

## Meeting with Eversource Tuesday, April 5, 2016

### Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project

#### Attendees

Eversource: Bev Schultz, *Project Manager*; Maija Benjamins, *Siting*; Denise Baitone, *Senior Environmental Engineer*; JoAnne O'Leary, *Customer Relations*; Mark Kimball, *Project Outreach*  
VHB Environmental: Marc Bergeron

Town of Sudbury: Melissa Murphy Rodrigues, Esq., *Town Manager*; Susan Iuliano, *Board of Selectmen Vice Chair*; George Pucci, *Town Counsel*; Jody Kablack, *Town Planner*; Bill Miles, *DPW Director*; Michelle Ciccolo, *Planning Consultant*; Leila Frank, *Office Supervisor*

Town Counsel in attendance only for purpose of being kept abreast of project developments. It was agreed that matters discussed at today's meeting would not be used during any official proceedings by Town Counsel.

An informational handout was provided, which was collected at the end of the meeting.

#### Meeting Outline

Overview of Project Goals  
Open House Feedback  
Improving Customer Service  
Reliability  
Project Need & Benefits  
Route Analysis & Selection Process  
MBTA Status  
Challenges  
Continued Project Communications  
Next Steps

#### Overview

Route selected by Eversource for the project

- a. Shortest path – beneficial as this often provides least impact
- b. Addressed 3 main Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) requirements
  1. Reliability – improves current infrastructure
  2. Environmental impact
  3. Cost effective – shortest route
- c. Currently reviewing feedback to see what can be done from routing and design perspective before filing

#### Open House

Approximately 300 people attended each open house (Hudson and Sudbury)

*Comments Card Responses:*

-180 total

-Cards were open-ended/write-ins, not checkboxes. Responses do not add to 180, as some people had more than one comment.

- a. Preferred Underground Lines: 61
- b. Environmental Concerns: 54
- c. Property Value Impact Concerns: 29
- d. Preferred Underground in Road (Route 20): 14
- e. Health/Safety/Electric & Magnetic Fields (EMF): 12
- f. Herbicides: 5
- g. Costs/Increase in Rates: 3
- h. Do Not Support at all: 17
- i. Historic Property Impacts: 4
- j. 16 requested more information (added to Eversource communication list)

*Other questions and comments received from the public:*

- a. Tree removal – how wide?
- b. maintenance along corridor – what’s allowed to regrow?
- c. EFSB review process – how does it work?
- d. Relationship with Town
- e. Visual impacts (Assabet preservation area)
- f. Letters from Sudbury Valley Trustees, Conservation Commission and Protect Sudbury
- g. Is this a done deal?
- h. When does process start?

### **Questions from the Town, Including Those Received from Constituents**

Water District Question: Concerns regarding the vegetation plan, and specifically the use of herbicides, as the District is a local water source and wells may be impacted.

Eversource Response: Herbicide use is determined via a 5-year process with the Department of Agricultural Resources. Every year, an operating plan is submitted which dictates buffer zones, right of ways, what herbicides are used and other requirements. This is a standard, Eversource-wide plan, approved every year, which cannot be tailored to specific locations, but takes into account sensitive areas. Eversource uses only sensitive listed herbicides on the DAR website. Wetlands can be sprayed, but standing water cannot be sprayed. They will work with Town to ID & map wells and apply more sensitive herbicides to those areas. Example: Woburn substation is right next to well and they have undergone a process that is similar to what this will be. Eversource will build this information into their petition so the Town is informed of and understands the process.

Resident Question: Can the 3<sup>rd</sup> conduit on Goodman’s Hill Rd be used for this project?

Eversource Response: There is no third conduit available. All of the conduits are in use. Beverly Schultz explained that proposed newly installed underground wires would be different from what is currently in the ground. The new system consists of three 6 inch cables, each in their own separate 8-inch conduit. A 4th spare (6” cable in 8” conduit) is also installed. This is a new different technology called cross link XLPE and does not involve the use of cooling fluid. The old technology called HPFF, which had 3 conductors in one steel pipe, did require the use of cooling fluid. Goodman’s Hill currently uses HPFF.

