

Note:
This summary was last updated on
July 21, 2023
For current information, follow this link:
[PSC Docket Case #9698](#)

Vienna to Nelson Transmission Reliability Project (Dorchester and Wicomico Counties, Maryland to Sussex County, Delaware) PSC Case Number 9698

Note:
This summary is based on information
provided in the CPCN Application
dated **April 25, 2023**, which is subject
to change and has not yet been fully
reviewed by PPRP.

CPCN Timeline

CPCN Application filed on April 25, 2023
Pre-Hearing Conference: May 24, 2023
Staff, OPC, and PPRP File Direct Testimony: September 13, 2023
Rebuttal Testimony Due: October 4, 2023
Public Hearing Date: October 10 and October 11, 2023
Evidentiary Hearing Date: October 18 and October 19, 2023
PSC Evidentiary Hearing: TBD

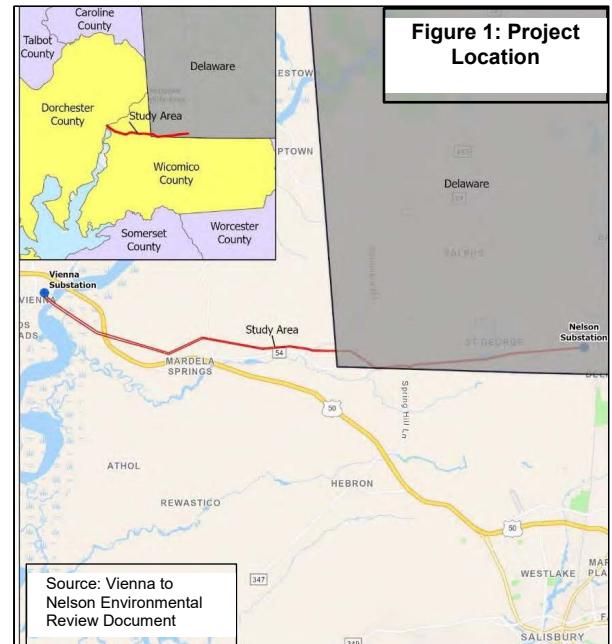
Project Location:

The Project extends from the Vienna Substation in Dorchester County, Maryland to the Nelson Substation in Sussex County, Delaware. The entire Project length is 13.7 miles; 7.6 miles in Maryland and 6.1 miles in Delaware. All work will occur within the existing right-of-way (ROW). The Project crosses the Nanticoke River east of the Vienna Substation. [Google Map Link](#) (Vienna Substation End); [Google Map Link](#) (Nelson Substation End)

Project Overview:

Delmarva Power and Light Company (DPL or Applicant) filed an application to obtain a CPCN to rebuild the Vienna to Nelson 138-kV Transmission Line, with 59 structures to be replaced in Maryland. Most of the existing structures were installed in the late 1950s. The planned in-service date is late 2025. Project components include:

- Replace 2 existing steel lattice towers and 57 existing wood H-frame structures with 59 galvanized steel monopoles;
- Upgrade existing conductors and shield wire to 230-kV construction standards;
- Remove and replace existing foundations in upland areas. (existing lattice tower concrete foundations along the banks of the Nanticoke River will be left in place); and
- Two planned electrical outages will occur; one in Quarter 1 to 2 of 2025 and the second in Quarter 3 to 4 of 2025.



Site Description

All construction will take place within the existing 150-300-foot ROW and the Applicant indicates that new structures will be located in approximately the same locations as old structures. The route crosses the Nanticoke River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. The corridor intersects multiple protected lands, including 19.2 acres of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The land surrounding the Project is zoned Agricultural-Rural, Light Industrial, and Heavy Industrial.

Impact Assessment Highlights

Electrical Need and Reliability

- DPL's Environmental Review Document (ERD) states that the Project is needed to avoid overloads on the Vienna to Nelson line that are expected when the Indian River 4 coal-fired unit (IR4), located in Delaware, is retired.
- DPL also states that many of the Project structures are over 50 years old and nearing their expected end-of-life.

Air Quality

- The Applicant's ERD states that earthwork activities associated with the Project may generate fugitive dust.
- The ERD further states that the operation of heavy equipment will result in combustion by-product emissions.
- The ERD also states that retirement of IR4 will reduce emissions of NOX, SOX, CO2, mercury, and fly ash.

