Frequently Asked Questions:
Foothills Site – FEMA Alternate Project

Updated: 10/21/2015

Neighborhood and Planning Commission Meeting Questions:

1. Will the citizens of Loveland that attend the meeting on Thursday have the opportunity to ask questions?

Of course! And as mentioned above, we will also be posting all FEMA Alternate project related documents on our website and FAQs such as these.

2. I live on West 22nd Street, I was only aware of the meeting through my HOA and neighbors. How was the mailing list compiled?

We pulled the county records for property owners within the buffer zone for mailings. We also posted signs on the property. If you attended the September 10, 2015 neighborhood meeting, you have been added to the mailing list for future meeting notifications. If you would like to be placed on the mailing list, please contact Gretchen Stanford, Customer Relations Manager at Gretchen.Stanford@cityofloveland.org.

3. What was the buffer zone for the mailing?

The buffer zone included anything within 1,200 feet of the Meadowbrook Ridge site, including all of the homes within Meadowbrook Ridge. In total, we sent approximately 400 letters. The Special Review is the next step in this process. The Special Review process doesn't go through the Planning Commission but will include a neighborhood meeting and a notification will be sent out in advance of the meeting.

4. Can we attend the Planning Commission hearing and present evidence?

Yes. You are limited to three minutes of testimony. All comments from the Planning Commission hearing will be forwarded to City Council.

Site and Road Questions:

1. Does the City own this property? How much did it cost?

Yes. The property was purchased by Water and Power in April 2015 for $833,000.

2. Where did that money come from to purchase the property?

The money came from the electric utility.

3. Will the money spent buying the property be reimbursed from FEMA?

No. The FEMA money will reimburse the construction expenses for the substation and solar facility projects.

4. When do you expect a decision from FEMA on the scope change?

We anticipated a decision over a month ago. We are routinely in contact with the State of Colorado and FEMA so we can provide any additional information or answer any questions on the scope.

5. If you don't get a response from FEMA, what will you do?

This is the first project of its kind proposed to FEMA so they are evaluating everything. The City cannot move forward with the environmental process until they approve the scope. We will continue to work with FEMA to answer any questions or provide additional information for their review.

6. What is the plan if the FEMA money does not come through?

The City will pay for the project up front. FEMA will reimburse those expenses. The money for these projects has already been budgeted and will be reimbursed. If this is approved by City Council, the project will move forward.

7. What other locations are under consideration and why was this location chosen, a location so close to subdivisions? Isn't it unusual to have a substation so close to the surrounding homes?

One project we were considering was expanding West Substation. An additional site (30 acres just southeast of Boedecker Lake) was purchased and was actually the original site submitted to FEMA and the State. Currently, we have more capacity than is needed in the southwest side of town than the northwest side of town; therefore, we submitted a change to the scope of work to FEMA and the State for the alternate project. We are keeping the Boedecker property, and we will be proposing to build a substation sometime in the future on that site. One of the greatest benefits of this site is that it is next to existing utility infrastructure and will minimize the impact to the community.

No, it is not unusual to build a substation in a neighborhood setting. East Substation and Valley Substation reside in or close to neighborhood areas. East Substation is located at 875 N. Denver Ave. and Valley Substation is located at 920 S. Colorado Ave.

8. Why was the site changed from Boedecker?

The Foothills site was chosen for various reasons; the larger acreage of the Foothills site, and the load growth in the northwest area of Loveland is greater, which makes it the ideal location at this time. The substation planned at the Boedecker site is still on the electric utility's long-range master plan and will be constructed as growth continues in the southwest area of Loveland.

9. Will Rio Blanco connect to 29th Street?

Yes. A temporary connection is proposed as part of the plan. When the development to the north starts construction, that developer will be responsible for the permanent connection of Rio Blanco to 29th Street.

10. What will the elevation be of the site, especially in the area proposed for the solar facility?

The site will be re-graded to fit the road, solar facility and substation. The grade will be higher in some places and lower in others to fit these items. The solar facility area will be smoothed out and will generally sit a few feet lower than the existing stockpiles of dirt that are in the area.

