

BC Hydro West End Substation Project

Community Construction Liaison Committee

Meeting notes

Date:	July 16, 2026
Location:	Gordon Neighbourhood House, Vancouver
Members present:	10
BC Hydro present:	Andrew, Project Manager Fay, Stakeholder Engagement Tyler, Construction Management

Topics of discussion

1: Introductions

Members of the committee introduced themselves and spoke about why they had chosen to participate.

2: Community sentiment

The group chose to depart from the agenda and discuss community sentiment first. They shared feedback from the community that there is concern about the project and canvassing of letters of objection to be shared with the BCUC. One focus area of concern is tree removal and trees scheduled for removal have signs placed on them. Areas of concern shared by the group included that:

Community concern	BC Hydro's response
Too many trees are being removed and that this will negatively impact the community	BC Hydro explained that it started from a place of retaining as many trees as possible, it is continuing discussions about construction plans and tree retention, and it will fund 107 replacement trees. The group recommended improving the tree map on the project webpage and placing its own signage on site prominently. The group also commented that it is more important to retain trees than to retain the bike lanes.

The substation should be placed elsewhere e.g. on the 1000 block of Nelson St	BC Hydro explained its site selection process, which is detailed in its regulatory application. Sites had to meet technical requirements and have a reasonable likelihood of BC Hydro acquiring them, in the context of high land valuations in the 2010s. Having purchased land from the Vancouver School Board, BC Hydro proceeded with designing a substation for this site.
The park will be ruined – people will not have a place to be outside, picnic or play	BC Hydro expects almost all of Nelson Park to remain open throughout construction, it will construct in its cabling rights-of-way one winter and expects work will take about 3 months. BC Hydro has committed to restoring the area to a similar condition post-construction or to make improvements in coordination with the Vancouver Park Board. Although there are restrictions on what can be placed above cables, the area above does not need to be concreted over – grass and landscaping, including smaller trees, can be placed on top of the cables.
Cabling routes should not go through the park and not in the current alignments	BC Hydro explained that it requires cable egress on three sides of the substation to have sufficient space for the underground cables to operate safely. BC Hydro's initial routing proposal reduced the total number of trees removed within the park but the routes were updated at the Vancouver Park Board's request to avoid 'priority trees' and to amalgamate the rights-of-way to ensure the greatest flexibility for future park design.
The replacement school may not be built	BC Hydro understands that the replacement school is a priority in the Vancouver School Board's capital plan and that the Board has submitted its development permit application to the City of Vancouver.
A replacement school will have an astroturf playing field	The Vancouver School Board will decide how its play space is designed and programmed. BC Hydro understands that there will be a playing field, play equipment, planting and an outdoor classroom above the substation, and is working with the School Board to ensure its design and the safe operation of the electrical equipment are compatible.

3. Project progress

Andrew shared an update on project progress:

- A. Regulatory process continues:** BC Hydro has submitted the third part of its application to the BC Utilities Commission and has requested a decision from the Commission by October 30. Assuming a positive decision, construction would start in November.
- B. EMF measurements:** as committed, an expert engineering services provider has visited the school building and park to measure current EMF and their report will be published on bchydro.com/westendsub before the start of construction.
- C. Building assessments:** BC Hydro has started contacting buildings around the Nelson Park block for pre-construction assessments, these will be repeated at the end of construction.

In response to questions from the group, Andrew shared that:

- I. WSP will complete the upcoming building assessments and BC Hydro would not pay for additional assessments because these would double up work.
- II. Construction will be planned to avoid damage to buildings, if the upcoming assessments show a chance of damage, methods will be updated to avoid it.
- III. Buildings were recommended for assessment by a structural engineer: if a building has not been selected for assessment, it is because this expert believes the possibility of damage is extremely low.
- IV. BC Hydro will ask the engineering firm conducting building assessments if they inspect piping: this was in response to a member sharing experience of construction elsewhere that cause pinhole leaks.
- V. BC Hydro is contacting building owners and those with authority to enter into agreements for the buildings: this was in response to a member question about owners v. renters.

4. Construction planning: first six months

Tyler shared an overview of the first six months of construction at the site, including fencing, access routes, activities, and anticipated impacts and mitigations. In response, the group asked about:

- A. **Washroom access:** although the park washroom will be within the construction site, BC Hydro will provide an alternative public washroom throughout construction.
- B. **Access to site:** BC Hydro confirmed that during this time, Nelson Street will be the main access route to site and a traffic management plan will be developed for this period of work and shared with the group.
- C. **Park playground:** BC Hydro confirmed that there will be a maximum of 4 weeks at the start of construction when the park playground is inaccessible while BC Hydro relocates the park storm sewer, it will be made available again as soon as it is safe.

Next steps

- BC Hydro to circulate meeting notes
- BC Hydro to plan next committee meeting.

Disclaimer

These summary notes are intended for public sharing and provide a high-level overview of discussions. They do not include specific individual comments, confidential information, or detailed deliberations.