



An **AEP** Company

BOUNDLESS ENERGY™

## New Buffalo-Bridgman Transmission Line Rebuild Project Frequently Asked Questions

### General:

- **Why is this project needed?**
  - The current high-voltage transmission lines have been in operation since the 1950s. To take advantage of new technology it's time to rebuild the power lines with modern steel poles. The upgrades will strengthen the high-voltage lines against severe weather, reduce the frequent need for maintenance and enhance the overall delivery of reliable and safe power to homes and businesses.
- **What is the timeline for the project?**
  - We welcome you to attend a Public Open House in late June. The details are being finalized and will be made public in the coming days.
  - Indiana Michigan Power (I&M) anticipates construction to begin in late 2024 and conclude by mid-2026.
- **Why is I&M hosting a Public Open House instead of a Public Forum?**
  - A Public Open House provides each landowner the opportunity to ask specific questions related to their property. This format ensures concerns are addressed at an individual level by guiding landowners through a series of "stations" where project team members can answer questions related to their area of expertise. Groups of landowners (up to 5) can plan to walk through the open house with a tour guide and have questions answered by team members.

### Routing:

- **Is the community involved in the decision making for these potential improvements?**
  - We work in a way that respects people, communities and the environment. We are committed to carefully balancing the energy needs of customers while protecting the environment. We have an open and transparent process and work with landowners, community members and other stakeholders to gather input, answer questions and provide information throughout the process. Since the project team is not planning to change the location of the existing power line, the input that the community provides will aid in construction access concerns and any other specific information about properties for crews to review before construction.
- **Does my opinion count?**
  - I&M welcomes public involvement and input throughout the process and strives to address concerns and offer responsible solutions. Stakeholder insights and feedback can help us develop the best solutions for necessary system improvements. The existing line route will be rebuilt in its current location to minimize impact to the area. Utilizing the

existing utility corridor limits the overall impact of the line on its surroundings while maintaining a technically buildable design.

#### **Engineering:**

- **Line design:**
  - Single Steel Monopole
  - Structure Height: Approximately 85 feet
  - Right-of-Way Width: 30 feet on either side of the power line
- **How will the towers look?**
  - We plan to replace the existing wooden poles from the 1950s with steel poles. The exact structure height depends on the location. Project engineers plan to complete final design in the coming months. Right-of-way agents will then communicate specific details to landowners as information becomes available.
- **Will the structures be placed in their same location?**
  - We are still in the early stages of the project. We have not identified exactly where to locate each specific structure but plan to do our best to balance landowner concerns, and preferences, with the need for electric infrastructure. We anticipate rebuilding the poles where they currently are but if you have specific feedback you would like to share regarding pole location, please include details through the comment section on the project website.
- **What is I&M doing to ensure the environment is protected during this rebuild project?**
  - Our project teams work in the field to identify environmental constraints and follow state and federal environmental guidelines. Balancing customers' need for reliable electric service with respect for the environment is important when rebuilding transmission lines.
- **How did you determine where to build the line? Why aren't you moving the line?**
  - We plan to rebuild the line in the company's existing right-of-way. Our siting specialists conducted a due diligence review evaluating constraints in the area. We plan to rebuild the line where it is currently located with minor adjustments. Utilizing the existing utility corridor limits the overall impact of the line on its surroundings while maintaining a technically buildable design.
- **Can you bury the line instead of putting it above ground?**
  - Underground options are only explored when overhead options are not feasible. Underground transmission lines are typically cost-prohibitive, and the cost of transmission lines are shared among all recipients of the transmission facilities in the region. It is our responsibility to ensure we are considering cost options when designing power lines, to make sure costs to customers are kept as low as possible.

#### **Right-of-Way (ROW):**

- **What does this project mean for my property? Will you need an easement or additional right-of-way?**
  - We plan to rebuild the power line in its current location in most areas and use existing easements. Company representatives plan to supplement the easements to a defined right-of-way width. Supplementing the easements ensures safe construction, operation

and maintenance of the power line. Each property is different. We are still in the early stages of the project. Right-of-way agents plan to meet with landowners to discuss specific details once they come available.

- **Will you use eminent domain?**
  - AEP's use of eminent domain authority is the exception rather than the rule. We will make every attempt to work with landowners to acquire necessary easements through negotiations and by working with landowners, as long as it is practical, to reach a voluntary agreement. Only when a voluntary agreement cannot be reached, and other viable alternatives do not exist, that the final option of exercising the right of eminent domain is pursued. Eminent domain is outlined in the U.S. Constitution and state law. When a property is taken through eminent domain, the land is condemned and the property owner receives just compensation.
- **What should the community expect during the construction process?**
  - We make every effort during the construction process to respect the environment and our neighbors, while working safely to ensure reliable electric service. We plan to work with individual property owners throughout the construction process. Right-of-way agents plan to provide details of upcoming work and listen to customer feedback.
- **Can I still develop my property in the future and put driveways/streets and other utilities under and across this power line easement?**
  - There are many compatible uses within a right-of-way easement including crops, roads and driveways. Developments that could jeopardize the safe construction, operation and maintenance like permanent buildings, pools, woody-stemmed vegetation would be restricted. A Right-of-way agent can discuss compatible uses in more detail as the enhancements progress.
- **What kind of tree clearing work will need to take place on my property?**
  - Forestry representatives evaluate each property to ensure appropriate clearance distances are maintained between transmission lines and the nearest vegetation. Maintaining clear right-of-way helps ensure electric reliability for customers while keeping the public and our workers safe. To learn more about our Vegetation Management Program, please visit <https://aeptransmission.com/property/forestry.php>. If you have specific feedback you would like to share regarding trees on your property, please include details through the comment section on the project website.
- **What are the next steps?**
  - We welcome you to attend an in-person open house event to meet project team members, view detailed maps and learn more about the project. The event details are being finalized and will be made public in the coming days.

Sincerely,



Eric Giffey  
Project Outreach Specialist  
Indiana Michigan Power