Biological

- The Applicant completed a wetland delineation in September 2022 within the Project ROW. A total of 28 wetland systems were identified, including both tidal and non-tidal wetlands.

- The Barren Creek Wetland of Special State Concern (WSSC) is near the Project ROW. While this WSSC is outside of the ROW, two tributaries and two other wetlands associated with the WSSC are within the ROW.
- The Applicant's ERD states that the Project crosses one 100-year floodplain associated with the Nanticoke River.
- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Eyes on the Bay Program maintains a long-term fixed water quality monitoring station and a tide prediction station on the Nanticoke River near the Project. DPL will coordinate with this program regarding construction activities and potential impacts on the tide prediction station.
- The Applicant's ERD states that no tree cutting beyond routine ROW maintenance is planned.
- DPL contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to identify sensitive wildlife species near the Project. USFWS identified two federally listed species that may be present within the Project ROW: the Northern long-eared bat (threatened) and the Monarch butterfly (candidate).
- The Applicant conducted a raptor survey that identified one inactive bald eagle nest and three inactive osprey nests near the Project and observed bald eagles near the Project site. This survey was conducted outside of the nesting season and an additional survey was conducted during the nesting season in spring 2023.
- The DNR Wildlife Heritage Service (WHS) indicated the potential presence of two rare aquatic species in the tributaries associated with the Barren Creek WSSC. The Project does not include instream construction, therefore, impacts to fish species can be avoided by erosion and sediment controls.
- To avoid additional soil disturbance associated with construction equipment access, DPL states that, to the extent possible, it will use existing access roads and public roads to reach the Project ROW.
- The Project ROW intersects mapped Green Infrastructure and some potential wildlife corridors and management areas, including forest interior dwelling species (FIDS), sensitive species protection areas (SSPRA), and targeted ecological areas (TEA).
- The Project crosses three tracts of MDNR's Chesapeake Forest Lands that are leased for hunting. DPL has initiated coordination with the MDNR Forest Service.

Economic and Fiscal

- Project construction may have limited temporary benefits to the local economy through increased spending on goods and services near the proposed Project location.

Transportation

- The Project crosses several state and local roads but no long-term impacts on transportation are anticipated. DPL's ERD states that impacts that do occur will be temporary and will be addressed in collaboration with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), the County, and Stakeholders to address these impacts.
- During construction, the Applicant indicates that access will be principally via US Route 50 as well as MD Route 54, along with secondary roads that the ROW intersects.
- The closest public airports to the Project site are the Salisbury Regional Airport and the Cambridge-Dorchester Regional Airport, both located about 12 miles from the Project. FAA has determined that the Project does not exceed obstruction standards and would not be a hazard to air navigation provided that two poles/line at each end of the Nanticoke River crossing are equipped with markings/lighting meeting FAA's standards.
- The Project's proposed laydown yard is located about 7 miles southeast from the Project in Salisbury. The Applicant plans to implement measures to minimize traffic between the laydown yard and the ROW.
- The Nanticoke River is a navigable river of commercial importance; coordination with local stakeholders and agencies will be needed to assure measures are taken to minimize impacts to stakeholders during construction.

Land Use

- The Applicant states that the Project will not affect land use for the surrounding properties because it will be constructed within the existing ROW.

Cultural and Aesthetic

- There is one site on the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP) within the Project study area (Delaware Boundary Marker). There is another NRHP within 1 mile of the Project (Highball Signal).
- DPL identified several sites on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places (MIHP) within and adjacent to the ROW. The Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) has reviewed the Project and determined that it will not have an adverse impact on historic properties.
- The Project lies within two Maryland Heritage Areas: the Beach to Bay Heritage Area and the Heart of Chesapeake Cultural Heritage Area.

Visual

- The existing wooden structures range from approximately 70-85 feet and will be replaced with monopoles ranging from 100-130 feet tall. The lattice towers at the Nanticoke River crossing are 220 feet tall and will be replaced with 259 feet tall structures.
- Construction-related disturbances will be temporary and localized with post-construction views of the corridor expected to be similar to existing ones.