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Thursday, Aug 14, 2008

Dozens of county residents comment on Allegheny plans

New power lines could affect wide swath of Frederick County

by Chris Brown | Staff Writer

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About 115 Frederick County residents showed up to voice their opinions Tuesday night about two 500 kilovolt power lines that will likely pass through the area, according to a spokesman for Allegheny Energy.

Allegheny was pleased with the public participation in its project, spokesman Todd Myers said, the lack of which had derailed an attempt to build new electrical lines in Urbana a few years ago. The Maryland Public Service Commission denied Allegheny's attempt to construct the power lines because of possible impact on the scenic view of the area, and a perceived lack of public involvement. Myers said the company plans to take all of the information gathered from residents, business owners and government representatives at meetings and on the project Web site (www.pathtransmission.com) and plan the best route.

"We've had more than 100 comments from the online open house," Meyers said. "All that feedback will be put into the hopper."

The Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline (PATH) Project, the final leg of a much larger project, is planned to extend from Charleston, W.Va., to Kemptown. This portion will be constructed entirely by Allegheny Energy, while the rest of the project is a joint venture between Allegheny and American Electric Power.

Though hundreds of possible versions of the route exist, essentially there are two basic ways that it could pass through Frederick County, according to the maps of alternatives presented at a meeting Tuesday night. A possible northern route would bring power lines past Frederick, New Market, New London, Monrovia and Bartholows on its way to the Kemptown substation. The southern route could pass near Burkittsville, the Monocacy National Battlefield and Urbana on its way to the substation.

Meyers said the benefit of public information meetings was that individual homeowners could visit and look at the routes on a map, and point out specific potentially affected areas that aerial photography might not capture. "They can tell us 'this is the oldest house in the county,'" he said.

So far, Frederick County officials have not suggested a preferred route to Allegheny Energy. According to Jim Gugel, a Frederick County planner who has served as a contact between the county and Allegheny, the public information process that Allegheny is undertaking is different from previous power line projects in Frederick County. He said that usually, the county does not get to take an advisory role until after a power company has made its recommendation to the Public Service Commission. Gugel said that county planners would not review the plans unless the Frederick Board of County Commissioners directed them to do so.

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Susan Trail, park superintendent of the Monocacy National Battlefield, represents one of the larger land owners this power line could affect. She said she had not been aware of the potential routes until the public information meeting Tuesday night, and she was concerned about some elements.

An existing line along the southern edge of the park at the intersection of Baker Valley Road and Fingerboard Road might be used in the project. If this were so, the existing 230 kilovolt line would be overbuilt – that is, it would be

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taken down and run on a larger tower along with the new 500 kilovolt line-- which could add as much as 50 feet. This would make the power line even more visible from the park, Trail said. She said her job as a stakeholder was to convince Allegheny of the importance of the depth of cultural and natural resources in Frederick County, though she acknowledged the difficulty of routing the needed power lines through the county.

"We're going to be watching this process," she said.

Further Frederick County public information meetings have been scheduled for 5 to 8 p.m., Monday, at the New Market Grange Hall; and 5 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, at the Middletown Volunteer Fire Company.





Learn the Facts About the Future of Reliable Power

Open House Meetings to Receive Your Input

Allegheny Energy and American Electric Power want your input. At these meetings, we will share plans for the Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline (PATH), a high-voltage transmission line project. Find out why PATH is needed and help us gather information to develop the most acceptable route for the proposed line. Learn more about reliability, conservation and the transmission of electric power.

