



# **ComEd's Proposed West Central Reliability Project**

**Village of Roselle Community Meeting  
March 21, 2016**

## **ComEd claims that its proposed West Central Reliability Project is intended to improve electricity delivery and reliability. According to ComEd:**

- The project is proposed to provide an alternative delivery pathway so that ComEd may restore power to customers more quickly. The Bartlett substation, the west terminus of the proposed project, is currently served by a single wood pole line from another substation in Wayne.
- The project is designed to enhance local reliability and provide greater flexibility to perform maintenance activities to meet customer needs with faster restoration times.
- The project is projected to accommodate additional high-voltage transmission lines on the same poles that are installed to meet both current and future needs in this part of the electrical grid.

## **Village of Roselle Officials were notified about ComEd's proposed plan on November 30, 2015. Since then:**

- The Village Board has authorized spending up to \$100,000 to oppose ComEd's proposed plan.
- A coalition of communities, including Roselle, Schaumburg, Hanover Park, Itasca, and Elk Grove Village, have formed to develop a coordinated and multi-community response to the proposed project. Coalition meetings have included top ComEd officials.
- Village officials held numerous meetings, working with legal counsel, lobbyists, and the coalition of communities to prepare for the opposition to ComEd's proposed project. The coalition plans to intervene in ComEd's case before the Illinois Commerce Commission, which regulates utility projects in Illinois, once it is filed.



# Roselle Response

**Roselle Officials have worked with the following groups to prepare its opposition to ComEd's plan:**

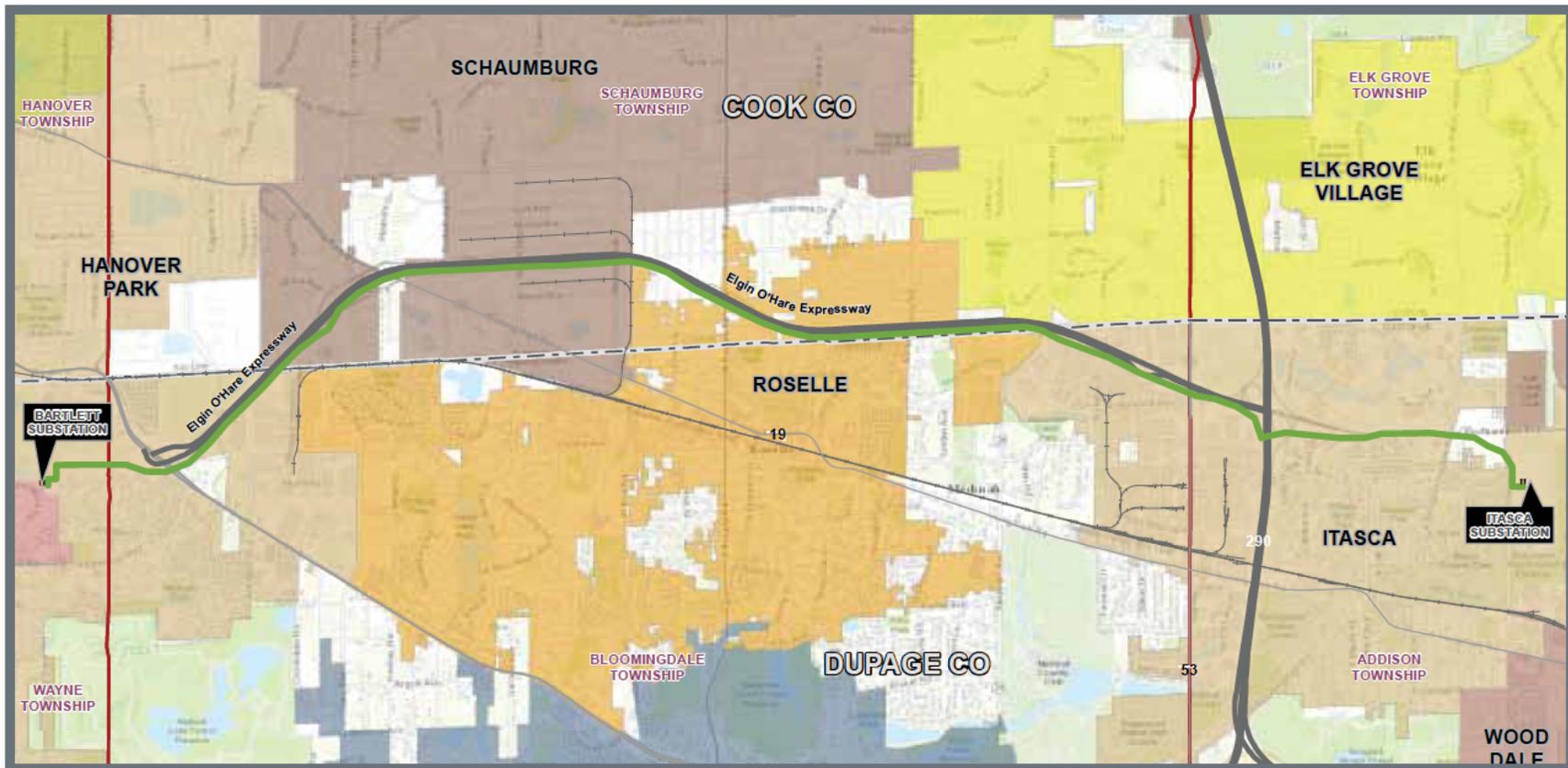
- Coalition of Neighboring Communities
- State Elected Officials
- DuPage & Cook County Officials
- Schaumburg & Bloomingdale Township Officials
- Local Councils of Government
- Suburban O'Hare Commission
- Illinois Commerce Commission
- Legal Counsel & Lobbyists