Resident Question: If the more expensive route is chosen by EFSB, would Sudbury power rates go up?

Eversource Response: It is not correct that the entire burden would be on Sudbury rate payers. ISO approved the overhead power lines project at \$46 million; if placed underground, the cost essentially

doubles and the difference over the \$46 million is what becomes “localized.” The ISO determines what will be built and who pays for the project. Those costs are defined and it’s typical that all of Eversource’s customers in Mass are affected, but since this project would help National Grid, it’s possible they could contribute as well. Costs that are “localized” do not go to one town, but typically to a region such as Eastern Massachusetts. The tariff is approved by FERC; Eversource can only make a recommendation.

Resident Question: What will the route be?

Eversource Response: We will discuss this later in the meeting.

Resident Question: Could shielding be added to buried lines to block EMF?

Eversource Response: The way the line is designed, it doesn't need shielding and if they attempted to shield it, the shielding would push the EMF toward the homes.

Eversource then addressed issues that affect route choices. They generally pick right of ways where they could negotiate with one entity, such as the MBTA or a town. Typically, additional easements make it more difficult, adds time to process. This could make it harder to meet the in-service date. Eversource stated that any lines that are buried will not be in any resident yards, not on any private property. The lines would be within the town-controlled portion of the road or the MBTA right-of-way.

### **Reliability**

Eversource stressed the importance of reliability, stating that for 2015 their overall system reliability is the best ever, but, each year, they upgrade and strengthen their infrastructure.

### **Customer Service & Continued Project Communications**

Susan Iuliano asked about statements made by Eversource, including at the open house and in Mark Kimball’s communications to residents, that were inconsistent with Eversource statements made to the Town previously. In particular, Eversource has told residents that Eversource did not originally consider an underground MBTA option, but included it at the request of the Town.

It was clarified that, with regards to project communication, Mark Kimball is charged with outreach to businesses and residents and JoAnne O’Leary facilitates general project communications. Eversource representatives confirmed that the Town did not propose the MBTA right-of-way routes, either overhead or underground, but said that, at some point, they understood the Town would prefer the underground right-of-way option. They said that Jody always made it clear that overhead lines would be greatly opposed anywhere in town. They referred to the November 2015 meeting in Hudson with both towns present when they talked about underground and street routes. After that, Eversource (not the Town) decided they would rather go in the right-of-way underground.

Eversource then said that, before going to Siting Board, they needed to seek permission to have the same route for preferred route and optional. Eversource said they had a discussion after November with the Siting Board, based on their perception that towns did not want them on streets and preferred the right-of-way. So, they asked the Siting Board if they could put both route options on the same alignment, and the Siting Board said they would consider that request. Eversource said there is no “requirement” to provide geographically diverse options, but this has been a “practice” before the Siting Board.

Jody Kablack, Melissa Rodrigues, and Susan Iuliano addressed the January 21, 2016, meeting when Eversource announced that ISO had chosen them for the project (over National Grid) and that they would not need to provide two geographically diverse options to the Siting Board. This was the first time that the Town had heard that Eversource would limit options to the right-of-way. It was noted that in December 2015, Eversource was still emailing with Bill Place about street options.

Eversource said they believed there was a general consensus at the Hudson/Sudbury meeting, so they moved away from the roadways. They said they had to keep the overhead option because it is the cheapest.

The group discussed how to make communication better going forward. Eversource agreed that they would contact Town Manager Rodrigues, who will be reviewing Eversource responses to the public.