New Market, Md. • Monday, August 18

**The Grange Hall No. 362
5 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

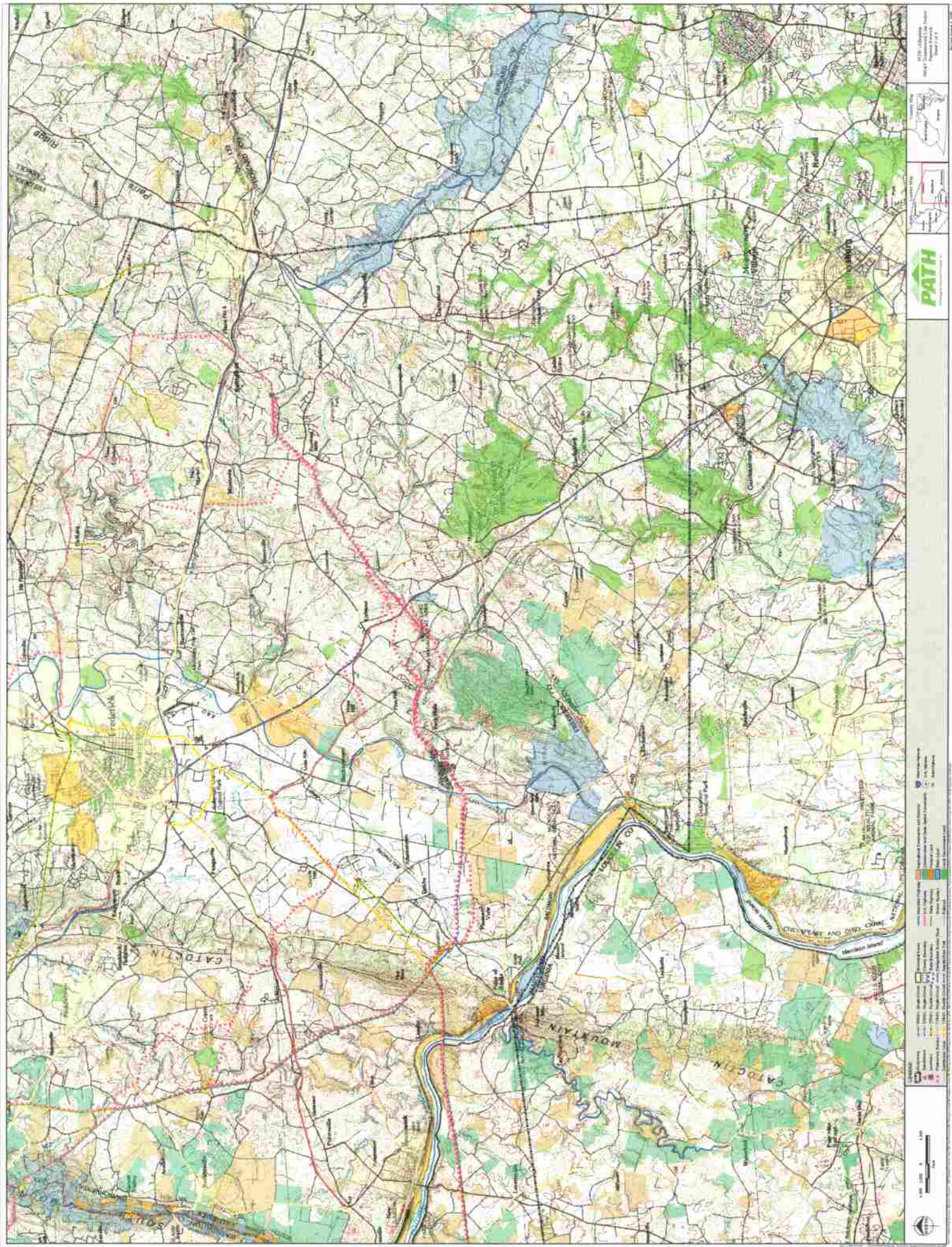
Middletown, Md. • Tuesday, August 19

**Middletown Fire Hall
5 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

If you are unable to attend an Open House Meeting and would like more information about the project, visit pathtransmission.com

Working Together for The Power of Progress





Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile
North Arrow

Legend:

- Proposed Project Area
- Water Features
- Topography
- Other symbols and colors used in the map