11. What illumination will be provided at the site?

Street lights will be extended along Rio Blanco. They will be full cut-off LED lights. The substation and solar facility will have lights to use as needed during any night access by staff at those facilities.

12. When doing illumination planning please explore "dark sky" approved lighting. One reason residents like the area is the dark nights.

On Rio Blanco, we intend to use the cobra-head lights which extend the light downward. We intend to use full cut-off lights and LED technology at this site. Because there will not be a subdivision on this site, there will be no need for post top lights, which will reduce the lighting in this area.

13. When is the 2nd water tank scheduled to be built?

The Water Division Master Plan indicates 8-10 years out. Water tanks are needed for emergency storage, in case the Water Treatment Plant goes offline and during the summer time when irrigation happens, the City experiences a big water system demand. The water tanks will offset that demand.

14. Did planned construction time for the water tank change?

Yes. The Water Division performs annual master planning. Plans for the water tank have been adjusted based on anticipated development needs in the area.

15. What about the new waterline along Cascade and 22nd? When is that planned for construction?

This project has been delayed until a new water tank is needed.

16. What is the vision for the west side of the property?
We are not intending to change that area. It will be preserved as open lands. The Parks Department is considering connecting the trails through this area to Mehaffey Park as a future project.

17. What about the acreage to the South of the proposed solar facility?
The Power Division is researching community solar gardens that have been constructed in other communities. We are evaluating this option for the acreage south of the proposed solar facility since there we will already be solar infrastructure in place.

Substation Questions:

1. In regards to the transmission lines going in and out of the substation, where will the transmission towers be placed and how big are they? Will photographs of substations with the same size towers be available? Not similar, but the same size.

Approximately 250 feet of transmission line will be extended east of the existing transmission line and south of the water tank directly into the new Foothills substation. The transmission lines will be similar in size to what is out there now (possibly a few feet shorter) and will be as low profile as possible.

We looked at putting those transmission lines underground but because of the steepness of the land we would have to anchor the lines. Placing these lines underground and anchoring them is very expensive. At this particular meeting, we will not have photographs of the substation with the transmission lines; however, at the Special Review meeting, we will.

2. What load growth has occurred to substantiate the need/necessity for this substation?
With the addition of several neighborhoods on the west side of town and the future growth that is anticipated, we are recommending the substation be built. However, the most important reason for Loveland Water and Power is that West substation, located on Namaqua Road south of Eisenhower and which currently serves this portion of town, was threatened and taken off-line during the 2013 Flood and the west side of town was definitely a concern for us. Ironically at that particular time, we were looking at expanding West substation to accommodate the anticipated growth, but because of the flooding that the substation sustained, we are proposing to have Foothills substation replace that expansion project.

3. How high are the actual towers of the substation?
We expect the tallest substation tower to be approximately 60 feet. More information will be available after the substation design is complete.

4. What noise will we hear from the substation?
Typical noise for a substation is about 40 decibels. This is similar to typical urban noise. More details on substation noise can be provided at the Special Review meeting.

5. How much do you think the EMF of the substation will be?
Electromagnetic fields (EMF) emanates from anything electric. The EMF from transmission lines tapers off quickly, EMF from a 115 kilovolt transmission line drops to almost 0 within about 200 feet.

6. What additional infrastructure is needed to distribute the power from the substation?
Distribution lines connecting the substation to the electric system infrastructure will be installed as part of the substation project. All distribution lines that come out of the substation, other than the transmission lines will be underground.

7. Will the substation fencing just be block walls or decorative?
We intend to use colors compatible with the park for fencing. In some areas, we will install berms so to camouflage the substation wall. We are researching options for the walls and will be able to provide more information after the substation design is completed.

8. What defensive trees and bushes will be used underneath the substation walls to prevent graffiti?
Options for discouraging graffiti are being considered including the types of landscaping located in vulnerable areas, we may also use graffiti coating on the walls.

