



AltaLink Management Ltd.

Transmission Line 225L Rebuild

May 20, 2021



Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 26325-D01-2021

AltaLink Management Ltd.

Transmission Line 225L Rebuild

Proceeding 26325

Application 26325-A001

May 20, 2021

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The Commission may, within 30 days of the date of this decision and without notice, correct typographical, spelling and calculation errors and other similar types of errors and post the corrected decision on its website.

1 Decision summary

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission approves an application from AltaLink Management Ltd. to alter portions of the existing Transmission Line 225L in the Magrath area.

2 Application

2. As part of AltaLink’s capital replacement and upgrade program, AltaLink is rebuilding a 22-kilometre section of the 69-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line 225L. The rebuild starts at the crossing of Township Road 60 and Range Road 220, near the town of Magrath, and follows along Highway 5 to the hamlet of Spring Coulee.

3. AltaLink classified the majority of the rebuild as “like-for-like” with less than a five-metre shift to the centreline of the transmission line. Four segments of the transmission line were identified by AltaLink as requiring relocations that would not qualify as “like-for-like.” In addition to the four segments identified, portions of the existing Transmission Line 225L are currently located adjacent to the Highway 5 right-of-way on private lands.

4. AltaLink filed an application with the Commission for approval of the relocations of the four segments as well as shifting sections of the transmission line from private lands onto the Highway 5 right-of-way. The project area is located in the Magrath area, as shown on the map in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Proposed Transmission Line 225L Rebuild location



5. Three of the proposed relocation segments were requested by landowners. These segments currently route across cultivated fields. The proposed relocations would result in the transmission line more closely paralleling Highway 5. AltaLink stated that, where required, it would seek right-of-way agreements from the landowners requesting the relocations.

6. AltaLink stated that the fourth proposed relocation segment is an opportunity to improve the alignment of the transmission line after consultation with the Town of Magrath and Alberta Transportation. AltaLink confirmed that the landowners impacted by the proposed relocated transmission line have no outstanding concerns.

7. Alberta Transportation has agreed to the proposed location of the centerline within the Highway 5 right-of-way, with the understanding that clear zones would be maintained.

8. An environmental evaluation found that the project area has numerous temporary wetlands and historical occurrences of sensitive wildlife. AltaLink stated it would comply with the *Code of Practice Notification for Powerline Works Impacting Wetlands* as required by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP). AltaLink also stated that it would conduct site-specific surveys and develop mitigation measures as part of the construction planning to minimize environmental impacts. With these measures, AltaLink stated that environmental impacts are expected to be negligible.

9. AltaLink stated that the rebuild project would replace the 69-kV transmission line structures with 138-kV transmission line structures that meet the aviation safe structure design

guidelines. In response to an information request, AltaLink clarified that it does not have 69-kV transmission line structures that meet the aviation safe structure design guidelines.¹

10. Despite the proposed construction of 138-kV structures, the transmission line is anticipated to remain energized at 69 kV for the foreseeable future. AltaLink stated that the Alberta Electric System Operator's 2015 long-term plan did identify an upgrade to 138-kV for the transmission line, but subsequent long-term plans did not. The use of 138-kV structures would enable AltaLink to minimize inventory and standardize spare parts and it would allow for an upgrade to a 138-kV conductor without the need to replace the structures if directed so in the future.²

11. In addition, AltaLink's application included:

- Details of its participant involvement program which confirmed there were no outstanding concerns.
- Details of requested construction workspaces and access trails to facilitate the safe construction of the project.

12. AltaLink has scheduled the project to begin construction in August 2021 with the possibility of having the project completed in two phases. It is anticipated the project would be completed by December 2021 if constructed in a single phase. If the construction is completed in two phases, the anticipated project completion date would be December 2022.

13. The Commission issued a notice of application and no submissions were received in response to the notice.

3 Findings

14. For the reasons outlined below, the Commission finds that approval of the project is in the public interest having regard to the social, economic, and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment.

15. The Commission has reviewed the application and has determined that the information requirements specified in Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations and Hydro Developments* have been met. Additionally, the Commission finds that AltaLink's participant involvement program satisfied the requirements of Rule 007 and notes that no submission was received in response to the notice of application.

16. The Commission finds that the proposed alterations to Transmission Line 225L result in less impacts than the existing transmission line because of the removal of the transmission line from cultivated fields and private lands onto the Highway 5 right-of-way. The segment of transmission line nearest Magrath is supported by the Town of Magrath as well as Alberta Transportation and the potentially affected stakeholders have no outstanding concerns.

¹ Exhibit 26325-X0025, AML IR Response to AUC (1-2), AltaLink-AUC-2021MAR18-001, PDF page 1.

² Exhibit 26325-X0025, AML IR Response to AUC (1-2), AltaLink-AUC-2021MAR18-001, PDF pages 1 and 2.

17. The Commission finds that the requested construction workspaces and access trails to facilitate the safe construction and operation of the transmission line are in the public interest. AltaLink confirmed it had consulted with stakeholders about these workspaces and no concerns were raised.

18. The Commission accepts that the construction of the 138-kV transmission line structures is prudent. These structures meet the aviation safe structure design guidelines, provide efficiency by standardizing transmission lines and could provide cost savings if the transmission line is proposed to be upgraded to 138-kV by the Alberta Electric System Operator in the future.

19. The Commission accepts that the environmental impacts would be negligible. The project is along an existing road, largely next to agricultural land and is a rebuild of an existing transmission line. AltaLink will also comply with the *Code of Practice Notification for Powerline Works Impacting Wetlands*, apply for reclamation certificates and conduct site-specific wildlife surveys as required by AEP.

20. The Commission considers the application to be in the public interest in accordance with Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

4 Decision

21. Pursuant to sections 14, 15, 19 and 21 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the Commission approves Application 26325-A001 and grants AltaLink Management Ltd. the approval set out in Appendix 1 – Transmission Line Permit and Licence 26325-D02-2021 – May 20, 2021, to alter and operate Transmission Line 225L.

22. The appendix will be distributed separately.

Dated on May 20, 2021.

Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Neil Jamieson
Commission Member