



1800 Larimer Street  
Denver, CO 80202

May 15, 2020

Dear Weld County Stakeholder:

We hope this update on the Northern Colorado Area Plan finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe during the COVID-19 crisis. Keeping your community informed about the project is important to us, and we are sending this letter to share revised plans to keep public outreach and engagement a priority while also addressing community, health and safety needs.

Xcel Energy's Northern Colorado Area Plan will modernize the electric system by building a more reliable, robust and resilient power grid to serve northern Weld County. We know the current system has been strained, causing service issues and power outages. This phase of the plan addresses these issues by building a new substation in the Eaton area and new transmission lines between Ault and northern Greeley. Delivering for our customers around the clock, every day, is at the core of what we do—especially in challenging times.

We have a strong track record of preparing for emergencies and we're bringing that same focus and dedication to this situation. Xcel Energy has given extensive thought and planning for how best to move this project forward while being mindful of restrictions associated with COVID-19.

A key element to protecting the health and safety of our customers, employees and communities is to continue adhering to local requirements and social distancing guidelines. Xcel Energy is adjusting how we interact with the public, even as we maintain our commitment to community engagement. For example:

- Instead of large, in-person gatherings, we are planning **virtual public open house meetings** to include opportunities for question-and-answer sessions.
- Further, the **project website** will continue to be updated, offering timely information and opportunities for public comment via mail and email.
- Finally, we also are offering one-on-one phone- or web-based **live appointments** with subject matter experts from Xcel Energy's project team.

We have included more details about these opportunities in this letter. Please review this information and visit the project website at [www.xcelenergynortherncoloradoareaplan.com](http://www.xcelenergynortherncoloradoareaplan.com) for ongoing updates.

Our entire project team is grateful for your understanding and flexibility. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Rita Ruderman via phone at 303.588.8425 or send an email to [Rita.C.Ruderman@xcelenergy.com](mailto:Rita.C.Ruderman@xcelenergy.com).

Sincerely,  
Northern Colorado Area Plan Project Team  
Xcel Energy

## IMPORTANT UPDATES:

**Schedule.** Xcel Energy has modified its original plan for public engagement between March and May 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our team has been working diligently to keep this important project on schedule without compromising community engagement. The updated timeline below allows for continued public input, recommendations from the Community Working Group and analysis of transmission line route and substation alternatives, with the goal of identifying a preferred route by July 2020.

- May 2020 – Community Working Group Meeting #3 (virtual)
- June 2020 – Open House #3 (virtual meeting in a town-hall style)
- July 2020 – Selection of a preferred transmission-line route and substation site
- September/October 2020 – Submit permit application(s) for review and approval

**Virtual Open House Meetings.** Challenges caused by COVID-19 have prompted extra measures to ensure we adhere to social distancing guidelines and avoid large in-person gatherings. Given those needs, we will host Open House #3 virtually. The virtual open house meetings will be conducted in both English and Spanish at the dates and times shown below. Instructions for participating in the open house meetings will be available in the coming weeks.

- Thursday, June 11: in English from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Thursday, June 11: in Spanish from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 17: in English from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 17: in Spanish from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Presentations for all meetings will be the same and each will be followed by a question-and-answer period. Participants can submit comments via an online comment form, as well as through polls and surveys available on the project website. Community members will also be able to schedule appointments after the meeting for one-on-one answers to questions. The virtual open houses will be recorded and posted on the project website for broader viewership.

**Substation Siting and Transmission Line Routing.** At Open House #2 hosted in January 2020, the Xcel Energy project team presented a target siting area for the new substation to replace the existing Eaton Substation, as well as a large network of alternative routes for the proposed transmission lines. Since that time, we have conducted a thorough analysis comparing environmental, land use, engineering data, community issues and public comments to narrow the number of alternative routes.

At the upcoming virtual Open House #3, the team will present preliminary substation sites; explain the analysis process for comparing and narrowing the number of alternative transmission-line routes; and identify the alternative routes with the fewest adverse effects from an engineering, land use and environmental perspective. Community input and feedback is vital to helping Xcel Energy understand what constitutes a preferred transmission line route and a substation site that can ultimately be presented to Weld County and Towns of Eaton and Ault for approval.

**Land Acquisition.** Xcel Energy's Land Acquisition team has been looking at land options for the new substation site and been in contact with several landowners about the potential purchase of available property, pending the selection and approval of a preferred transmission line route. Once a preferred route and one or two alternative routes are selected this summer, the Land Acquisition team will contact those landowners to introduce themselves and initiate conversations. They will also explain the project and process—from option agreements through construction—to provide an understanding of how Xcel Energy would work with them if their properties are along the final selected route for transmission-line construction. Upon receiving land use approvals for the project, the Land Acquisition team will begin negotiating agreements with those landowners.