

**Public Hearing (Continued from 6-5-2025) for Idaho Power
McDermott Substation (H-2025-0008) by KM Engineering, LLP.,
located at SW corner of McMillan Rd and Owyhee Storm Ave.**

- A. Request: Annexation of 2.69 acres of land from RUT in Ada County to the R-15 zoning district.
- B. Request: Conditional Use Permit to allow the development of an Idaho Power Substation.

Lorcher: Item No. 6 on the agenda is the Idaho Power at McDermott Substation for annexation and conditional use permit at the southwest corner of McMillan and Owyhee Storm Roads and we will begin with the staff report.

Ritter: Good evening, Commissioners. Linda Ritter from the planning department. So, tonight we are here for a request for annexation of 2.69 acres of land from RUT in Ada county to R-15 zoning district and a conditional use permit to allow for the development of the Idaho Power substation. So, this property went through a property boundary adjustment to allow for a new lot. The county allows for a one time split. Normally the lots in Ada county are five acres, but they do allow for a one time split for smaller lots and so it went through that process to create this new lot. So, this property is located at the southwest corner of McMillan Road and North Owyhee Storm Avenue. So, the applicant is proposing the construction of a new substation to enhance the reliability and resilience of electrical service in Meridian and the surrounding areas of Ada county. Currently customers in the region are served by Can-Ada station in Nampa and the Ten Mile substation in Meridian. So, with the rapid ongoing growth through the Treasure Valley it has placed increased demand on the existing facilities leading to service strain and reduced liability. The proposed substation is strategically designed to accommodate future growth and development, while alleviating pressure on the existing infrastructure by rerouting service lines. The new -- the new facility will not only serve new residents and commercial customers, but also improve service continuity and reliability for current users. So, as you can see on the site plan they are proposing up to two transformers to each serve four distribution feeders up to two breakers beneath the transmission termination structure, up to two metal clad structures, which manage switching of distribution feeders. One small control building, which houses racks of switches and communication equipment. One transmission and dead-end structure, which connects the transmission line to McMillan Road. So, public utility major and public infrastructure is the permitted use within the R-15 zoning district upon the approval of a conditional use permit and compliance with the specific use standards per the UDC. Staff has determined that the proposed project aligns with these standards and is essential to support the area's long-term utility needs and as you can see from the site plan access will be from McMillan Road and the Owyhee Storm and this will allow for safety to accommodate the maneuvering of large transport vehicles doing infrequent deliveries of major electrical equipment, such as transformers, breakers and the metal clad switch gear to the substation. Under typical operating conditions there would only be a single access point, but for this particular development it was determined that two access points would be

needed. So, although the development of a power station is located within the residential zoning district, the applicant is proposing 30 feet of landscaping buffer to the west and south of the property to mitigate any noise that may be generated from the substation and there is no building, but the applicant is proposing an eight foot tall precast stamped concrete wall along McMillan Road and Owyhee Storm Avenue frontage, but staff is requiring the wall be extended around the entire substation, because to the west and to the south will eventually be residential development. The application will have to go through a final design, then, they will be required to meet the standards of the architectural standards manual and go through a certificate of zoning compliance prior to building permit issuance and, then, residential zones, the maximum height of any fences are six feet, but the applicant is requesting eight feet, so they will be going through a separate permit process outside of this to increase the height of the proposed wall to eight feet and that is based on site security and to deter trespassing and the applicant is also requesting barbed wire on top of the fence, but within residential districts it is prohibited per our UDC. So, this is just an aerial of the area. This is the area in which the substation will be placed. So, that is all the information I have on this project and at this time I will take any questions from the Commission.

Lorcher: Would the applicant like to come forward? Hi. If you could state your name and address for the record that would be great.

Lomeli: Give me just one second. Okay. You can try it now.

Hopkins: Hello. Okay. Madam Chair, Members of the Commission, Stephanie Hopkins with KM Engineering. Our address is 5725 North Discovery Way in Boise and joining me is David Hazel with Idaho Power.

Hazel: Nice to meet you guys.

Hopkins: I'm here on behalf of Idaho Power to request annexation and conditional use permit for a planned substation near Owyhee Storm and McMillan in northwest Meridian. Staff covered our request really well, so we will try to keep our presentation pretty short and David's here to provide any technical information you might have on the operation of the substation. So, the purpose of this project is to fulfill a need that currently exists and future development that will happen to fulfill that need as well. So, we are requesting to locate it near -- it's in The Fields sub area plan, which is anticipated to include a variety of uses in the future, including commercial, residential, industrial and, then, public uses. So, a new substation in this location will well serve the community. Substations are the point in which Idaho Power serves their customers directly with power. As this graphic shows there are multiple ways in which power is generated. Those are all grayed out, but you could have natural gas or there could be purchased power. Those all go to -- they are moved to a larger switching station and, then, those are moved to transmission lines. From there it moves to a substation, like the McDermott substation, and it's distributed to homes and businesses. So, the objective of this project is to meet the electrical growths and demands in this area with a new substation. This will help to relieve existing facilities. Customers in this area are currently served by the Can-Ada substation