### **Impact on Property Value**

Beverly Schultz stated that they were surprised by the resident opposition to the underground right-of-way option. Susan Iuliano explained that it may be hard for Eversource to understand how much Sudbury values its conservation land and believes that any intrusion on it could be damaging. Open space and conservation are part of Sudbury's history and an important value here. Residents also recall the negative experience in South Sudbury where there were issues related to clearing vegetation, and many are still angry with the outcome. Coupled with recent experiences with Eversource, these factors cause people to oppose any Eversource involvement in Town conservation areas.

Susan Iuliano raised concerns about the impact on property values. It is clear from experiences residents have shared that the idea of giant towers is hurting the values of and affecting ability to sell homes in Sudbury. When this situation is minimized, people understandably react negatively. Eversource's Mark Kimball stated that he believes this impact on property value could be just perception or a self-fulfilling prophecy. Studies conducted by Eversource real estate experts have not been able to produce a rate of impact (in terms of a percentage of home value) that Eversource projects cause for a municipality. Vice-Chairman Iuliano emphasized that, studies aside, the negative impact of the Eversource transmission line project on property sales is already a reality in Sudbury.

### **Project Need & Benefits**

#### **ISO and EFSB Process**

There was discussion of the ISO process and National Grid's (NGrid) competing project. Both Eversource and NGrid submitted a set of projects. Eversource said both ISO submissions are available online. The NGrid project includes work on at least 3 substations and upgrading some lines. They have recently updated their project set.

Eversource updated costs which stayed at \$44-46 million for overhead. The NGrid project was approximately \$67 million, when initially submitted, but has reportedly grown more expensive.

All numbers are currently being refined. NGrid numbers do not include real estate costs and they may need to obtain rights to widen a right-of-way.

#### Demonstrated Need

Eversource said this project is unique because it is part of the *Greater Boston Solution*. The Greater Boston Solution is set of 40 projects, including work completed and being done on the Sudbury substation, which began in 2008. Eversource must show a demonstrated need (in this case, improved

reliability) to the Siting Board. It is important to understand that this project is different because the need was founded and defined for Eversource by ISO. It was noted that while this project will *not* benefit Sudbury, the overall Greater Boston Solution *will* increase reliability in Sudbury.

#### Cost

Eversource explained that ISO looks *only* at dollar amounts when determining which project will move forward. The NGrid project was originally \$67M, but has since come in with much higher numbers.

#### Evaluating Criteria

For the EFSB process, Eversource built the petition around the Demonstrated Need, and have gone in with a vision of a solution to meet that need. Eversource has used consistent ranking criteria in all its projects except in Sudbury Hudson because there are above ground lines, so they added a visual ranking.

Clarification was requested on whether Sudbury is the only overhead project in the entire *Greater Boston Solution* of 40 projects. Eversource stated that there are a handful of overhead projects in the *Greater Boston Solution*, specifically Merrimack, Needham and Walpole, but that most of the projects are buried and/or located in a right-of-way.

Sudbury asked about the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) filing. Eversource said that they would file MEPA concurrently with the petition, and will file an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Eversource said the transmission line project “became a project” in January of 2015, when ISO identified it as a project to go to the EFSB. There was discussion of whether this happened in January of 2015 or in January of 2016, as the Town had previously been informed. Eversource said that ISO had made the decision in January 2015. Sudbury representatives said that Eversource had previously informed the Town that the decision was made in January of 2016.

Jody Kablack stated that the Town was told that the project was in a pool with National Grid, and later, in January 2016, Eversource said they were picked over National Grid. Eversource said that if the project changes and goes underground, it will need to go back before the ISO for re-approval. That’s why the NGrid project is not considered off the table. ISO approved the Eversource overhead project to go forward. Susan Iuliano said this is inconsistent with the information provided to the Town in January of 2016.

Eversource said that the overhead project is “grandfathered” from subsequently adopted Federal Energy Regulatory Committee (FERC) 1000 requirements, which has introduced stricter requirements, including increased competition, into the utility planning process. If Eversource proposes a preferred route underground, the project will no longer be grandfathered and must go back before the ISO. Thus, they must include the overhead as the preferred project in order to avoid repeating the ISO process.

