MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 12, 2017

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DOMINION 230KV TRANSMISSION LINE UPDATE

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the Dominion Energy proposal to construct a new 230-kilovolt (kV) underground transmission line between Alexandria and Arlington. This update builds on information provided to the City in the summer of 2016 and summarizes a recent briefing provided to City staff by Dominion. This memo will also be provided to the members of the Alexandria Ad Hoc Underground Transmission Line and Substation Working Group as well as adjacent civic associations and HOA’s. This memo will also be posted on the City’s website.

Additionally, the public may see or have seen activity associated with the potential 230kV project beginning the weekend of June 10, 2017 along the Potomac Yard railroad corridor on the CSX tracks. Dominion is drilling test holes for soil borings along the railroad corridor as it establishes a possible alignment for the underground line. The work is expected to continue for up to six weekends and will occur during the daytime (between 7 am and 4:30 pm) and on weekends only.

BACKGROUND: As Council may recall, the City in June 2016 received a letter from Dominion affirming its intent to file with the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC), and proposing two alignment options. The utility’s preferred alignment, known as the Glebe to Potomac River Substation Route, proposes to install a new 230kV line underground from the existing Glebe Substation in Arlington County to Pepco’s existing Potomac River Substation in the City of Alexandria (Attachment 1). This option would use City rights-of-way at the northern and southern ends of the project to access the Potomac Yard Rail Corridor property which is now owned by the City but upon which CSX (subject to a number of easements) operates railroad tracks. Since last summer, Dominion has been working closely with CSX to establish a detailed final alignment which meets strict technical requirements and would remain entirely within the Potomac Yard Rail Corridor right-of-way for the length of the railroad corridor. This technical work must be completed before the project is ready for consideration by the SCC.

DISCUSSION: City staff met with Dominion recently and received an update on the project. Dominion relayed the following primary points:

- Dominion re-affirmed its plan to submit the project to the SCC, and noted that its new timetable is in the fourth quarter (October-December) of calendar year 2017.
- Dominion plans to submit the underground Glebe to Potomac River Substation Route as its preferred alternative while Alternative 1 (the “re-conductoring” option which includes work in Fairfax County) will be submitted as an alternative.
• Dominion will note in its submission that overhead options were considered and ultimately rejected.
• Close coordination with CSX and other utilities has resulted in a potentially acceptable underground alignment within the Potomac Yard Railroad Corridor that would keep the line predominately on the west side of the tracks, although some possible constrictions may require crossings to the east side.
• Dominion has engaged additional technical consultants to develop a detailed report, finalize the alignment and determine the most appropriate construction methods.
• If approved, construction could be coordinated with no anticipated delay to the Potomac Yard Metro Station and would also consider and adjust for the planned Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit proposal for potential fourth track as part of the DC2RVA rail project. Coordination with planned infrastructure (including planned sanitary and storm sewer facilities) in North Potomac Yard is ongoing.
• Dominion reaffirmed its plan to submit North Potomac Yard substation improvements (including plans to underground the existing above-ground lines over Four Mile Run) along with the Glebe to Potomac River Substation Route.
• If the project schedule holds and the SCC approves, construction could begin in 2019-20.

NEXT STEPS: Dominion notes that it expects to have final alignments available for City review by fall 2017. If the Dominion schedule holds, staff proposes the following next steps:

• Brief City Council in September on key outstanding issues pertaining to this project, including potential compensation to the City, final proposed alignment and specific impacts to City-owned parcels.
• Reconvene the Underground Transmission Line and Substation Working Group and bring them up to speed on recent developments and Dominion’s proposed course of action. A public meeting in the fall would include a project status summary, a final alignment expected to be filed with the SCC, discussion of City impacts and potential compensation and a schedule of next steps.
• Docket any required property transfer materials for consideration by City Council in the fall at a legislative meeting and public hearing.

If you have any questions about the project, please contact Yon Lambert, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-746-4025.

STAFF:
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ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment 1: 230kV Glebe to Potomac River Substation Route
Attachment 2: Alternative 1