in Nampa and the Ten Mile substation in Meridian. This substation, the McDermott substation, will connect to the existing North Side substation with a new 138 kilovolt wire from the existing 230 kilovolt transmission line poles. Those really large facilities along McMillan. Linda covered where this is located pretty well. So, there are two points of access proposed to the site. One is to McMillan. The other is to Owyhee Storm. Both accesses will be gated and the entire site will be secured with a fence. As Linda mentioned, we are requesting that the south and west boundaries of the site, which are adjacent to currently undeveloped property, in the future they will be residential and I think multi-family kind of uses, with a chain link fence. There is a 30 foot buffer area there that we believe will buffer future use as well and we think that the chain link with that buffer will provide adequate spacing and buffer to future uses. A precast concrete wall eight feet, as Linda mentioned, will be located along McMillan and Owyhee Storm. This site will include up to two breakers, two metal clad structures, a small control building, which will house a variety of controls for the actual substation and one transmission dead-end structure on the site. So, the transmission will come in from the dead end. It will go to the transformer, which steps the electricity down to 130 -- or from 138 kilovolt to four 12.5 kilovolt distribution feeders and that will go to customers through the metal -- metal clad. So, this is -- this is our -- this is what the precast concrete wall looks like on the left-side of your screen and, then, the chain link that we are proposing to locate on the south and west sides of the site would be more like the right picture and we have been working with Public Works on pressurized irrigation requirements for the landscaping that we are showing here. Our intent would be to try to work with them to delay the landscaping if we can to coincide well with development that's planned in the area. So, we are still working with them on that and trying to find a good solution and this is just basically saying that we are complying with the Comprehensive Plan and the city's codes for each of the uses that are -- for the uses proposed. So, the specific use standards as well as the annexation and conditional use permit standards. We have enjoyed working with staff and are really excited about this project. Think it will provide a really necessary service to residents within this area and will help alleviate some of the constraints that are currently being noticed in the area, too. So, I will stand for any questions.

Lorcher: Commissioners, do we have any questions for the applicant?

Garrett: Yes.

Lorcher: Commissioner Garrett.

Garrett: Question. I heard that barbed wire is not permitted. Now, how else will you harden the site given that there has been a lot of threats on the various water and electrical systems?

Hopkins: Madam Chair, Commissioner Garrett, David might cover that.

Hazel: Yeah. So, that's -- I mean that's kind of the whole intent of the increase had on that concrete wall and what we typically do, because I know that barbed wire is not allowed, sorry, but we will kind of cantilever that on the inside of our fence, so it's not

seen, so it's pretty much obstructed by that wall; right? But that's really part of our security protocol as far as detect, deterring, delaying, if anybody was to enter our site without authorization. So, that's kind of our main intent there. And we do that with a combination of fencing, you know, barbed wire, cameras, all that good stuff.

Garrett: Okay. Thank you.

Hazel: Yep.

Lorcher: Do you plan on having cameras at the site?

Hazel: It's still kind of determined at the moment. We will at some point in the future, but I don't know if -- once this project is energized I don't know if we will have cameras on at that point. It's kind of security -- Idaho Power's security is kind of evaluating these distribution stations and the level of security required. So, our standard right now doesn't require that, but we are currently re-evaluating that given the history right now, so --

Lorcher: So, in regard to this particular site, I can't really speak to the one at Pocatello, but this one seems to be surrounded by residential, you know, with McMillan being one, you will have residential across the street, you are going to have all three sides residential. How common is it to have a station like this engulfed in residential areas or are you more kind of on the sticks a little bit with the Ten Mile and the Nampa facilities?

Hazel: Are you -- just the general location? Is that kind of questions? Would you mind going back to that main map? So, there is kind of a few things in play here. So, that existing line -- sorry. Which we are showing on this depiction; right? So, you can see basically from northside down McDermott at that intersection there is an existing line there. So, we are basically pulling conductor up north side, tagging on the existing line, which goes -- runs right by that property we purchased.

Lorcher: Right.

Hazel: So, it's also -- I mean convenience that our transmission lines there, right, without having to build new lines through the city, but at the same time it helps us relieve some of the capacity on our existing feeders.

Lorcher: Right.

Hazel: So, location is critical to our existing feeders that serve that area and taking some of that relief off with this new station.

Lorcher: Let me clarify my question.

Hazel: Yes.

Lorcher: The substation specifically. The location of the substation, which is totally fine.

Hazel: Yeah.

Lorcher: But in this case right now there is just empty lots around you.

Hazel: Correct.

Lorcher: But five years from now, ten years from now, you are going to be surrounded by residential, which, you know, electricity and kids is a concern. So, you are proposing a brick wall on a portion of it. You are proposing a chain link fence on the other proportion of it. Is that the best materials to use, knowing that you are going to be here for a long time, along with the development that's coming up, is that sufficient materials enough to be able to be a good neighbor to the future residents who will be moving in next to you?