National Grid will continue to update their costs. Eversource has received approval for \$8 million to buy an easement from the MBTA for this project. NGrid had not yet provided their real estate cost needs.

Jody Kablack requested clarification on the previously submitted Mass Central Rail Trail MEPA filing made by DCR, which sought approval for rail trail construction on the same route that Eversource is now proposing for their transmission line project. She asked if the filing had been paid for by DCR or

Eversource, since it is a notable coincidence that Eversource decided to use the same route for their project as that in DCR's MEPA filing. Eversource stated that they did not pay for the DCR MEPA filing, but DCR is allowing Eversource use their Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) for mapping information.

### **EFSB Process**

- Adjudicatory process
- No regulatory perimeters in place
- No guidelines of how projects are presented or scored

### Petition

The EFSB process begins when a petition is filed. Eversource gave an outline of their petition for the transmission line project.

### Section 1: Project Overview

#### Section 2: Prove Need

The need for their petition will be based on the *Greater Boston Solution*. The need area includes Marlborough, Northborough, parts of Southborough and Hudson. Eversource said that ISO approved the need and that they would provide the Town with the need statement used before the ISO.

#### Section 3: Project Alternatives

Eversource must address non-transmission alternatives, such as distributed generation, energy efficiency, and use of solar and wind generation options. They must determine whether the need could be met locally. Eversource explained that, with this project, the megawatt needs is so great that it cannot be met locally.

Additionally, Eversource will address three criteria to prove that the best solution to meet the above need is indeed a 115kv transmission line from Sudbury to Hudson:

1. Environmental Impacts (both natural and social)
2. Cost
3. Reliability

#### Section 4: Routing Analysis

Eversource must look at all options to get back and forth from Hudson to Sudbury. They established routing objectives and selection guidelines to develop potentially feasible routes. More length in a route is considered to have more impacts and more costs than a shorter one. Eversource eliminates routes with obvious or "fatal" flaws, and they do not score those routes. The routes are scored and ranked by applying detailed Environmental, Constructability, community impact and conceptual cost estimate criteria.

Not all of the criteria are weighted equally. Eversource typically uses a 1-3 scale for rating criteria. Based on the community impact for this project, they decided to use a 1-5 range, and they adjusted the weighting based on community concerns. The higher number means greater the importance to the community, and more weight is given to the score in that category. They are still reevaluating the criteria and how each item is scored. The methodology for arriving at each number includes weighing gross numbers obtained for each category as a ratio.

## 11 Environmental Impact Criteria

1. Residential Land Use: **5** (initially scored as 3). This refers to immediate abutters and counts the number of housing units affected, based on tax records. It reflects construction and long term maintenance, but does not include property values.
2. Commercial or Industrial Land Uses: **4** (initially scored as 3). This reflects the number of individual business units in affected buildings.
3. Sensitive Receptors: **5** (initially scored as 5). These include day cares, schools and hospitals.
4. Cultural (Historical and Archeological) Resources: **2** (initially scored as 1). This is reviewed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and GIS is used for additional local research, including historic districts and archeological sites.
5. Visual Impacts: **1** for underground option; above-ground option is still being evaluated. This category was added because the project is now above-ground. It will consider how landscape will be affected, including vistas and trees, and score the route in segments.
6. Potential for Traffic Congestion: **3** (initially scored as 3): This is evaluated by a traffic planner, or, if using a state route, then MassDOT tracks the information annually. Roads are divided into segments, each segment is analyzed, then the average is scored. Factors such as lane width and on-street parking are considered.
7. Impacts to Public Shade Trees: This category was eliminated for low weighing, as it generally applies to cities that have fewer trees; such trees have significant impact on shade in roads and may also have historic significance. Jody Kablack asked that this category be reinstated as important trees will be impacted with the proposed route. Beverly Schultz agreed.
8. Amount of Tree Clearing: **5** (initially scored as 3): This measures the total acreage of trees removed.
9. Impacts to Wetland Resource Areas: **3** (initially scored as 1): This is measured as linear feet across or along wetlands. It includes locally regulated areas as well Wetland Protection Act areas. This includes areas required to file NOI, in cases where overhead poles could clear wetlands.
10. Impacts of Protected Habitats: **3** (initially scored as 2). This is based on the National Heritage Map and includes estimated and priority habitats. It is measured in either linear distance or square footage. Eversource is trying to work out with the MBTA to determine where precisely the line will be in the proposed corridor.
11. Potential to Encounter Subsurface Contamination: **1** (initially scored as 1). This reflects MassDEP/MCP sites, specifically, what has been cleaned up, what remains active or closed and what, if any, mitigation measures are in place.

