

Locating a new transmission line and substation is an ugly process. It's happening now in Eastern Gillespie County because of the increased electrical demand due to explosive growth. A 10 to 20 mile 138 kV transmission line and a new substation must go somewhere. In the planning stages for over 5 years, LCRA and CTEC recently sent notice to potentially affected landowners, held an open house and are taking public comment until May 30th. <http://www.lcra.org/energy/electric-transmission/transmission-line-routing/pages/blumenthal-substation-and-138kv-transmission-line-project.aspx>

What is especially ugly is how the process pits community members against each other before a final decision to build and locate is made by the Public Utility Commission (PUC). Alliances develop to push the lines way from one proposed route to another. Bitterness grows among business owners, full-time residents, farmers, ranchers, and weekend or occasional residents with 2nd homes. We agree only that no one wants the line or the substation on their property, in their back yard or affecting their view.

We have the opportunity to unite on one other point. We can insist on guarantees from LCRA and CTEC that once located, the lines and the substation will be built with regard for minimum aesthetic and environmental impact. Mono-poles rather than more intrusive cross-braced towers, screens, barriers and landscaping to hide the substation, shielded lights, no light trespass and no all-night lighting would be a start. These assurances would be a small respite from all the ugliness.

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