Solar Questions:

1. We would like more information on glare with the solar panels.
During the bid evaluations, we will be requesting lower glare solar panel technology. More information will be available after the solar facility design is completed.

2. Are the solar panels permanently fixed or tracking?
We expect to install single-axis tracking panels. These panels will track during the course of the day as the sun moves across the sky. The tracking of the panels does not change through the course of the seasons.

3. What is the wattage of the solar panels?
We are still in the process of evaluating bids for the panels. More information will be available after the solar facility design is completed. Typically, solar panels are about 300 watts per panel.

4. How much do you think the EMF of a solar facility will be?
Electromagnetic fields (EMF) emanates from anything electric. The EMF from transmission lines tapers off quickly, EMF from a 115 kilovolt transmission line drops to almost 0 within about 200 feet. This is similar with solar facilities but since the voltage for solar is lower, around 380 volts, the EMF will dissipate within a few feet.

5. We lost the hydro facility in the flood and now we are installing solar. Is there a net gain or loss in generation?
The City will experience a net gain in generation. The hydro facility had the capacity to generate 900 kilowatts. The solar facility is estimated to generate 2 megawatts which equates to 2,000 kilowatts.

Overall Questions:

1. Isn't this replacing the Viestenz-Smith Park power plant?
Yes. The power house for the hydroelectric facility was located at Viestenz-Smith Park. The dam and penstock were located further west of Viestenz-Smith Park in the Big Thompson Canyon. The dam, penstock and power house were all severely damaged during the 2013 Flood. Instead of rebuilding a facility that has been damaged twice by flooding. The City elected to apply for a FEMA Alternate Project. The funds awarded by FEMA for the Alternate Project will be spent constructing the substation and solar facilities at this Foothills site.

2. What about the wildlife impact from the construction of these facilities?
We will be performing a full environmental process as required by FEMA. The design includes a 60 foot wildlife migration corridor between the substation and solar facility.

3. What about damage that can be caused to birds flying over the solar fields?
We will do research on what other communities have done to address this for the solar facilities they have installed. The design of this solar facility will not focus heat or light.

4. Will the City look at property value impacts before going to City Council?
No. Property value impact analysis is not performed by the City. Property owners may research and present this information to the Planning Commission.

5. What is the impact of building these facilities this close to $500,000 homes?
The City does not perform property value impact analysis. It is not unusual to build a substation in a neighborhood setting. Currently, we have two substations in Loveland that reside in or close to neighborhood areas, East Substation and Valley Substation. East Substation is located at 875 N. Denver Ave. and Valley Substation is located at 920 S. Colorado Ave.

6. What is the expected revenue to the City and for how long?
We do not anticipate any revenue for the City from these projects but we will be reducing the amount of power the City purchases from Platte River Power Authority (PRPA). The solar facility is estimated to generate around 2 megawatts of power for the City. The electric system peak is around 153 megawatts in the summer. The solar generation would be around 1% of the electric system peak.

7. What future expenses are anticipated for customers?
Future operations and maintenance (O&M) expenses for both the substation and solar facility will be covered by the power utility. These O&M expenses for the solar facility will be similar to the O&M expenses the City incurred for the hydroelectric facility when it was operational.

8. What percentage of power used by Loveland is purchased on the open market?
Approximately 6% of outside electric purchases are made by Platte River Power Authority for Loveland's power supply.

9. How long will this project take to complete?
Per the FEMA Alternate Project timeline the project has to be completed by September 2017; however, the majority of the construction will take place in 2016. Once the site work is completed, the majority of the work will be within the fence line of the project and should not have much impact to the surrounding neighborhoods.

10. Has the city considered the impact this will have on the neighborhoods surrounding this project? We were subjected to 2 years of construction for the Mehaffey Park, huge amounts of dust, dirt and noise.
Yes, we have spent a considerable amount of time discussing the impact to the neighborhoods. We have a tight timeline to complete the project so our hope is to be done quickly. In addition, we plan to build attractive fencing, buffers and lots of attractive landscaping. We hope to use this facility as an educational site with interactive signs that will help teach our customers about solar. This will be the first electric generating project that FEMA has considered as an alternate project. At the next public meeting – the special review meeting, more images and more of the project details will be presented and discussed.

