

# **ComEd's West Central Reliability Project**

**Village of Itasca Meeting  
Tuesday, March 22, 2016**



# ComEd Project Goal

## **ComEd's proposed West Central Reliability Project is intended to improve electricity delivery and reliability**

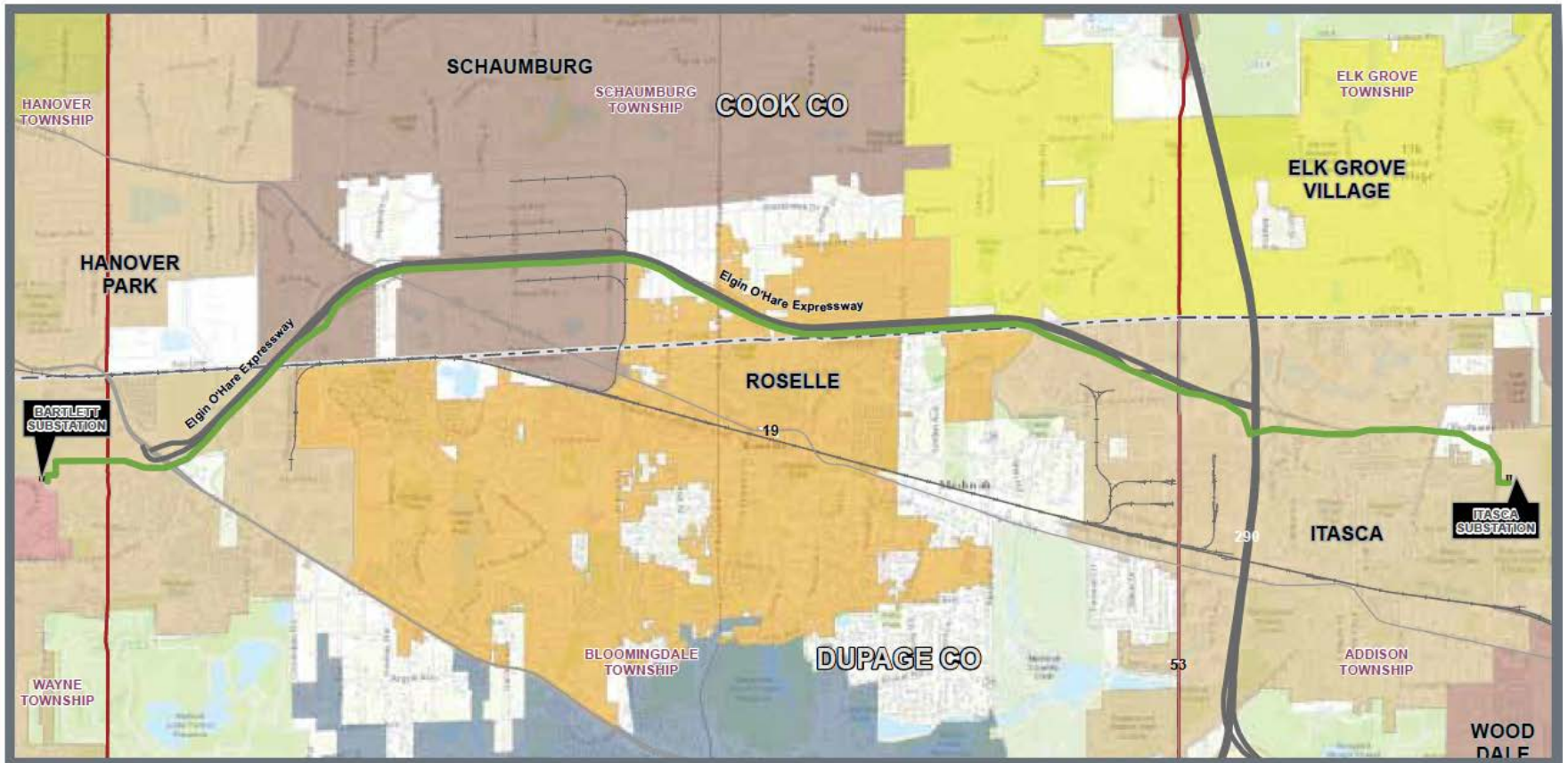
- Provides an alternate delivery path so that ComEd may restore power more quickly
- Designed to enhance local reliability and provide greater flexibility to perform maintenance activities to meet customer needs with faster restoration times
- Projected to accommodate additional high-voltage transmission lines to meet both current and future needs

