

# Protect Sudbury – No Power Lines Overview

Sudbury Library  
March 1, 2016  
Jim Gish, Ray Phillips

# *Overview of the project*

- What's being proposed
- The purpose
- The players
- Routes considered
- Impact on Sudbury & Hudson
- Our proposed strategy

## *The Eversource Proposal*

- Construct a 115kv transmission line from the Sudbury substation on Rt 20 to the Hudson substation (8.9 miles total, 4.3 miles in Sudbury)
- The route coincides with the MBTA right-of-way
- Above-ground line and towers (75-105 feet tall)
- Clearcut of 82 feet
  - Including a 12 foot gravel service/access road
  - (does not include rebuilding of bridges along the way)

## *Alternate route*

- At the request of the Town, they also have prepared an alternate plan
  - Same route
  - Buried cable
  - 32 foot clearcut
  - Includes the 12 foot gravel service road
  - Does not rebuild bridges

## *Some additional notes*

- MBTA requires that the ability to restore the train be maintained
  - The access road is built where the tracks are now
  - Nothing is under the access road
- The clearing is wide to:
  - Allow for room to service the towers, wires
  - Presumably to have a wider fall-area for the towers

## *The Purpose*

- To improve the reliability of the Hudson electric supply
  - Hudson currently has two lines on the same tower/substation
  - This would provide additional redundancy
- Note: this does not benefit Sudbury electric supply or reliability

## *How did this come to be?*

- This is part of a long-term reliability project for the regional (and national) electrical grid.
- Much of this evolved over the past 50 years, since the Northeast Blackout of 1965 which impacted much of Ontario, New England and New York
  - Over 30 million people and 80,000 square miles were left without electricity for up to 13 hours.

## *The Main Players*

- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- ISO New England Inc. (ISO-NE)
- Eversource
- Mass. Energy Facilities Siting Board



## *ISO New England Inc. (ISO-NE)*

- ISO-NE is an independent, non-profit, Regional Transmission Organization (RTO)
- Serves CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT
- ISO-NE oversees operation of NE electric power system and transmission lines of member utilities
- 400 members, including Eversource and National Grid
- Ensuring reliability of generation and transmission

## *Eversource*

- Working in conjunction with NationalGrid to respond to the ISO-NE plan to implement the reliability projects
- This plan has been in the works since about 2008
- Eversource has responded by evaluating multiple routes and selecting what they believe is *their* best option.
- They will submit their proposal to the MA Energy Facilities Siting Board for a siting decision.

## *MA Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB)*

- Independent State Review Board within Mass Dept. of Public Utilities (DPU)
- Charter: To ensure that proposed project provides “reliable energy supply for Commonwealth with a minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost”

## ***EFSB (Cont.)***

- Transmission Line Criteria
  - Demonstrate the need and cost
  - Evaluate alternate routes
  - Determine if consistent with current health, environmental protection and resources use and development policies
- Nature of Proposal by Utility Company
  - Typically looks for local and state zoning exemption

## ***EFSB Review Process***

- Procedural Phase
  - Public Notice
  - Public Comment Hearing and Site Visit
  - Seeking the Right to Take Part in a Proceeding
- Intervene as a party
- Participate as a Limited Participant

## *EFSB Review Process(2)*

- Evidentiary Phase
  - Applicant
  - Intervenors
  - Pre-Filed Testimony
  - Discovery
  - Evidentiary Hearings

## ***EFSB Review Process(3)***

- Decision Phase
  - Briefs
  - Tentative Decision
  - Comment Period
  - Siting Board Meeting
  - Final Decision of the Siting Board

# *Becoming a Party of Limited Participant*

- Petition
- Intervene as a Party “Intervenors”
- Must demonstrate that you are “substantially and specifically affected by the proceeding.”
- Limited Participant
- Interest can be general in nature
- Rights of Intervenor are much more substantial
- Intervenors can be Town, Individual or Groups
- Requires legal representation



## *The Routes considered*

- Eversource said they worked with environmental consultant, VHB Inc. to establish route selection guidelines to identify “all potentially feasible” routes, eliminate ones with “obvious flaws” and rank the rest.
- They say they met with the Town in Nov. 2015 and the Town asked for an underground MBTA ROW route.
- 8 candidate routes selected for scoring, however there were only 3 variants through the Sudbury portion

## *The Sudbury Routes considered*

- All starting at the Sudbury substation (behind Buddy Dog)
- *Rt 20 to the MBTA ROW (brushes through tip of Marlborough, through Hudson, tiny corner of Stow and back into Hudson)*
- Rt 20 to Union Ave to Old Lancaster Rd to Hudson Rd (then through Stow and into Hudson)
- Rt 20 to Horse Pond Rd to Pratts Mill Rd to Dutton to Hudson Rd (then through Stow and into Hudson)