11. Kids are often at the park until 10 pm, how will the security of these facilities be handled?
Security is a consideration at all of our facilities. The security measures will include the use of motion lights, sensors, block walls and secured fencing to prevent access to the facilities.

12. At night this is a highly used area for dumping, how will you prevent damage to the solar panels from people dumping at the site.

The solar facility will be fenced. We expect the fencing to be a 7 to 10 foot chain-link fence. The City will also perform regular security checks at the site.

13. What about the existing trails on the site?

The trails along the west ridge are expected to remain untouched. The Parks Department is considering connecting trails to Mehaffey Park through this area. The other trails through the proposed locations for the substation and solar facility will be removed during the project construction.

The questions below are from meetings hosted by Loveland Water and Power with the Home Owner Associations from Quail Run, Meadowbrook Ridge and Hunters Run. Many of the questions asked were previously answered above and are not detailed again below. Several questions were duplicates between the different HOA meetings and are only addressed once.

Quail Run HOA Questions from October 6, 2015:

1. Is the fence around the solar facility going to be built out around the whole area or just the area being developed now?

The details are still being determined with the designer for the solar project but staff feels that is would make more economic sense to build the full fence now rather than tearing down a section and extending the fence in the future. We are also planning to get all the buffering installed and irrigated at the beginning of the project so that the landscaping grows and is filled in by the time the second solar phase is installed.

2. What kind of fence will be installed around the solar facility?

The fence is planned to be a 7-10 foot galvanized chain link fence. The goal is to limit the view difference between materials already out there. There is a galvanized chain link fence around the existing water tank and the tennis courts at Mehaffey Park.

3. What kind of signage will be posted on the solar fencing?

This is an electric facility so we are required to post warning signage per electric code. These signs will be bilingual.

4. We are concerned that the fencing around the solar facility will look like a prison. How are you going to address that?

We are not planning to do an angled barbed fence at the top which will make it look less prisonlike.

5. Would it be possible to build a block wall (like the substation wall) on the south side of the solar facility along 22nd St? This would help block the view of the solar facility.

It is possible. We will evaluate the costs and consider it in the design. It is estimated that this block wall will add about $300,000 to the fencing cost. The estimated cost for a block wall is about $500/linear foot versus $30/linear foot for the chain link option.

6. Is there any choice on the height of the substation wall?

No. This is a safety requirement for substations.

7. Will the whole solar area be graded and cleaned up or just the area being developed now?

Yes. For efficiency, the full site will be cleaned up and graded at the same time. In the undeveloped solar area, we expect to plant a low grow grass which will provide vegetative cover. This will be mowed along with the developed area.

8. How high are the solar structures?
From ground to maximum height they are about 10 feet tall. They will be angled towards the south. We are planning to install single-axis tracking panels that track the sun during the day but do not track with the seasons.

9. Will the solar field be similar to the one near the Greeley Water Treatment Plant on Highway 34?
Yes, it will be similar looking, however this solar field does not have landscaping or buffering. That one is stationary and ours will be tracking through the day.

10. When will Rio Blanco be constructed?
We do not have an exact timeline for construction but we expect to begin in the 2nd quarter of 2016.

11. Are power lines going to be added in this area?
Yes. We will be tying into the existing transmission line that is currently out there by adding about 250 feet of overhead transmission line. There will also be distribution lines installed from the substation into the distribution system but those will all be underground.

12. Is the area that Kearns sold that was identified for a recreation center on this site?
No. That site is to the east of the property we are discussing.

13. How are you going to protect the wildlife? We also have concerns with snakes in the area.
The design includes a 60 foot wildlife migration corridor between the substation and solar facility, and an additional migration corridor between the substation and existing water tank fence. The disruption of snake habitats during the site work will be taken into consideration.