# Proposed Plan

## **ComEd proposed a plan for the West Central Reliability Project:**

- A new 138kV electric transmission line to be constructed on steel monopole structures between ComEd's existing substations in Itasca and Bartlett
- Within the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway right-of-way
- 80 to 85 poles along the 9-mile project path
- Construction in 2017 / Complete in Fall 2018
- \$50 to \$60 million

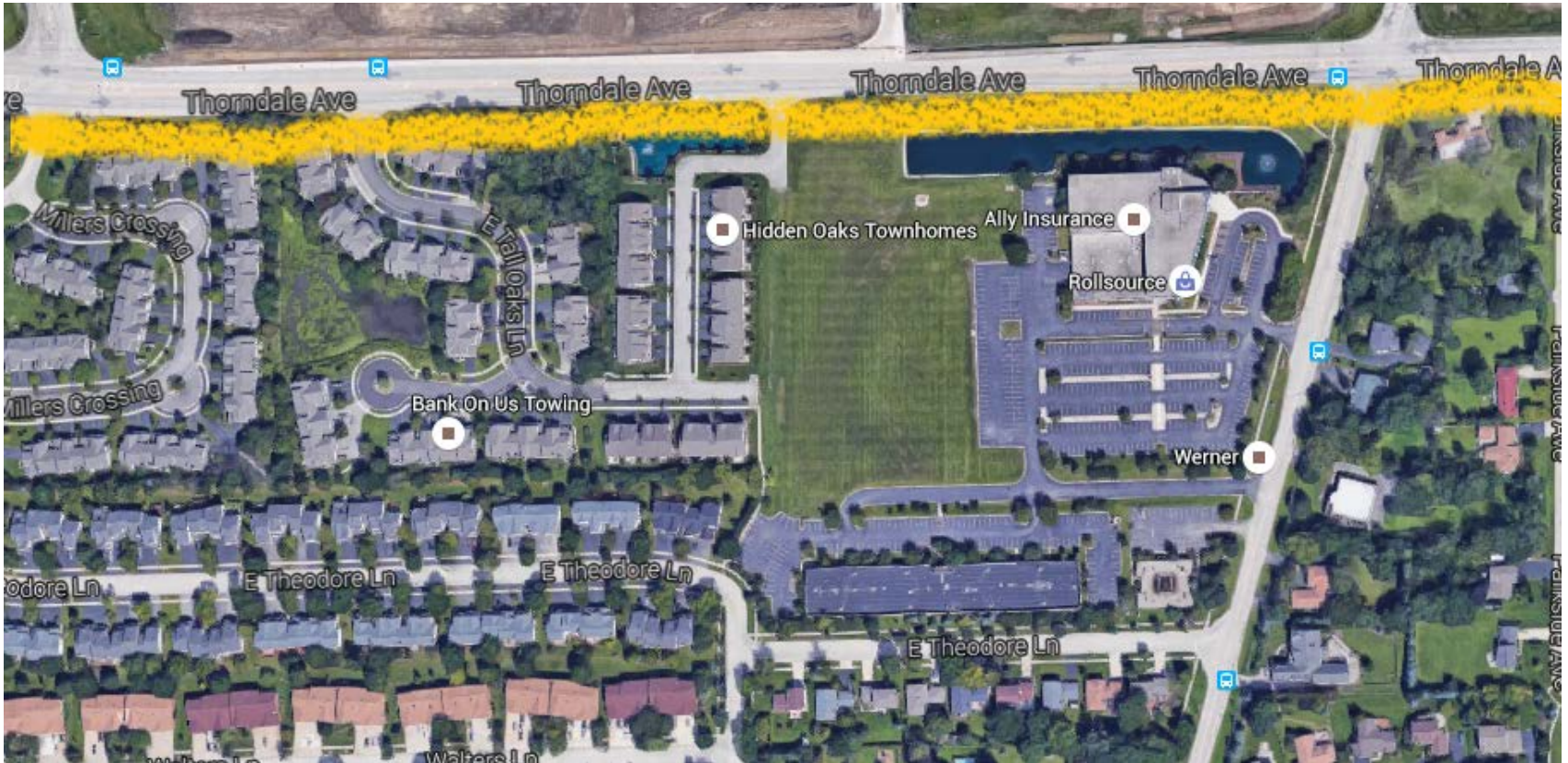
# Proposed Route



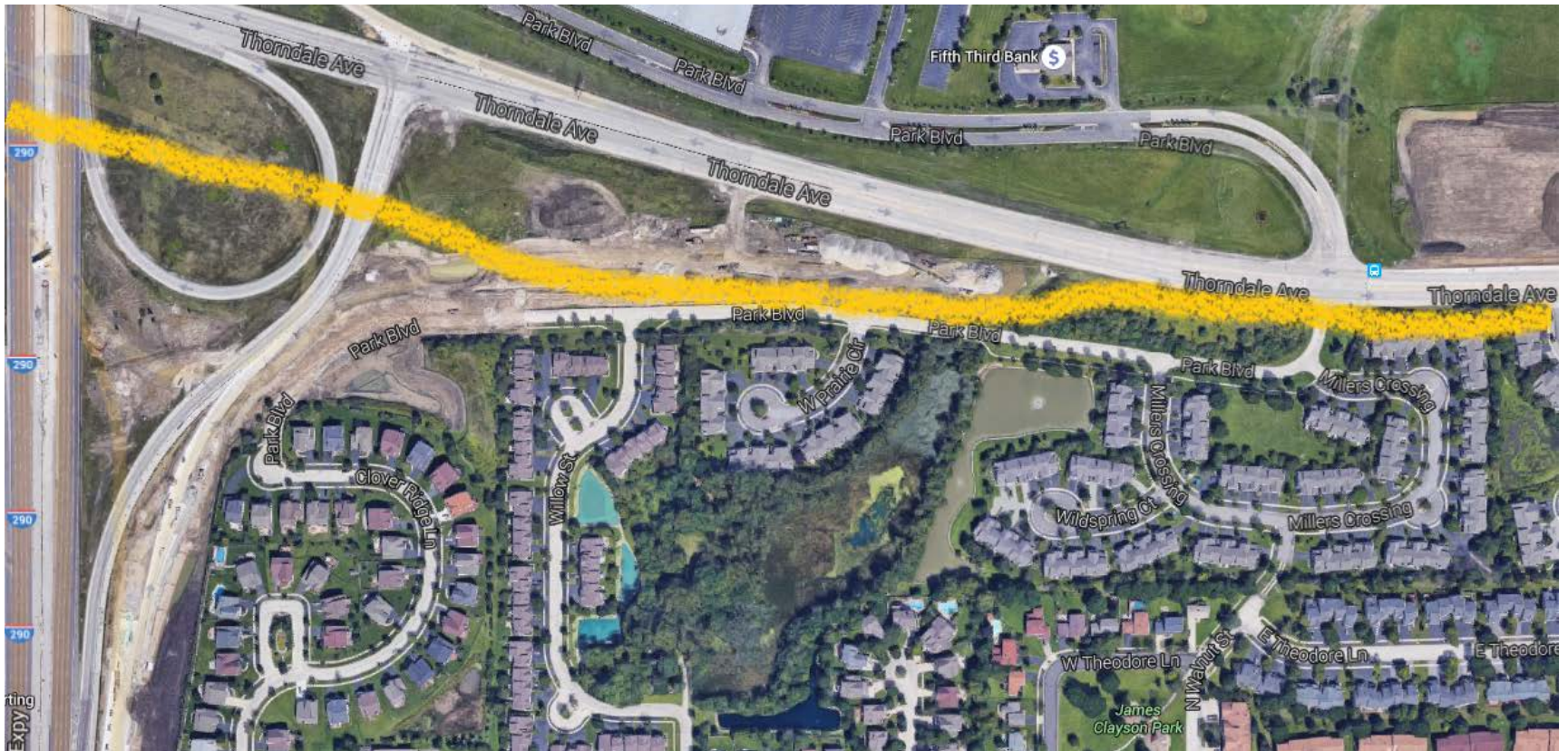
# Proposed Route



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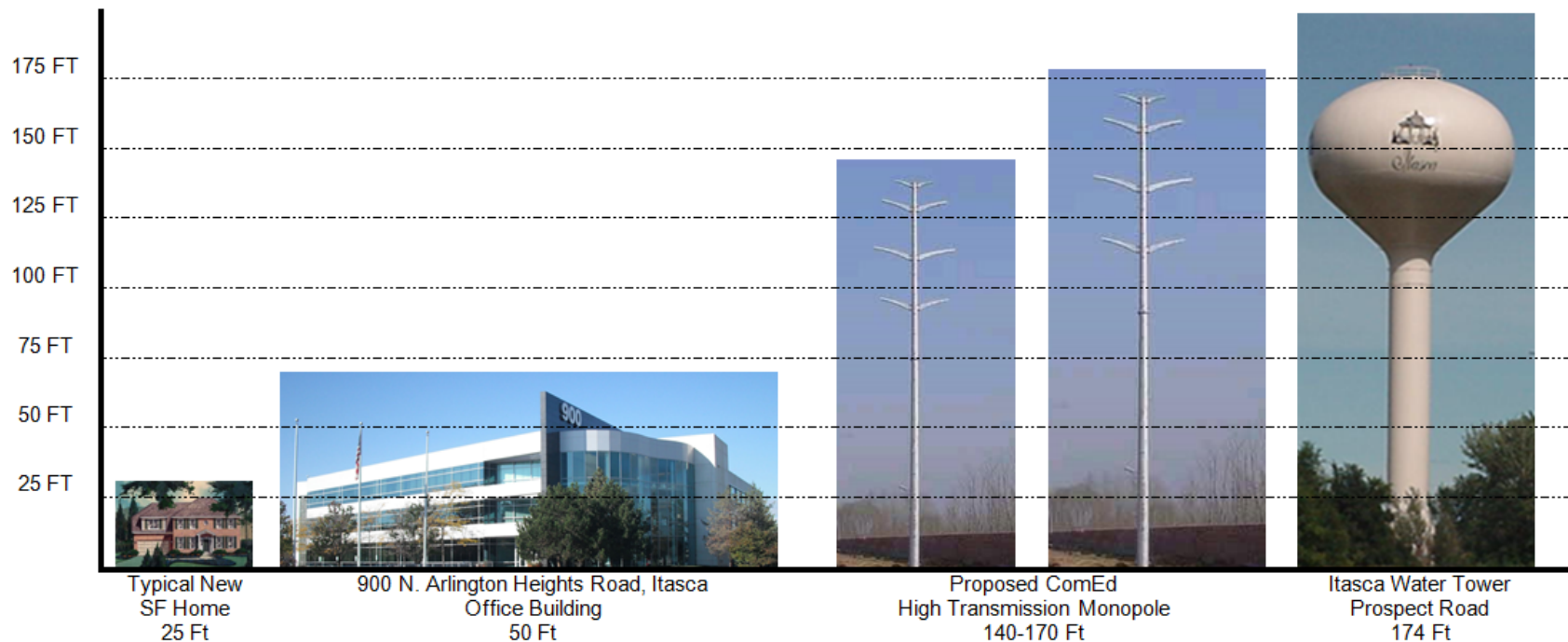


# Proposed Route



# Pole Heights

The proposed plan calls for poles that may be between 140 and 170 feet tall





# Pole Heights

**\*Visual aid courtesy of Itasca resident Matthew Kostelnick**



# Project Timeline

## **ComEd must meet regulatory requirements prior to starting construction**

- Public Utility Act requirements include public information meetings, newspaper publication, and county clerk notification
