

ATTACHMENT F: RESPONSE TO PRE-APPLICATION COMMENTS



1800 Larimer Street
Denver, CO 80202

April 17, 2024

Lorianne Thennes, Project Manager
Office of Development Assistance
City of Aurora
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, Colorado 80012
Submitted via email: lthennes@auroragov.org.

RE: Response to Aurora's Staff Comments from Pre-Application Meeting for
Colorado's Power Pathway (#1708633)

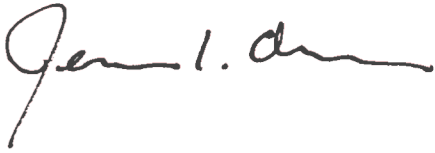
Dear Lorianne Thennes:

Public Service Company of Colorado, a Colorado corporation conducting business as Xcel Energy (Xcel Energy), proposes to construct and operate Colorado's Power Pathway (Pathway) in eastern Colorado. Pathway is a \$1.7 billion investment proposed by Xcel Energy to improve the state's electric grid and enable future renewable energy development around the state. Pathway will ensure safe, reliable, and economical electric service to the public, boost the regional economy, and create jobs during its construction.

Attached to this letter, please find Xcel Energy's responses to Aurora's five key issues from the Pathway Pre-Application Meeting held on May 18, 2023, included in Aurora's formal Staff Comments dated June 1, 2023.

We look forward to working with you and any other representatives of the City of Aurora during the permitting process for Pathway. Please contact me by telephone at (303) 285-6533 or email at Jennifer.L.Chester@xcelenergy.com, Cory Miller at (303) 571-7759 or email at Cory.R.Miller@xcelenergy.com or contact our environmental consultant Stephanie Phippen with Tetra Tech Inc. at (303) 980-3515 or email at stephanie.phippen@tetrattech.com if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jennifer L. Chester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" being more prominent and the last name "Chester" following in a similar style.

Jennifer Chester, Manager
Siting & Land Rights
Xcel Energy
Telephone: (303) 285-6533
Jennifer.L.Chester@XcelEnergy.com

RESPONSE TO PRE-APPLICATION STAFF COMMENTS

Below are Xcel Energy's responses to the five Key Issues listed in the formal Staff Comments from the Development Review Team, provided by Aurora on June 1, 2023.

Xcel Energy has identified several questions and items of clarification for Aurora, summarized below and discussed in detail in the responses to the individual comments:

- Please confirm the Site Plan requirements that do not apply to Pathway (see COMMENT: Conditional Use Approval);
- Please provide additional information about future trails (see COMMENT: PROS Coordination);
- Please provide additional information about the future Quincy Avenue right-of-way (see ROW; COMMENT: Intergovernmental Agreement).

Xcel Energy appreciates Aurora's clarification regarding these information requests.

COMMENT: Conditional Use Approval

Conditional Use Approval: The proposed use is subject to Conditional Use approval. As part of the application, please submit a Letter of Introduction with an Operations Plan that introduces the project and justifies the Conditional Use request by specifically responding to the Criteria of Approval. Staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission will consider the ability of the proposal to meet these criteria in their evaluation of the proposal.

Response:

Xcel Energy has prepared a Conditional Use Permit application (CUP application) package for Aurora review. The package includes a Letter of Introduction and Operations Plan and responds to the Conditional Use Criteria of Approval.

Xcel Energy has submitted the Site Plan with the Conditional Use Permit application. Upon review of the Aurora Site Plan Manual (Aurora, 2020¹), Xcel Energy has identified the following Site Plan requirements that do not apply to a linear transmission line project:

- Cover sheet requirements:

¹ Aurora. 2020. Aurora Site Plan Manual. Available online at: https://cdns5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1881137/File/Business%20Services/Development%20Center/Development%20Process/Forms%20and%20Applications/Site%20Plan%20Manual%209.21.2020.pdf. Accessed July 2023.