Eversource explained that all of these criteria are currently being reevaluated and are open to input. It was also said that as the petition is in flux, information is difficult to share. Open Water Crossings is being considered as an additional criterion after the open house, based on comments from attendees, but has not yet been scored.

## Ease of Construction Criteria

1. Length of Route: This is no longer being considered, though it is still a factor in the Cost criteria.
2. Existing Road Width: This is no longer being considered, though it is still a factor in the Cost criteria.
3. Number of Trenchless Crossings That May Be Required: **3**
4. Existing Utility Density: **3**. It is a rule of thumb that the higher this number is, the longer the project will take to complete.
5. Number of Hard Angles in The Route: **1**. This is a consideration as any turns in the route that are greater than 30 degrees result in the need for more manholes and more excavation.

Melissa Rodrigues said that she is glad to be having this conversation because, in the past, the Town was told that this information would be received only when Eversource filed the petition. She completely understands Town staffs' frustration because she shares those frustrations. Sudbury representatives said that time was needed beyond today to comment on scoring. After several demands, Eversource agreed to send Jody the scoring spreadsheet. Eversource reiterated that they are still working on scoring the Town is invited to provide input over the next couple of weeks.

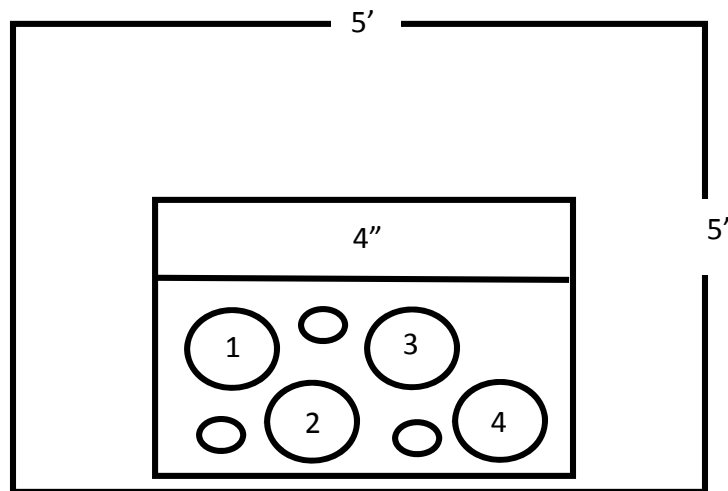
### Underground Facilities

Beverly Schultz provided details and an illustration of a Duct Bank Excavation.

5 ft. X 5 ft. underground path

- 3 large conduits and 1 spare large conduit
- 3 small pipes

10 ft. X 12 ft. X 30 ft. manhole cover/splice box every 1,800 feet or less



Discussion of the Need Statement continued as Eversource stated that certain damage could cause a voltage collapse on the network (meaning that everything would go dark), affecting 80,000 customers in Shrewsbury, Berlin, Stow, Southborough, Northborough, Hudson and Marlborough.

### Route Analysis & Selection Process

Eversource focused on 3 routes that were scored and advanced in draft. DPW Director Bill Place is not in full agreement about the route selection.