## Details of ComEd's proposed plan include:

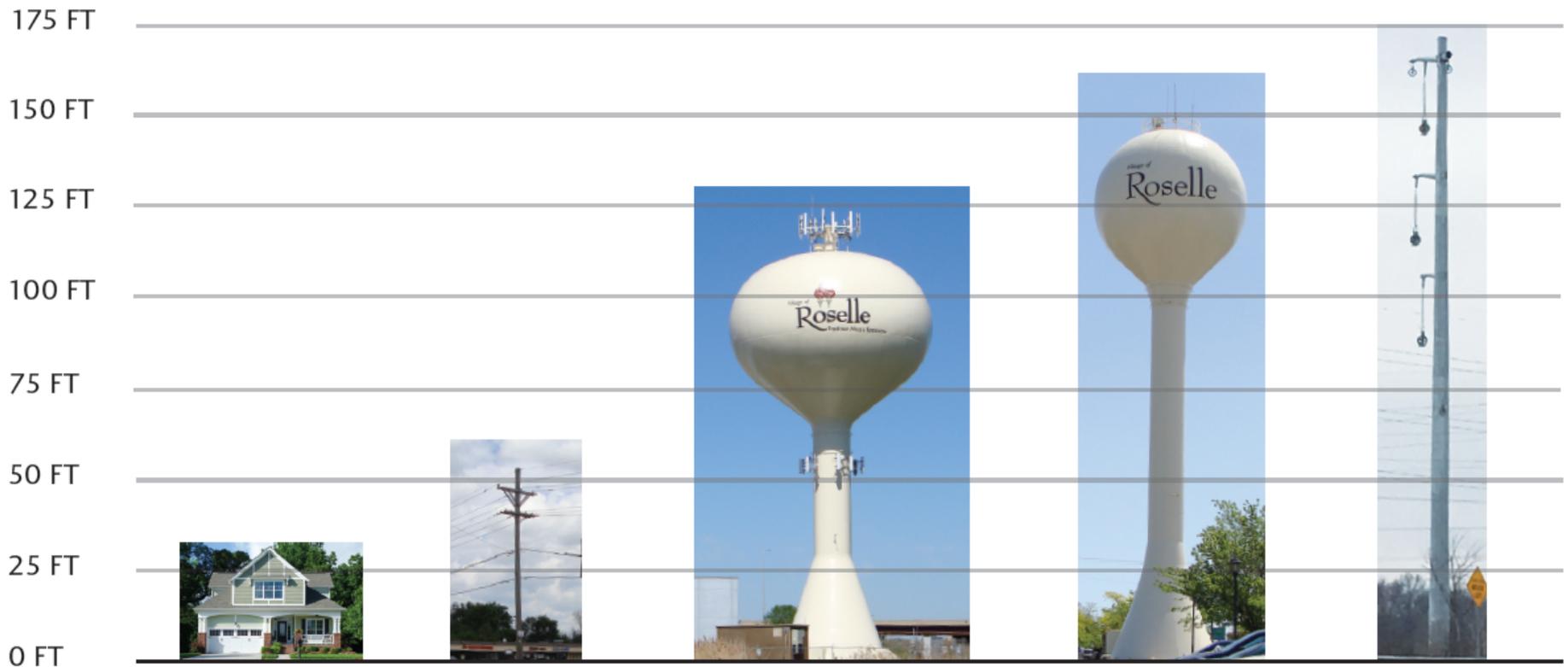
- A new 138kV electric transmission line is proposed to be constructed on steel monopole structures between ComEd's existing substations near the communities of Hanover Park and Itasca.
- At a projected cost of \$50 to \$60 million, the proposed line will connect these substations and cross DuPage and Cook counties, primarily within the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway right-of-way.
- Preliminary information shared with municipal officials indicates a total of 80 to 85 poles along the 9-mile project path.
- ComEd had proposed to begin construction in 2017, with completion expected in Fall 2018.

