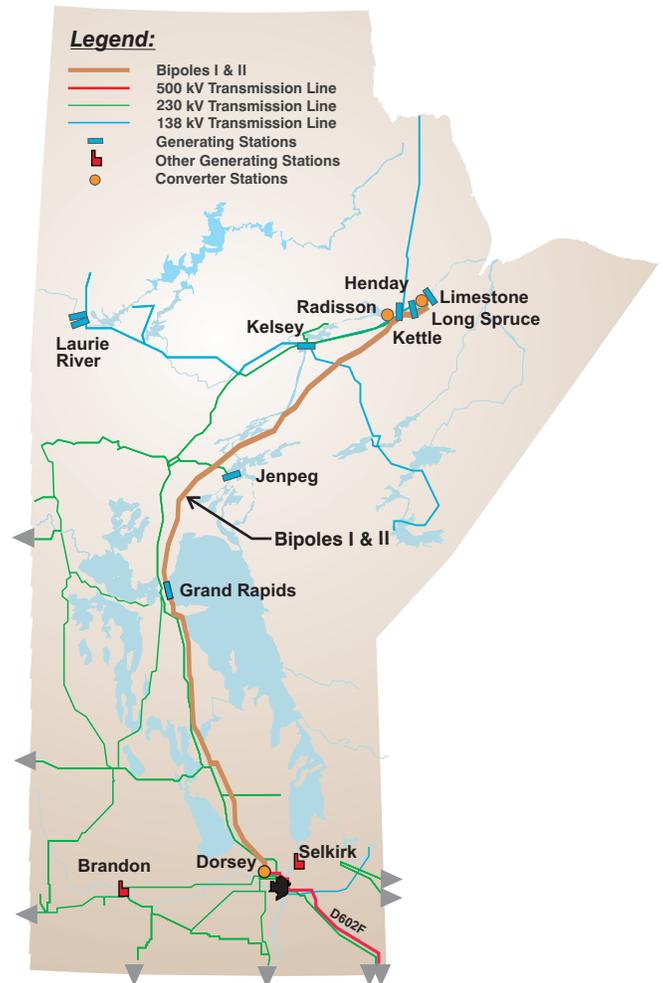
Approximately 75% of Manitoba Hydro's generating capacity is delivered to southern Manitoba via the existing high voltage direct current (HVdc) Interlake corridor which is shared by Bipoles I and II, which terminate at Dorsey Station, in the Rural Municipality of Rosser, northwest of the City of Winnipeg. Manitoba Hydro's system is vulnerable to the risk of outage of either the Interlake corridor or Dorsey Station, both of which could, for example, occur as a result of a severe weather incident such as a major ice storm, an extreme wind event or a tornado. The in-service date for the project is 2017.

The Bipole III Project will improve system reliability by establishing Riel Station, a second converter station in southern Manitoba, which will provide a second major point of power injection into the transmission system. As well, Bipole III will reduce risks from a range of possible system outages such as:

- The HVdc facilities at Dorsey Station;
- The adjacent 500 kV station at Dorsey Station;
- The Bipoles I & II Interlake corridor;
- The corridor immediately north of Dorsey Station containing a 500 kV line to the United States, Bipoles I & II and a 230 kV line to Brandon; and
- The transmission corridors around Winnipeg.

In addition, Bipole III will improve the existing Bipoles I & II line losses and provide additional transmission line capacity to deliver new northern hydroelectric generation to southern markets.

Newsletter #1 for Bipole III (dated February 2008) further describes "The Reliability Concern". That newsletter also provides an overview of the "Bipole III Project Concept", "The Site Selection and Environmental Assessment (SSEA) Process", "Community and Public Consultation", and "Regulatory Approvals".



Additional copies of the introductory newsletter can be obtained from Manitoba Hydro at the contact address shown on the back of this newsletter. Project information is also available at:

www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/bipoleIII/

From February to October 2008, Manitoba Hydro conducted introductory meetings with elected officials and the leadership of northern and southern communities that are in the general area under consideration for planning the Bipole III transmission line. Following these meetings Manitoba Hydro also held a series of regional Public Open Houses regarding the project.

This newsletter outlines feedback obtained during the introductory round of community and public consultation and the next steps.

