

PUD might have settled debate over underground lines at their meeting on May 15

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CHELAN - The more time goes on, the more it looks like under-grounding transmission lines throughout Chelan might be more expensive than one anticipated.

At the Chelan County PUD's regular meeting on Monday, May 15, they were given a presentation on the cost comparison between overheard double circuit with varied terrain and underground double circuit with varied terrain and the results were a staggering difference.

According to the presentation, the estimated cost per mile with installation and maintenance for overheard was \$1.028 million to \$2.029 million while the cost for underground ranged from \$7.122 million to \$13.429 million. Sloped terrain, which scatters across the North Shore, could at least double the installation costs as well.

As a result, staff concluded that underground transmission is cost prohibitive in the Lake Chelan North Shore substation. Staff recommends further targeting efforts on a substation site north of the Chelan - Manson transmission line and close to the load center.

"The staff is focusing on a location that has been referred to as "area 7" which is close to Boyd Road and the load center," PUD Communications Director Suzanne Hartman said. "There are some property owners who have come forward, but no specific site had been identified.

Although capacity is reaching it's threshold at 80 percent and thousands of tourists are at the precipice of flocking to Chelan for their summer stay, Hartman said the Commission is not going to rush a decision on the future substation.

"The Commission wants to get this decision right and is willing-- within reason in terms of existing substation capacity -- to ensure that the PUD can find a suitable location," Hartman stated. "There will be trade-offs for all locations. Before any decision is made, the PUD will be coming back to the community to discuss progress."

Stay tuned for more updates as the PUD strides to a new substation on the North Shore.

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