- Legal description block
- Site Plan requirements:
 - ADA route
 - Bike racks
 - Building footprints
 - Curbs, curb cuts, and crossspan
 - Detention/water quality ponds
 - Drainage inlets and manholes
 - Entry monuments
 - Fences/gates across driveways or easements
 - Fire hydrants/FDC/etc.
 - Fire lanes
 - Handicap ramps
 - Handicap parking stalls
 - Lot dimensions, boundaries, and lot and block numbers
 - Mailbox locations
 - Monument signs
 - Motor vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle connections
 - Open space tracts and common areas
 - Parking stalls
 - Phasing
 - Plan cross sections
 - Retaining walls
 - Sidewalks and trails
 - Sight distance triangles
 - Sign program and design
 - Site lighting

- Street and pedestrian lighting
 - Street cross sections
 - Street furniture
 - Traffic signals
 - Trash enclosures
- Grading and Utility Schematic requirements:
 - Drainage inlets, manholes, head walls
 - Drainage
 - Fire hydrants/FDC, etc.
 - Fire lanes
 - Grease interceptors
 - Street and site lighting
 - Top of wall and bottom of wall elevations
 - Estimate locations of water meters and related pocket utility easements
 - Water quality/detention ponds
 - Water and sanitary sewer service lines
- Landscape Plan requirements: all requirements
- Photometric Plan requirements: all requirements
- Accompanying Documents requirements:
 - Proof of ownership
 - Building material samples

Xcel Energy requests that Aurora confirm that the aforementioned Site Plan requirements will not be required for Pathway.

In a separate meeting with the City of Aurora for the *Kestrel 230 kV Interconnection Project*, it was suggested that the 'Pawnee Daniel 350kV' project represents a good example of the level of detail the city will expect for a transmission line submittal. Xcel Energy has prepared a site plan that provides the same level of detail as that previous submittal.

COMMENT: Avigation Easement:

Avigation Easement: Because the property is within the Airport Influence District surrounding Buckley Air Force Base, an avigation easement with the city and the airport shall be conveyed by the person subdividing lands or initiating construction of any structure on already subdivided lands. Please contact Jeffrey Moore with any questions you may have.

Response: Xcel Energy is seeking an avigation easement through Jeffrey Moore (303.739.7676 and jsmoore@auroragov.org) and will have the easement in place prior to initiating construction.

COMMENT: Pronghorn Natural Area

Pronghorn Natural Area: Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) is vehemently opposed to any new utility right-of-way through the Pronghorn Natural Area on the north side of Quincy Avenue. Construction of any utility infrastructure through the Pronghorn Natural Area, whether on the north or south side of Quincy Avenue, will permanently impact the sensitive habitat and resources currently enjoying protections. As with past utility projects impacting open space and conservation areas, any impacts should be offset by providing the City with Mitigation Funds. Alternative alignments should be considered that avoid the Pronghorn Natural Area altogether. If this is not feasible, to reduce impacts to the greatest extent possible, an alternative should be considered to construct the new transmission lines adjacent to, or within, the already existing utility right-of-way on the south side of Quincy Avenue.

Response: Xcel Energy recognizes the concern and looks forward to working with Aurora staff to reach a resolution.

Xcel Energy conducted an extensive routing analysis for Segment 5, which is documented in the Segment 5 Routing and Siting Study that is attached to the CUP application. A summary of key routing considerations is included below. Multiple alternatives along Quincy Avenue, including alignments along the north and south sides of the road and the Natural Area were considered.

Based on road right-of-way width, other existing transmission and distribution lines, oil and gas facilities and a solar facility, there is insufficient space to locate Pathway along the south side of Quincy Avenue. Pathway would not fit between Quincy Avenue and the existing transmission lines directly to the south of the road. Xcel Energy evaluated the south side of the existing transmission line corridor but had two major space constraints on either side of the Natural Area. Pathway would not fit between the existing transmission lines south of Quincy Avenue and the Arapahoe County

Fairgrounds and the Arapahoe Park Racetrack to the west of the Natural Area, nor would it fit between the south side of the existing transmission line corridor and the existing solar facility to the east of the Natural Area.

