



## INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: April 28, 2026

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

File No: 5500-01

Subject: **BC Hydro Transmission Mains Project – Community Impacts**

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### INFORMATION SUMMARY

*There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.*

### STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

**Invest in Infrastructure** – We will invest in building, improving and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of, and to provide a high quality of life for, current and future generations.

**Foster Safety and Well-Being** – We will pursue through direct action, advocacy, and collaboration with local and regional service providers, investments in community health, needs-based housing, emergency preparedness, policing, and other services that foster safety and well-being in West Kelowna.

### BACKGROUND

The City of West Kelowna has supported BC Hydro on the preliminary design of the secondary transmission main intended to reinforce power reliability for the west side of Okanagan Lake. This project represents a significant regional utility upgrade that will ultimately benefit residents, businesses, and essential services. The project will provide an additional source of transmission supply to Westbank substation to strengthen the transmission system delivering clean, reliable electricity to Westbank First Nation, West Kelowna, Peachland and parts of Summerland.

Over the past several months, City staff have participated in multiple discussions with BC Hydro as the project design advances. BC Hydro has presented updated routing information, underground and overhead design considerations, and their Structured Decision-Making framework.

Staff have provided preliminary feedback intended to reflect community expectations, and existing City planning documents such as the Official Community Plan (OCP). This is intended to share the community's values and vision for growth. This perspective can conflict with BC Hydro's mandate of safely providing reliable, affordable, clean electricity throughout B.C. They plan the system in accordance with good utility practice and consider their planning objectives, such as:

- Keeping costs down for customers
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through clean electricity
- Limiting land and water impacts
- Supporting the growth of B.C.'s economy

This report summarizes the information that City staff have provided to BC Hydro prior to the utility's public engagement and compares the two organizations project objectives for these vital improvements to emergency preparedness.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Potential Route Options**

City staff have stressed minimizing long-term community impacts, aligning infrastructure with land use plans and OCP policies, protecting established neighbourhoods and growth areas, and ensuring the project supports long-term urban design and livability. While the City recognizes BC Hydro's technical and financial considerations, we also need to ensure that any transmission route reflects West Kelowna's community values and development goals.

BC Hydro has presented three potential route options to tie into the Westbank Substation (Figure 1):

- Option 1 (Orange), Old Okanagan Highway
- Option 2 (Blue), Shannon Lake Road via Daimler Drive or Bartley Road.
- Option 3 (Magenta), Old Okanagan Highway via Butt Road, Bering Road, or Old Okanagan Highway.

# Route options: Westbank Substation to Hwy 97



Figure 1: Proposed Routing Options

Staff have conveyed the preference of using Option 1 (orange option), which is a direct route with the least impact on the community. The route utilizes Shannon Lake Road, Old Okanagan Highway, and Highway 97. Among the alternative options presented, Option 3a, is the second most favourable as it has the second least impact on the community. Options 2a and 2b have considerable impacts on the community and travel through residential areas of West Kelowna.

## Underground VS Overhead lines

BC Hydro has emphasized that its mandate is to deliver electrical infrastructure in a manner that is economical to construct, cost effective over the long term, and efficient to operate and maintain. These priorities naturally lead BC Hydro to prefer overhead

transmission alignments, which have lower capital cost, simplified maintenance access, and fewer excavation related risks. BC Hydro has shown a clear preference for overhead structures wherever feasible. City staff have conveyed the following preliminary feedback:

- Overhead lines are not supported in Westbank Centre, established residential neighbourhoods, or growth areas identified in the OCP. These areas are expected to accommodate higher pedestrian activity, future intensification, and sensitive land uses. Overhead installations in such locations would conflict with community character, streetscape goals, and future development expectations.
- Overhead lines may be acceptable in limited, non-residential areas, such as along the Highway 97 corridor or within existing commercial/industrial zones.

### Conclusion

BC Hydro’s secondary transmission main is a significant regional investment that will strengthen electrical reliability for West Kelowna and surrounding communities. City staff have emphasized minimizing long-term community impacts and ensuring the preferred route and infrastructure form aligns with West Kelowna’s land use plans, OCP policies, and neighbourhood character. Staff have communicated a preference for the most direct routing option with the least community disruption and have advised that overhead transmission may be appropriate only in non-residential corridors, while underground lines are strongly preferred through Westbank Centre, established residential areas, and identified growth areas.

The upcoming community meeting will provide an opportunity for Council and staff to hear directly from residents and will help inform the City’s formal response to BC Hydro. After the community meeting staff will prepare a formal response for Council’s consideration for the following City of West Kelowna Council Meeting. The response will be shared with the BC Utilities Commission, whom BC Hydro will be seeking project approval from.

### COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
April 14, 2026	THAT staff be directed to schedule and advertise a formal community meeting in May for the purpose of receiving public feedback regarding the BC Hydro Transmission project.	C101/26

PowerPoint: Yes  No