

AESTHETICS AND HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES

The Myth:

Overhead high voltage power lines have no effect on our surroundings.

The Facts:

- Overhead high voltage power lines are unsightly; in fact many people consider them ugly. They consist of tall grey metal towers;

EPCOR and AltaLink (2009) indicate 60-metre or 200-foot tall towers (about 20 storeys) for their proposed double circuit 500kV line. Heavy dark power lines or cables hang between these towers, and together are a blight on the landscape. Not only are the towers and lines unsightly, but they obstruct and detract from the many positive aspects of our rural and urban landscapes and scenery.

- The negative visual impacts of high voltage power lines have been well documented. Although most electricity transmission companies downplay this fact, they are well aware of the problem, as evident by AltaLink's and EPCOR's (2009) statement, "In some cases the specific location of towers can be shifted to mitigate a potential visual impact."
- Compared to other high voltage towers that we see more frequently in Alberta, which may be up to 39m tall for single circuit 500kV or 44m tall for double circuit 240kV (AltaLink and EPCOR

2009), the proposed 60m towers and double circuit 500kV lines would be visible for a significantly greater distance. This translates into negative visual impacts for more people.

- Not only would residents be negatively impacted by the unsightly 500kV line, but tourists and visitors to Edmonton, Sherwood Park, Sturgeon County or Parkland County would be confronted with these monstrous towers and lines for long distances if an overhead line was constructed in EPCOR's and AltaLink's preferred or alternate route. Tourism is negatively affected by high voltage overhead power lines (Gallant 2006, Askon Consulting Group 2008, Colindres 2009, Stachura 2009).
- AltaLink and EPCOR (2009) indicate, "After construction is complete, the transmission line will produce a low frequency hum." Anyone who has stood under, or within an appreciable distance of, a high voltage power line will be aware of this loud, harsh and raspy hum or buzz that can be heard 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.
- A review of websites that raise concerns about the hum of high voltage power lines indicates that this noise is annoying and often causes headaches and hearing problems.
- Foul weather (rain, fog, snow, hoar frost) or high relative humidity often leads to discharges on high voltage overhead power lines that result in a louder crackling or hissing noise that is even more annoying than the normal humming sound.



For information
on what you can do
go to www.reta.ca

RETA
Responsible Electricity
Transmission for Albertans