14. What is being done for cultural resource assessments?
We have already performed a level 1 and level 2 assessment for the site. Nothing so far has been identified that will trigger a review by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) but assessments will still be performed as required.

15. The City owns the property right, so will they be responsible for keeping it clean and addressing trespassing in the area?
Yes. We are aware that there is a lot of vehicle use currently on the site. We have spoken with Public Works regarding how to address this issue. We intend to put barricades back up as well as signage. We are also working with the Police on this issue. The City will also be responsible for cleaning up the site.

16. How does the amount of power from the solar facility compare with hydro generation?
The hydroelectric plant generated 900 kW of electricity. The solar facility is expected to generate 2 to 3 MW of electricity which will be used by all of City of Loveland electric customers.

17. Will we get an electric rate reduction?
No. The energy produced will reduce the energy we have to purchase from PRPA but this is a small percentage of the power purchased.

18. When Mehaffey was constructed there was a lot of dust blowing around into homes. How are you addressing this?
The Civil Engineer will be required to comply with state standards for dust plans and material handling. This concern will be passed on the Civil Engineer to make sure it is addressed. We are planning to start the grading towards the end of winter when the ground is still wet, which will hopefully help with this issue. We will also be trying to revegetate as quickly as possible which will help to hold the soil down.

19. Is there a holding pond for the drainage system?
Yes, the detention pond was installed when Mehaffey Park was built. The drainage plan includes a water quality pond on this site which will then drain into the existing detention pond.

20. So will there be standing water there?
No. This water quality pond does not retain water. It is designed to fill up during a storm event and then drain.

Meadowbrook Ridge HOA Questions from October 7, 2015:

1. The elevations from 22nd Street are 12 feet and then you are building a 7 foot fence on top. It sounds like we will still see the fence from 22nd Street.

That is correct. We do not anticipate that the fence will be completely hidden from view but we are attempting to minimize the visual impact by using materials that are consistent with the materials already out there. The existing water tank and tennis courts at Mehaffey Park both have galvanized chain link fencing around them.

2. The fencing that was installed during the Mehaffey Park construction was ugly and intrusive.

The Mehaffey Park contractors probably installed a temporary construction fence; permanent chain link fencing around the solar facility looks much cleaner and more maintained than temporary construction fence; additionally, it will be located approximately 260 feet away from the nearest home.

3. What fencing suggestions are being considered

It was suggested at the Quail Run HOA meeting to build a block wall (similar to the substation wall) around the solar facility along the area north of 22nd Street. Afterward we estimated the costs for this block wall will add about $300,000 to the fencing cost. It is possible though and we will consider it in the design.

4. I have been noticing fencing along other places such as Woodward (decorative wrought iron fencing along Wilson) and along the old HP site. I would propose something like this fencing around the solar facility.

We will consider fencing options for the solar facility other than galvanized chain link. These option costs will be evaluated and considered in the design. Our landscape architect, BHA will perform a visual simulation to give an indication of what various types of fencing options will look like on the site.

5. What is in the budget for removing tumbleweeds from the fencing?

We do have an operations and maintenance (O&M) budget that will be able to address these issues.

6. It feels like more winter trees are needed so when the leaves fall the visual impact is still kept low.

We will definitely take this into consideration with the Planning Department to add more evergreens to the landscape plan.

7. I am concerned about the time it will take for the trees to grow.

We are taking this into consideration and will be encouraging landscape growth at this site. The landscaping plan proposes to add drip irrigation systems to all the trees and shrubs to encourage rapid growth to the extent feasible.

8. All the fill material has to be moved anyway so can it be bumped south and create a berm along that south area and then put the fencing along the backside of the lower slope? What about creating a higher berm or a higher berm that is rocked, similar to what is a Mehaffey Park?

We will discuss these suggestions with the Civil Engineer. A higher berm would create a steeper slope and make it harder to establish landscaping on it. Right now the plan has been to try not to adjust the grading on the south area because in Colorado it is difficult to establish native grasses on steep south facing areas. We were planning to keep the existing grasses and add seed to that. We will look at options for a higher berm and a higher rocked berm with the Civil Engineer.