Hazel: Yes. And so a lot of our standards are written around the chain link right now and we actually put concrete curbing under the chain link fence as well, so that people can't access underneath the mesh material. So, I mean chain link is our standard currently. We have been kind of converting to some of these concrete walls in specific situations; right? And so it's just trying to make sure that with the change in material that we are used to is making sure we are capturing all of our security elements given the location like you had mentioned.

Lorcher: Right.

Hazel: So, to answer your question, yes, we do everything in our power to secure our site as much as possible from the general public.

Lorcher: Okay. I think from an esthetic point -- I live at Ustick and McDermott, so it's -- it's somewhat right down the street. Not that it's in my, you know, peripheral vision, but as a neighbor I would prefer to see the whole thing walled in, as opposed to having a chain link fence and that way you are your own little island and nobody can kind of see in, you know, deters any kids from jumping in the wall. You are down the street from the high school and it would just create more of an esthetic, especially with the landscaping that's around it. Would -- would putting a wall around the entire unit be within your periphery or are you committed to the chain link both sides?

Hazel: It's certainly an option, but I do want to back up to that security feature; right? That -- I mean either material we choose we are meeting specific safety standards that aren't only within our company; right? I mean we have other entities that regulate us, so we are strict to those guidelines as well. I mean we certainly have the option to do the concrete if you would like. That's just an increase in cost for us.

Lorcher: Right.

Hazel: And maintenance and that kind of stuff can be a little bit tricky. You know, ten to 15 years from now if concrete starts falling versus just replacing chain link, you know what I mean? So, there is some caveats there. But I mean all in all we are open to either

option, whichever you guys would prefer. But our initial intent would be to stick to our standard where we can and that's why that chain link is shown.

Lorcher: Okay. As you go to City Council I'm -- I have a feeling that's going to come up again, so it might be something you would like to talk with the city planners with --

Hazel: Absolutely.

Lorcher: -- as far as just, you know, a conversation one way or another. Commissioners, any other questions for the applicant before public testimony?

Perreault: Madam Chair?

Lorcher: Commissioner Perreault.

Perreault: So, perhaps you could speak to that in regard to your station at Black Cat and Franklin, because you have a school right next to that and residential right next to that. So, the concerns that Madam Chair has, could you address whether you had issues with that substation -- substation?

Hazel: Not to my knowledge. I would have to check our security team, but I'm not aware of any issues and --

Perreault: Okay.

Hazel: -- I haven't heard any issues with that site, so --

Lorcher: Okay. Thank you very much.

Hazel: Yeah. Thank you.

Lorcher: Madam Clerk, do we have anybody signed up to testify?

Lomeli: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have Eli Hyman.

Lorcher: No? Not for the power station? Okay. Thank you.

Lomeli: Madam Chair, Patty Golden. Same?

Lorcher: Same? Okay.

Lomeli: No one else has signed up.

Lorcher: David and Stephanie, did you have anything else to add before we close the public hearing? Okay. Can I get a motion to close the public hearing, please?

Smith: So moved.

Perreault: Second.

Lorcher: It's been moved and seconded to close the public hearing for Idaho Power McDermott Substation, Item No. H-2025-0008. All those in favor say aye. Any opposed? Motion carries.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

Lorcher: I mean it's pretty straightforward. We can definitely use the power. You know, McMillan's got huge power lines that make sense of where they are going. I'm just kind of -- knowing -- knowing the area, because I live in that area, knowing that all of The Fields is going to be developed in a long term plan -- I'm not a fan of chain link, but that's just me. So, if it was my choice to be a neighbor of the substation I would like to see it cemented in, but I wouldn't hold the application back just on an esthetic.

Smith: Madam Chair?

Lorcher: Commissioner Smith.

Smith: I think I tend to agree with you. I think there is probably also some argument to be made regarding security -- increased security of a concrete wall. It's harder to see through and see what's going on inside. I think there is a higher chance to deter anyone getting an idea of jumping over if you don't know if there is someone on the other side of the wall, et cetera. But, again, I think -- I don't think it's going to be something at -- you know, at the end of the day I don't think it's going to make or break this. I think where I'm at is I prefer to just maybe have that in the recommendation and have that so city -- City Council can have a conversation, which I think they will have either way, but if that's how the Commission intends to be feeling, maybe we just recommend that. But that's just kind of where I'm at.

Lorcher: Any thoughts?

Perreault: Madam Chair?

Lorcher: Commissioner Perreault.

Perreault: Given how many of these substations are in the area and how experienced Idaho Power is with this, they are obviously highly committed to security in their locations. It wouldn't be good for the community if they weren't committed to that. So, I'm -- I'm not as concerned about that. I mean they have had many many opportunities to try out different areas and if there were concerns about access or security I would guess they would have already run into those at some point.

Lorcher: Right. Okay. With that after considering all staff, applicant and public testimony, I move to recommend File No. H-2025-0008 as presented in the staff report for the hearing of June 26, 2025.

Smith: Second.

Lorcher: It's been moved and seconded to approve the -- or recommend annexation and a conditional use permit to City Council for the Idaho Power McDermott Substation. All those in favor say aye. Any opposed? Motion carries. Thank you very much.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.