Round One - Introductory Community and Public Consultation



Community and public consultation is an essential part of the planning process for the Bipole III Transmission Reliability Project. As part of this process Manitoba Hydro conducted an introductory round of community meetings with the elected officials and leadership of communities in the northern and southern part of the province. These meetings provided opportunities for elected officials and leadership to receive information about the need for Bipole III, the Bipole III concept, the Site Selection and Environmental Assessment (SSEA) process for selecting a route for the line, SSEA timelines and regulatory requirements, and to provide input into the Bipole III project. In Aboriginal communities, formal consultation will begin following this initial round of dialogue and will be guided by the development of a community based consultation plan.

As part of the Round One consultations, regional Public Open Houses were held in September and October 2008 to give interested parties an opportunity to receive information and provide input into the project. The regional Public Open Houses were held from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the following locations: Swan River, Dauphin,

Russell, Neepawa, The Pas, Flin Flon, McCreary, Snow Lake, Portage la Prairie, Thompson, Gillam, Oakbank and Winnipeg.

Issues and questions raised during the Introductory discussions included the following:

- The rationale for an east versus west Bipole III location;
- Respect for comprehensive Aboriginal community consultations;
- Aboriginal project benefits considerations;
- Details of the SSEA process and associated timelines;
- Consultation and next steps;
- Potential property impacts; and
- Right-of-way acquisition procedures.

In general, there was a good understanding by all participants that transmission reliability was a very important consideration for the provincial transmission system.



Public Consultation Session

Round Two - Alternative Route Siting Process

Manitoba Hydro utilizes a Site Selection and Environmental Assessment (SSEA) process to identify a proposed route for transmission line projects. The purpose of the SSEA process is to select a route that has the least negative impact on people and the environment while maximizing positive opportunities. An overview of the SSEA process for Bipole III is found in Newsletter #1.

Following the Round One consultations, the SSEA process commenced with the definition of a study area, which is large enough to identify several alternative routes for Bipole III. The next step in the SSEA process is to identify biophysical and socio-economic features within the study area that may be affected by a transmission line. Features that may be affected include wildlife, vegetation, culturally sensitive sites, residences, land uses such as agriculture and mining, resource harvesting areas, and river/stream crossings. Alternative transmission line routes for Bipole III will be selected and compared based on public/landowner input, avoidance of sensitive sites/areas, as well as technical (engineering) and cost considerations. Technical (engineering) factors include minimizing line length and heavy angle structures, and limiting routing through major waterbodies.

The Bipole III study area covers a very large portion of the province. Mapping of biophysical and socio-economic features within the study area is a significant part of Round Two activities.

Round Two will include discussions with potentially affected communities, resource users, landowners, interest groups, potentially affected stakeholders and government departments, as well as conducting Public Open Houses. Information obtained during these consultations, including local input and Traditional Knowledge, will be built into the planning process to assist in the identification of alternative routes. The concluding aspect of the Round Two consultations will be the definition of a set of alternative routes by the summer of 2009.



For Illustrative Purposes Only

Next Steps



under *The Environment Act* (Manitoba). The environmental impact assessment for the project, including a program of community/public consultation, and the identification of potential impacts and mitigative measures, will be documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The project EIS, together with an Environment Act Proposal Form (EAPF) will be submitted to Manitoba Conservation in the fall of 2011 as application for the Environment Act Licence. It is anticipated that Manitoba Conservation will coordinate with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to ensure a harmonized approach to application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. Receipt of the Environment Act Licence is required in the fall of 2012 to meet a project in-service date of 2017.

A third round of consultation to present an evaluation and comparison of alternative routes is planned to begin in September of 2009 and continue through to the summer of 2010. The fourth and final round, which will present the proposed route along with mitigative measures to enhance positive and reduce potential negative effects, is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2010 and continue through until the spring of 2011. Further updates on the project will be available on Manitoba Hydro's Bipole III website (www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/bipoleIII/) and through additional newsletters as the SSEA process proceeds.

Development of Bipole III will require a Class 3 licence



*Bipole I near
Gillam, Manitoba*

Comments

Manitoba Hydro would welcome your comments related to the Bipole III Project. Should you require more information or desire to discuss the project, please contact:

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Project information is also available at www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/bipoleIII/