9. Does the City maintain landscaping natural growth? Mehaffey Park has tall weeds and sagebrush, like Wyoming.

Native seeding has about a 3 year take. We intend to install irrigation to promote growth quicker. Every development has an agreement to maintain their area and this will be no different.

10. The City is the applicant for this project so they make the decisions on what is being done right?

Yes, but we do have to follow City code the same way any developer would.

11. Will reflection come off solar panels into our homes?

The point of the solar panel is to absorb the sunlight. There is some glare that comes off these but in our design we will be proposing to use low glare panels. You will experience less glare from the solar panels than you would from windows on homes.

12. Is solar easier to maintain than hydro?

Yes, significantly. With solar you don't have to clean screens or oil turbines on a regular basis. The O&M costs for solar will mostly consist of mowing costs.

13. What are the solar panel's susceptibility to hail?

The panels are designed to withstand normal weather patterns, including hail.

14. Are the solar panels made here or overseas?

We are still reviewing the bids for the solar panels so we are not sure yet.

15. What is the timeline for this project?

We expect to start site grading work in the first quarter of 2016. The solar construction will begin in the spring of 2016 and complete by the end of 2016. The substation walls will be installed in 2016 and the substation equipment will be installed in 2017. This project must be completed by September 2017.

16. Will bike lanes be installed along Rio Blanco?

Yes. This will be a major collector road. It will serve as a north and south fairway between W. 22nd and W. 29th Streets. It will consist of two lanes, one going each direction with bike lanes, sidewalks and parallel parking available on each side of the road. Rio Blanco will also provide an entrance to Mehaffey Park as well as on-street parking for the park.

17. At the first meeting you mentioned a temporary road connection from Rio Blanco to 29th Street, is that still planned for?

We are currently in discussions with Hunters Run and the Traffic Department to install a permanent connection from Rio Blanco to 29th Street.

18. Why is Rio Blanco still being constructed since we will not have all the housing there anymore?
Rio Blanco has been planned as a street on Traffic's 30-year plan. We could construct this as a minor collector because of the development change but we are proposing to still build a major collector. There is not much width difference between a major and minor collector road and a major collector road will offer more benefits. The parking demand expected on the street is not driven by the solar and substation facility but rather by Mehaffey Park. This road will benefit the neighborhood by offering overflow parking for the park to prevent parking from flowing into the neighborhoods.

19. Are you looking at local contractors to do the work?
We will be posting bids on the Rocky Mountain E-Publishing System (Interactive Procurement Technologies). We encourage contractors to check the site at www.govbids.com

20. Is a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required?
No. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, FEMA's regulations for implementing NEPA, the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, and in the spirit of Unified Review as outlined in the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013, FEMA prepared a draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts resulting from the different types of utility projects. The draft PEA evaluated four project alternatives for utility projects:

- No action;
- Replacement;
- Relocation; and
- Combination of replacement and relocation.

In the final approved PEA, FEMA has identified the conditions that federally funded utility projects must adhere to in order to keep FEMA's determination that the four project alternatives associated with utility restoration, replacement, and relocation in the state of Colorado, will not have significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. With no significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be required. Compliance with the Final PEA will necessitate that the utility project adheres to the conditions of the Final PEA (including, but not limited to, acquiring any necessary permits prior to commencing construction at the proposed site, compliance with applicable stormwater pollution requirements, proper management of hazardous materials in accordance with applicable regulations, ensuring that the project is in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), monitoring and controlling construction traffic in accordance with OSHA requirements, submitting any project scope changes to FEMA for re-evaluation and determination of the applicability of the Final PEA, etc.) as well as completion of the Utilities PEA Checklist (which is a 25 page document requesting information including, but not limited to information about geology, soils, land use, air quality, noise, water resources, cultural resources, public outreach concerning the project, environmental permits, threatened and endangered plant and species habitat surveys, and mitigation measures). Based on previous discussions with FEMA concerning the Alternate Project for the Hydroelectric Plant, City staff believes that the Final PEA conditions and Utilities PEA checklist can be satisfied. Non-compliance with the Final PEA and conditions would necessitate the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which could take the better part of nine (9) months. Completion of the Final PEA for utility restoration, replacement, or relocation in the state of Colorado, is anticipated to take City staff about ninety (90) days.