**The 9-mile route runs along the south side of I-390.**

- This corridor is comprised of primarily industrial and manufacturing areas, with smaller areas designated for residential, entertainment, and aviation uses.



**ComEd's proposed plan calls for poles that may be between 140 and 170 feet tall.**



**Through the Public Utilities Act, the ICC is responsible for regulating public utilities.**

- PUA sections 8-406 and 8-406.1 apply to this proposed project.
- Public utilities may not begin construction of any new project without first obtaining a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity from the ICC.
- Certificates are issued only if the project will promote public convenience and necessity.
- In making its determination, the ICC applies primary weight to a least-cost approach to meet service needs for customers of the utility.

## Convenience and necessity determinations:

- The proposed project must be necessary to provide adequate, reliable, and efficient service to customers and is the least-cost means of satisfying the service needs of customers OR the proposed construction must promote the development of an effectively competitive electricity market that operates efficiently, is equitable to all customers, and is the least-cost means of satisfying those objectives.
- The utility must be capable of efficiently managing and supervising the construction process, and financing the proposed construction without significant adverse financial consequences for the utility or its customers.
- Intervening in a case before the ICC is a very complex process, relying on expert witnesses and several rounds of presentations, both before and after official hearings. The process allows for the introduction of a wide range of issues. Many intervening parties focus their opposition on a lack of necessity, i.e. is reliability and/or expansion a necessity.

## 12 Criteria for Evaluating Proposed Routes

- Length of line
- Difficulty and cost of construction
- Difficulty and cost of operation and maintenance
- Environmental impacts
- Impacts on historical resources
- Social and land use impacts
- Number of affected landowners and other stakeholders
- Proximity to homes and other structures
- Proximity to existing and planned development
- Community acceptance
- Visual impact
- Presence of existing corridors

The criteria are meant to provide a framework. Decisions in previous ICC cases have resulted in a balancing of these 12 criteria.

