

Land Acquisition Process Fact Sheet

Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to acquire most property rights required for the TransWest Express Transmission Project (TWE) under Federal property acquisition guidelines (the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970).

If you own land that would be crossed by the project, a realty agent would contact you to explain the steps involved in site selection, property rights acquisition, and construction.

Site Selection

A realty agent would request permission (for workers or contractors) to enter your property to conduct surveys and studies.

A combination of aerial and land surveys, environmental and engineering field studies, and geologic investigations would be used to select structure sites.

Structures would be located at sites to satisfy design criteria, maintain adequate line-to-ground clearance, and minimize effects to the properties being crossed.

Damage to crops, fences, or other property caused by surveys and studies would be repaired, or landowners would be compensated for damage.

Property Rights Acquisition

Property rights, called easements or rights-of-way, would be needed to construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line. Transmission line easements 250 feet wide are typical for a project of this size.

Access road easements are typically 30 feet wide. Access roads would be narrower than, and would fit within the boundaries of the easement.

Easements would be purchased through negotiations with landowners based on an independent appraisal.

Landowners can be present during the appraisal and identify property features and uses of importance to assist in determining the fair market value of the easement. The landowner would retain title to the land and may continue to use the property in ways that are compatible with the transmission line.

Every effort would be made to acquire easements through negotiations with landowners to obtain an agreement that is fair and reasonable to both parties.

Federal and state laws enable public agencies to acquire property rights for facilities to be built in the public interest.

If a negotiated agreement cannot be reached, easements can be acquired through eminent domain (condemnation) proceedings. Through the eminent domain process, a court determines the compensation to be paid to the property owner.

Construction

A realty agent would advise landowners of the construction schedule. Construction crews would be restricted to the area within the acquired easements.

Preparing the right-of-way for construction may require installing gates and culverts, clearing vegetation, trimming or removing trees, removing structures, and constructing access roads and crane pads.

Construction would occur in several phases as transmission structures are assembled and structures and conductors are installed.

All work areas and access roads not required for maintenance would be restored as nearly as practical to their previous condition. Construction refuse and scrap material would be removed.

Maintenance crews would periodically inspect, repair, and maintain the line. Ground inspections are usually performed one time each year.

Landowners would be compensated for any crop and property damage caused by construction or maintenance of the transmission line.

Living and Working Around Electrical Facilities

Transmission lines are designed and constructed to meet or exceed the requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code. These standards provide for the safety and protection of landowners and their property, the public, and utility employees.

Ranching and farming activities, gardening, recreational activities, and other uses are permitted in the easement as long as care is taken to prevent damage and maintain access to transmission line structures.

No buildings or structures may be erected in the easement because they could impede the safe operation of the line or interfere with maintenance access.

For safety reasons, pumps, wells, swimming pools, and flammables must not be placed in the easement area. Properly grounded and permitted irrigation systems are acceptable.