- ComEd held required open house meetings in DuPage and Cook Counties in January and February 2016
- ComEd held voluntary open house in Itasca
- ComEd expects to file a request for a Certificate for Public Convenience and Necessity with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) in Spring 2016. The ICC regulates ComEd and all other utility projects

# Duties of the ICC

## Through the Public Utilities Act, the ICC is responsible for regulating public utilities

- PUA sections 8-406 and 8-406.1 apply to this proposed project
- Public utilities may not begin construction of any new project without first obtaining a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity from ICC
- Certificates are issued only if the project will promote public convenience and necessity
- In making its determination, ICC applies primary weight to cost-savings to the customers of the utility

# ICC Approval

## Convenience and necessity are determined only if:

- Project is necessary to provide adequate, reliable, and efficient service to customers and is the least-cost means of satisfying the service needs of customers OR the proposed construction must promote the development of an effectively competitive electricity market that operates efficiently, is equitable to all customers, and is the least-cost means of satisfying those objectives
- The utility must be capable of efficiently managing and supervising the construction process, and financing the proposed construction without significant adverse financial consequences for the utility or its customers
- Intervening in a case before the ICC is a very complex process, relying on expert witnesses and several rounds of presentations, both before and after official hearings. The process allows for the introduction of a wide range of issues. Intervening parties typically focus their opposition on a lack of necessity, i.e. is reliability and/or expansion necessary.