## **The ICC has a process in place for citizens and units of government to intervene in proposed utility plans**

- The purpose of requiring ComEd to obtain certification through the ICC is to prevent the unnecessary duplication of facilities and to protect the public from inadequate service and higher rates.
- While the petition for the project is pending, the ICC may hold hearings and forums to evaluate interventions by individual property owners, concerned citizen groups, homeowners associations, and affected municipalities.
- Intervening parties to the Grand Prairie Gateway project included counties, municipalities, home owner associations, residents, and other land owners.

## **The ICC will take public comments as part of its role as the regulatory body.**

- Public comments from concerned citizens are already impacting the process.
- Village of Roselle officials gathered and submitted over 100 comments from community members to ComEd in January 2016.
- The ICC is now accepting public comments on the proposed project on its website [www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/comment/](http://www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/comment/). Over 700 have been received by the ICC.
- State Representative Michelle Mussman is currently circulating a digital petition urging the ICC to stop the project, which has collected over 1,000 signatures.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Why won't the ICC consider arguments about electrical magnetic fields (EMFs) and diminishment of property values?

There are no national governmental regulations associated with EMFs. The ICC generally does not consider EMF arguments as part of a Public Convenience and Necessity hearing.

Representatives from the ICC, legal firms that have litigated at the ICC, and political consulting firms have said that while the ICC will occasionally consider issues like aesthetics and property values, these cases must be thoroughly researched and well-documented.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- The Schaumburg Airport is nearby. Are the proposed poles too tall to be located so close to the airport?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for specific airport regulations related to air space and public health, safety, and welfare near an airport.

The existence of air space hazards resulting from the installation of high-voltage power lines in the area of an airport have been considered as appropriate elements of analysis by the ICC.

The FAA has already issued a notice of presumed hazard regarding the pole heights adjacent to the Schaumburg Airport.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Can a municipality stop the construction of high-voltage lines by refusing to issue permits or changing zoning regulations?

The Public Utilities Act and case law preempts enforcement of ordinances adopted by local home rule and non-home rule government units involving construction projects intended to facilitate the transmission of electric service for which the Illinois Commerce Commission has issued a certificate of public convenience and necessity.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- I heard houses located adjacent to high voltage transmission towers can't obtain mortgages?

According to HUD, the government agency responsible for developing lending rules and regulations, property appraisers must indicate whether a property is located within the easement serving a high-voltage transmission line. If the property is located outside the easement, the property is considered eligible and no further action is necessary.

ComEd claims that no homes are located within the easement.