Route Option 1: Leading out of the station, down Route 20, turning north on Union Avenue, crossing Old Lancaster Road (Bill Place is concerned about the number of utilities currently in place on Old Lancaster Road), then up to Hudson Road. This is currently the best rated route. It contains 16 culverts and is approximately 10.9 miles long.

Route Option 2: Route 20 to Horse Pond Road, across Pratt's Mill Road to Dutton Road to Hudson Road

Route Option 3: Concord Road

Other Considerations:



- Town Center eliminated as route option as it has been very recently paved and is also currently crowded with utilities.
- Goodman's Hill Road was eliminated as there is no room to run additional lines there.
- Rte. 27 was eliminated as it was considered to be too long
- Jody Kablack suggested that no corridors were shown and that corridors are usually the preferred way. It was explained that the Gas Transmission corridor was eliminated as it was considered too long. The existing transmission lines route was also eliminated for length (approximately 70 miles).
- Jody K. suggested that the BFRT to Hudson be considered
- Bill P. suggested that Route 20 to Wayside Inn Road be considered
- Jody suggested Route 20 all the way to Marlborough. This seems like an optimal option as it would take the project along a state road to another town that would actually benefit from the project.
- Susan Iuliano asked if there could be any cost benefits that this project could have on the Town's interest in having a sewer on Route 20. Eversource said that they cannot share trenches and that they would be on opposite sides of the road. It usually causes disruption on both sides and is not beneficial to either project.
- Susan also asked how reliability of over-head versus underground lines is assessed. Beverly Schultz responded that they are even from a reliability perspective as over-head lines are more susceptible to storm damage while underground lines take longer to repair.
- Eversource said that Route 20 to Marlborough had been eliminated due to length and construction traffic, but it was agreed to take a closer look at Route 20.
- Melissa Rodrigues said that residents would prefer this project to be as far outside of local roads as possible. Business have not been as vocal about any concerns they may have about the project.
- Susan Iuliano emphasized the importance of looking at this project in the long term since any inconvenience from construction is temporary, but power lines are permanent.

### **Right-of-Way Clearing**

Overhead: 82 ft. of overhead would need to be cleared. Eversource would ask abutters to cut some trees, but not require that they do this, with the exception of "danger trees" which could fall on a line and knock it out.

Underground: About 30 feet would be needed on the ground. The number is approximate due to the need to put in manholes, varying topography and other factors. Half of the clearing would be what is needed for the access road.

### **MBTA Status**

MBTA maintains Right of Reverter (taking back the land for their use), thus the transmission line could not be in the center of the route, it would have to be beside access road. They are asking MBTA to reconsider their directorate (three feet outside the edge, but that was for a pipeline carrying liquid). For overhead, placement is 13.5 feet off the center of the rail. The lease is not finalized with MBTA- they are looking to enter into an option soon, but Eversource will not procure the land until they have EFSB approval (approximated to be 1.5 years after they file).

Beverly Schultz reiterate that Eversource will not score all the possible routes- some are eliminated when they are too complicated/problematic. She also stated that Sudbury's current trench requirements (per bylaws) would be complied with for this project.

### Next Steps

Eversource said that they plan to file the petition by end of June. They assume, but do not guarantee, the addition of a roadway option. This possibility will be reviewed by executives. The overhead option will continue to be PREFERRED. The rough sense of cost for road options were not done, but were considered the most expensive options. Eversource will file only 2 options with EFSB as any more would be costly and complicate the process. Furthermore, it is likely that the second option they offer will be underground on the ROW, as no second viable above ground option has been identified in Sudbury. Ultimately the decision of where the line will go rests with the Siting Board.

Once the petition is received by EFSB, a public hearing will be scheduled for 6 weeks after receipt. Abutters within 300 feet of the project will be notified. Intervenors are allowed at this stage. Typically, a decision from the board takes 6 months.

Susan Iuliano requested that the group present at today's meeting could meet again prior to the June filing. Beverly Schultz agreed.