21. Will a permit be required?
Yes

22. We need clear answers on what the appeal process is after the special review process.
For details on this appeal process contact Kerri Burchett with Planning at Kerri.Burchett@cityofloveland.org

23. Is the October 20th Council meeting an open public meeting?
Yes, please attend and offer your comments.

24. Is the City subject to the covenants?
No. The Title documents support that this property is not subject to the HOA covenants.

Hunters Run HOA Questions from October 12, 2015:

1. What is the visual impact to the homeowners in Hunters Run?
We will be addressing this question by including a rendering which will be available at the special review meeting so you will be able to visualize the impact from your area.

2. Mehaffey Park has flooded since it opened. What is being done to address this and will this project add to the existing problems?
We are not aware of the flooding problems at Mehaffey Park but we will work with Stormwater Engineering and the Civil Engineer to double check calculations.

3. This area is hard to get landscape growth in. How will you address this?
We will be bringing in top soil and improving the environment to encourage landscape growth. There will be testing performed to the existing soils to determine what needs to be done to the soil prior to planting.

4. Is Rio Blanco plotted near where the emergency bike path was during Mehaffey Park?
There is an existing dirt road there and it will be in a similar area but wider.

5. We are concerned with vandalism at this site from people hanging out at the park. How will you address this?
Security systems will be put in place at both of these sites. These security measures will allow us to record activity and dispatch Police as needed.

6. Has consideration been given to changing the location of the substation on the site?
For functionality the substation needs to be close to square shaped in a flat area for drainage purposes. Our location choice on the site considered the desire to cluster the taller utility type items (the substation and water tank) together on the site. This area is also the shortest distance to the existing transmission lines. There is also an existing water line to the south of the water tank which the substation needs to avoid.

7. Did you consider sinking the substation into the ground?
Yes but we still need to construct the wall around the substation 12 feet high to prevent access. Also a certain distance is needed from ground level to connect to the existing transmission lines.

8. Has consideration been given to putting the new substation at the Boedecker site and adding solar on the entire Foothills site?

Due to the size of the solar facility planned, it will be easier on the distribution system to connect it directly to a substation. If the solar is placed a long distance away, we would need to upgrade our distribution feeders to accommodate the load from the solar field. This would require a system impact study to understand what would need to be done in order to avoid negatively impacting reliability, distribution services or equipment. As far as moving the substation to the Boedecker property, our long range planning efforts have identified a need for substations at both sites in the long term. If we do not build the substation at the Meadowbrook Ridge property, we will need to find another location in the northwest area. Just building a substation at the Boedecker property would not provide the long term capacity that we need as the city grows.

9. How does the acreage for Horseshoe Substation, near Taft and 57th Street, compare to this proposed substation?

The acreage for the Horseshoe Substation is approximately 6.3 acres.

Horseshoe Substation is much bigger than a normal distribution substation because it is also a high voltage switching station for Platte River Power Authority. The high voltage switching station portion takes up considerably more space and the voltage of the transmission lines are higher, making the towers at the Horseshoe Substation taller than what will be seen at the Foothills Substation.

10. Have you taken eagles building nests into account for the substation project?

Yes. There are requirements for separation between transmissions lines in the substation designs. This separation is wide enough to prevent electrocution to wildlife. Due to corona, eagles tend to not land on transmission lines.

11. How do you clean the solar panels?

We are still in the process of evaluating bids for the panels but we are receiving recommendations for maintenance from the solar installers.

Additional FAQ's will be added as they are asked. For questions regarding the Foothills Site - FEMA Alternate Project, please contact Gretchen Stanford, Customer Relations Manager, at Gretchen.Stanford@cityofloveland.org or 970-962-3550.