## Frequently Asked Questions

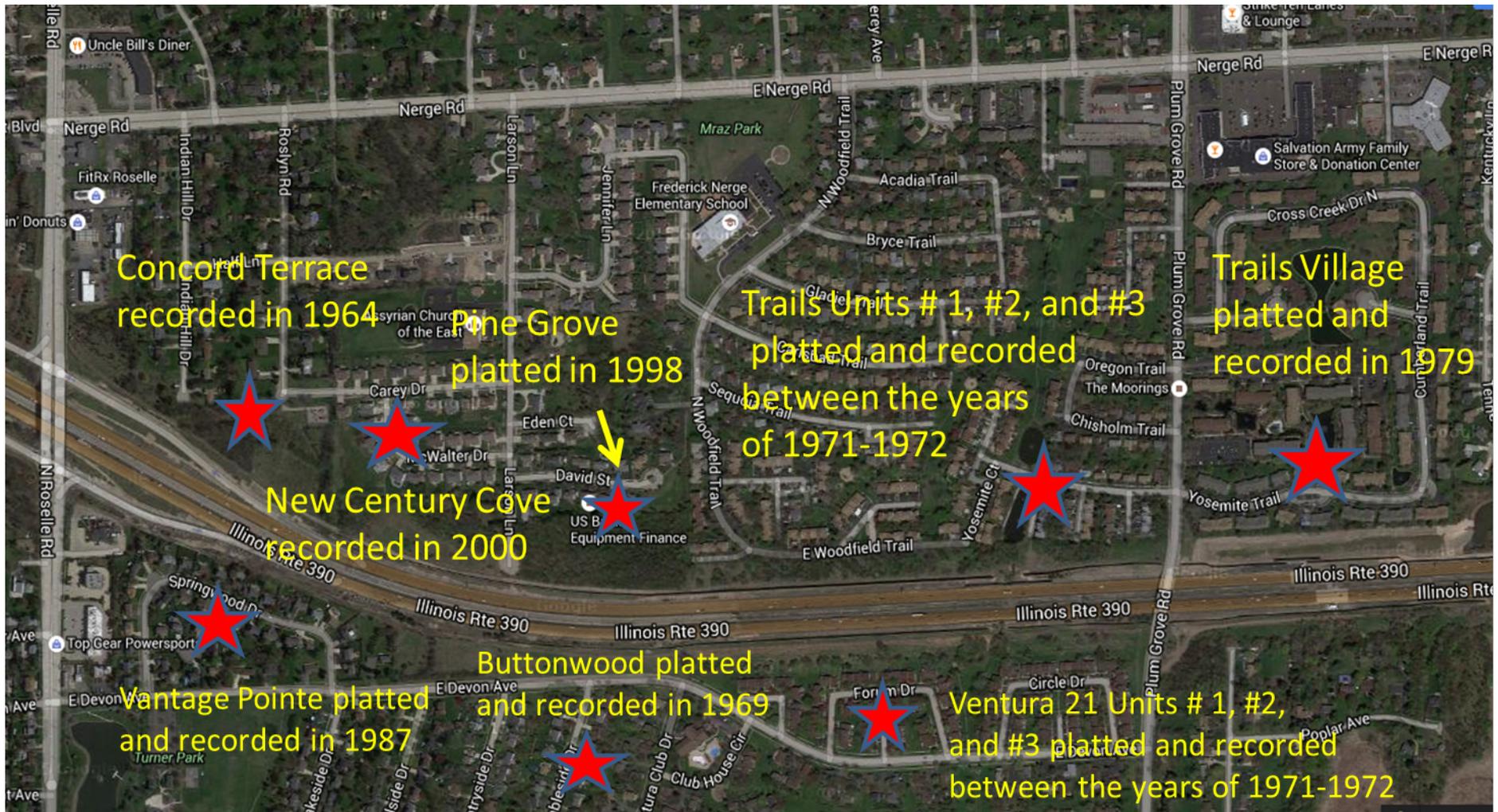
- How long has ComEd owned the property identified for the proposed project?

ComEd claims that they previously owned property along and under what is now the I-390 tollway beginning in the 1960's. State documents identified the I-390 tollway corridor has a proposed expressway in 1962. Village documents reference ComEd owned property along the corridor in the 1960's. Records obtained by the Village show ComEd granted land to IDOT in December 1990 to build the Elgin-O' Hare Expressway, in exchange for ComEd being permitted to construct, operate and maintain an electrical utility transmission and distribution system through sections of the highway. These sections appear to be part of the proposed West Central Reliability Project.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- When were residential subdivisions first built along the path of the proposed West Central Reliability Project approved by the Village?

## Residential Development Timeline



## Frequently Asked Questions

➤ Are there other issues that can be explored to either change or stop ComEd's proposed plan?

Burying the lines underground has been widely discussed, but is a complex issue. The ICC is not typically predisposed to this option due to the high cost involved.

If improving reliability truly is the issue for ComEd, the argument could be made that the most reliable way to run the lines would be underground.

The coalition of communities does not believe that ComEd's proposed plan is truly about reliability, and that is one of the reasons why they oppose it.

## **The Village of Roselle & the Coalition of Communities will focus on:**

- Delay in Proposed Plan by ComEd
- Legislative Process
- Strategic Planning: Developing Alternative Solutions
- Continue Citizen Engagement



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