## 12 Criteria for Evaluating Proposed Routes

1. Length of line
2. Difficulty and cost of construction
3. Difficulty and cost of operation and maintenance
4. Environmental impacts
5. Impacts on historical resources
6. Social and land use impacts
7. Number of affected landowners and other stakeholders
8. Proximity to homes and other structures
9. Proximity to existing and planned development
10. Community acceptance
11. Visual impact
12. Presence of existing corridors

# Intervention Process

## **The ICC has a process in place for citizens and units of government to intervene in proposed utility plans**

- The purpose of requiring ComEd to obtain certification through ICC is to prevent the unnecessary duplication of facilities and to protect the public from inadequate service and higher rates
- While the petition for the project is pending, ICC may hold hearings to evaluate interventions by individual property owners, concerned citizen groups, homeowners associations, and affected municipalities

# Community Participation

## The ICC will take public comments as part of its role as the regulatory body

- Public comments from concerned citizens are already impacting the process
- ICC is now accepting public comments on the proposed project on its website [www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/comment/](http://www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/comment/)

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **Are there other issues that can be explored to either change or stop ComEd's proposed plan?**

Burying the lines underground has been widely discussed, but it is a complex issue. The ICC is not typically predisposed to this option due to the high cost involved.

If improving reliability truly is the issue for ComEd, the argument could be made that the most reliable way to run the lines would be underground.

The coalition of communities does not believe that ComEd's proposed plan is truly about reliability, and that is one of the reasons why we oppose it.



## Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why won't the ICC consider arguments about EMFs and diminishment of property values?**

There are no governmental regulations associated with EMFs, and ICC has generally not considered EMF arguments as part of a Public Convenience and Necessity hearing

Legal firms that have litigated at ICC, and political consulting firms have said that issues like aesthetics, property values, and health risks are not persuasive arguments with ICC

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **I heard houses located adjacent to high voltage transmission towers can't obtain mortgages?**

According to HUD, the government agency responsible for developing lending rules and regulations, property appraisers must indicate whether a property is located within the easement serving a high-voltage transmission line. If the property is located outside the easement, the property is considered eligible and no further action is necessary.

ComEd claims that no homes are located within the easement.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **The Schaumburg Airport is nearby. Are the proposed poles too tall to be located so close to the airport?**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for specific airport regulations related to air space and public health, safety, and welfare near an airport.

The existence of air space hazards resulting from the installation of high-voltage power lines in the area of an airport have been considered as appropriate elements of analysis by the ICC.

The FAA has already issued a notice of presumed hazard regarding the pole heights adjacent to the Schaumburg Airport.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can a municipality stop the construction of high-voltage lines by refusing to issue permits or changing zoning regulations?**

No. The Public Utilities Act preempts enforcement of ordinances adopted by municipalities

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What has the Village of Itasca done so far?

- Meetings with ComEd
- Coalition of Neighboring Communities
- State Elected Officials
- DuPage & Cook County Officials
- Illinois Commerce Commission
- Legal Counsel & Lobbyists

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the next steps?

- Delay in Proposed Plan by ComEd
- Legislative Process
- Strategic Planning: Developing Alternative Solutions
- Continue Citizen Engagement

## So, what can I do as a resident?

### *Our Position & Recommended Message*

The Village of Itasca is opposed to the project as proposed and is advocating for the new electric infrastructure to be installed underground. The prospect of placing the proposed lines underground has already been discussed with ComEd representatives. ComEd has indicated that current state law requires the company to propose a project alternative that achieves the purpose/need at the lowest cost to ratepayers and ComEd asserts that the lowest cost is an overhead route. Company representatives have also indicated that placing transmission lines underground would be more costly, potentially as much as 10 times more costly.

## Important Websites

**Com Ed West Central Reliability Project:**

<https://www.comed.com/about-us/economic-development/reliability/Pages/west-central.aspx>

**ICC Comments page:**

<https://www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/comment/>

**Village of Itasca:**

[www.itasca.com/comed](http://www.itasca.com/comed)

- Includes this presentation.
- Includes all relevant information and links