As an alternative to paralleling Quincy Avenue on the south side, Xcel Energy also evaluated routing Pathway farther south of Quincy Avenue. Between the Harvest Mile Substation and the western border of the Pronghorn Natural Area there is no additional space along the existing transmission corridor through the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds. Pathway therefore would have to route along Quincy Avenue immediately west of the Pronghorn Natural Area. From there, Xcel Energy evaluated turning southward along South Powhatan Road before turning again eastward. That alignment would both abut the western edge of the Pronghorn Natural Area and also would cross it from east to west north of the existing Binney Water Purification Facility to avoid that facility.

These constraints led Xcel Energy to select the proposed alignment for Pathway along the north side of Quincy Avenue.

Xcel Energy wishes to discuss Mitigation Funds with PROS for the Pathway location along Quincy Avenue, within the Pronghorn Natural Area. Xcel Energy collected survey information around Quincy Avenue to better determine where the transmission line corridor can be located given existing constraints in the area. Xcel Energy met with the PROS division on 11/3/2023 and determined areas to avoid. No poles will be located in the areas identified as sensitive to the PROS division. This is reflected in the attached site plan.

COMMENT: PROS Coordination

PROS Coordination: Construction of any utility infrastructure through the Pronghorn Natural Area, whether on the north or south side of Quincy Avenue, will impact the future planned regional trail corridors through the Pronghorn Natural Area and will require coordination with the PROS Department.

Response: Xcel Energy will coordinate with PROS for the Pathway alignment along Quincy Avenue and within the Pronghorn Natural Area, including issues regarding future planned regional trail corridors.

Xcel Energy has reviewed the Aurora Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Aurora, 2012²) for information regarding future regional trail corridors through the Pronghorn Natural Area and identified a proposed trail within Pronghorn Natural Area (Map 1 on

² Aurora. 2012. Aurora Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Available online at: [https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1881137/File/Business%20Services/Planning/Transportation%20Planning/Aurora_BPMP_FINAL-print_with%20Appendices%20\(1\)-compressed.pdf](https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1881137/File/Business%20Services/Planning/Transportation%20Planning/Aurora_BPMP_FINAL-print_with%20Appendices%20(1)-compressed.pdf). Accessed July 2023.

Page 49). The proposed trail appears to be aligned in a north-to-southeast direction, which would assume a perpendicular crossing. Pathway will not prohibit the construction and use of the future trail in this area. Please provide any additional information, maps, or drawings about this future trail or other future trails PROS identifies in conflict with Pathway.

The Powerline Trails Act was passed in 2022 to help raise awareness and create opportunities for Public Entities, defined as “the state, a local government, or a district” to co-locate public recreation trails within Transmission Corridors. Xcel Energy’s role under the Act is limited to facilitating the potential co-location of trails by providing guidance to Public Entities on things such as what safety clearances need to be maintained, which materials should be used in the construction of the trail, and where such trails can safely be co-located with Xcel Energy’s facilities. Powerline Trails will ultimately be constructed by public entities after consultation with Xcel Energy, the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife, and landowners about the safety and feasibility of such trails after a transmission line is constructed. Xcel Energy has a long history of working with local governments who wish to collocate public recreation trails within its transmission corridors and will work with the City of Aurora to address any thoughts, questions, or interest is has regarding potential future Powerline Trails.

COMMENT: Intergovernmental Agreement

Intergovernmental Agreement: All structures shall be outside of existing or future right-of-way. There is an existing IGA between the City of Aurora and Arapahoe County that defines the sections, right-of-way width, and maintenance responsibilities of Quincy. This IGA can be found online on Aurora Property Info.

Response: Xcel Energy intends to site the Pathway transmission line outside but directly adjacent to Quincy Avenue right-of-way as defined by the IGA between City of Aurora and Arapahoe County regarding the sections, right-of-way width, and maintenance responsibilities of Quincy Avenue. Xcel Energy understands per the IGA that the ultimate width of the right-of-way is 144 feet and that the roadway is classified as a ‘Six Lane Arterial’ (Aurora, 2008³). Please provide any additional information, maps, or drawings about this future ROW.

³Aurora, 2008. Intergovernmental Agreement Between Arapahoe County and the City of Aurora Regarding East Quincy Avenue. July 2008. Available online at: <https://ags.auroragov.org/aurora/rest/services/OpenData/MapServer/39/9/attachments/118>. Accessed June 2023.

