

# 69 kV Reliability Enhancement/ Central Avenue Project



**Q: What is the anticipated traffic disruption on weekdays?**

**A:** Before performing the work, Pepco will submit a Traffic Control Plan to the Maryland State Highway Administration (MD SHA) for review and approval. Pepco will follow the plan as approved by MD SHA, including work hours and other conditions. We anticipate that one lane of Central Avenue will be periodically closed to provide a safe work zone. Most work will be performed during daytime hours outside the morning and evening rush hours. There will be some impact to roadway intersections when work is being done near these locations. Access to businesses and homes will be maintained.

The only exceptions to the above statements will be when we need to pull wire over major road crossings, such as Rt. 495. This work is expected to be performed during evening hours, and Pepco will coordinate with MD SHA and local police to ensure that work is done as safely and quickly as possible.

**Q: Will there be any service disruptions to homeowners/businesses?**

**A:** There may be some short-term service disruptions, which typically do not last more than one work day. Pepco plans to coordinate with customers in advance of planned service interruptions.

**Q: Will there be any work on private property?**

**A:** The majority of the work on this project is within public space or on Pepco's right-of-way. However, some work will be performed on private property in accordance with Pepco's existing easement rights. Pepco is proactively engaging with the impacted property owners to ensure they are made aware of the project.

**Q: What is the process for approval by the authorizing governing body?**

**A:** Pepco is an electric utility company regulated by the Maryland Public Service Commission (MD PSC), which means that the MD PSC has general oversight over the company. Because this project does not involve high voltage transmission lines (i.e., in excess of 69 kV), it is not subject to approval by the MD PSC, though the MD PSC will determine whether and how much of the project's costs Pepco will be authorized to recover.

Pepco coordinates and receives approval from local governmental and permitting agencies to perform work, such as MD SHA, Maryland Department of the Environment, Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

**Q: What process does Pepco use to determine if overhead or underground lines are the most appropriate method?**

**A:** The MD PSC directed Pepco to review the health of its electric system and to perform necessary hardening of Pepco's sub-transmission (69 kV) system to ensure substations have more reliable and resilient supplies. Pepco is obliged to implement a solution that meets the regulatory requirements for reliability and resiliency at a prudent cost to rate payers. Therefore, Pepco conducted a thorough inspection and analysis of its sub-transmission system to look for opportunities to harden the system to make it more resilient during damaging storms. As part of the analysis, Pepco examined several factors to determine the best solution to implement. These factors included, but were not limited to, existing infrastructure (existing overhead poles, existing underground lines, etc.), right-of-way and route options, other existing utilities that take up space, construction and cost impacts to customers, and reliability improvement.

**Q: What are the costs for undergrounding the same lines?**

**A:** Although the cost of the project cannot be determined prior to design work, in Pepco's estimation, the cost to complete this project with an underground solution would be about 10 times more expensive than the cost of an overhead solution. The MD PSC reviews expenses and investments in the electric system to ensure they are "prudently incurred." For example: "Are the costs necessary to provide adequate service?" and "Are the costs reasonable?" The costs of undergrounding these lines would not meet the test of "prudently incurred" because a less expensive and effective alternative is readily available, i.e., replacing the existing overhead lines with more resilient overhead lines.

**Q: What is the useful life of wooden poles vs metal poles?**

**A:** Wood poles have an expected useful life of 30 to 40 years while steel poles have an expected useful life of 60 to 100 years.

The new steel poles that Pepco will be installing, which are galvanized to resist rust, are being constructed to a more resilient engineering standard to improve reliability of the sub-transmission line. The new steel poles will be taller and larger to withstand severe weather events and to improve electrical clearances. They will be self-supporting, which eliminates the need for guy wires that are often used for wood poles. In addition, steel poles require much less maintenance than wood poles since steel poles do not suffer from issues due to rot and imperfections at the beginning of their life cycle.

**Q: Is Pepco self-performing or subcontracting the work on this project?**

**A:** Pepco will be contracting the construction work associated with this project. The work will always be under the supervision of Pepco construction managers. This is part of our efforts to invest in local and diverse contractors to drive jobs and economic development in the communities we serve.