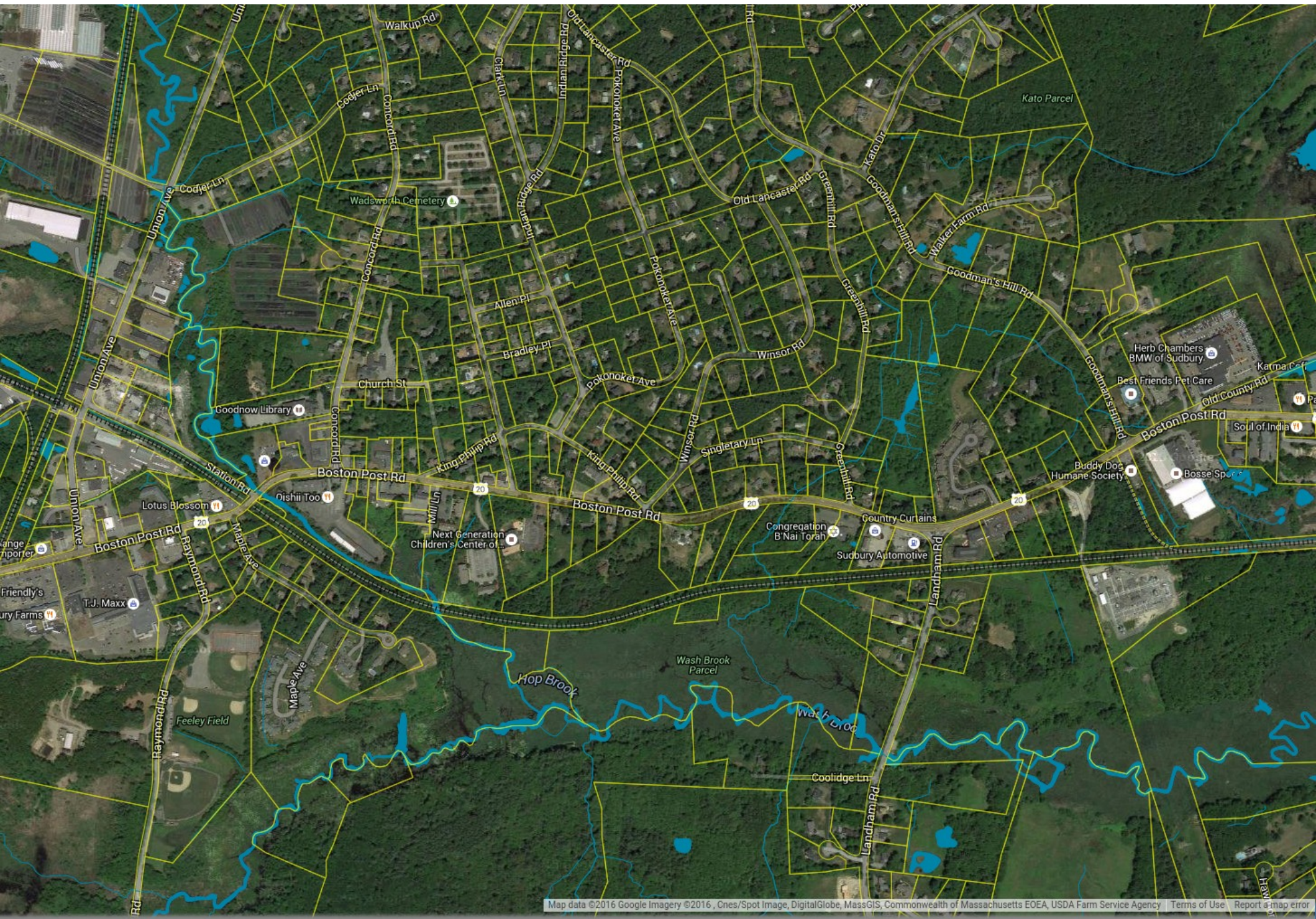
# *Impacts on Sudbury & Hudson*

- Look at GIS overlay maps:

[http://www.mapsonline.net/peopleforms/mo4/index.php?site\\_id=804](http://www.mapsonline.net/peopleforms/mo4/index.php?site_id=804)

- Will destroy the natural beauty of our town
  - clear cutting an 82 Ft wide gash through our neighborhoods and forests including conservation land, wetlands, and multiple types of wildlife habitat.
- Will reduce property values of abutting homes and adjoining neighborhoods
  - potentially costing the taxpayers millions of dollars in lost tax revenue.
- Destroy a portion of our region's and our country's rich railroad history dating back to 1869
  - by stripping the tracks and unique infrastructure to “sanitize” the power line corridor.
- Has potentially harmful health effects on adults, children and animals.



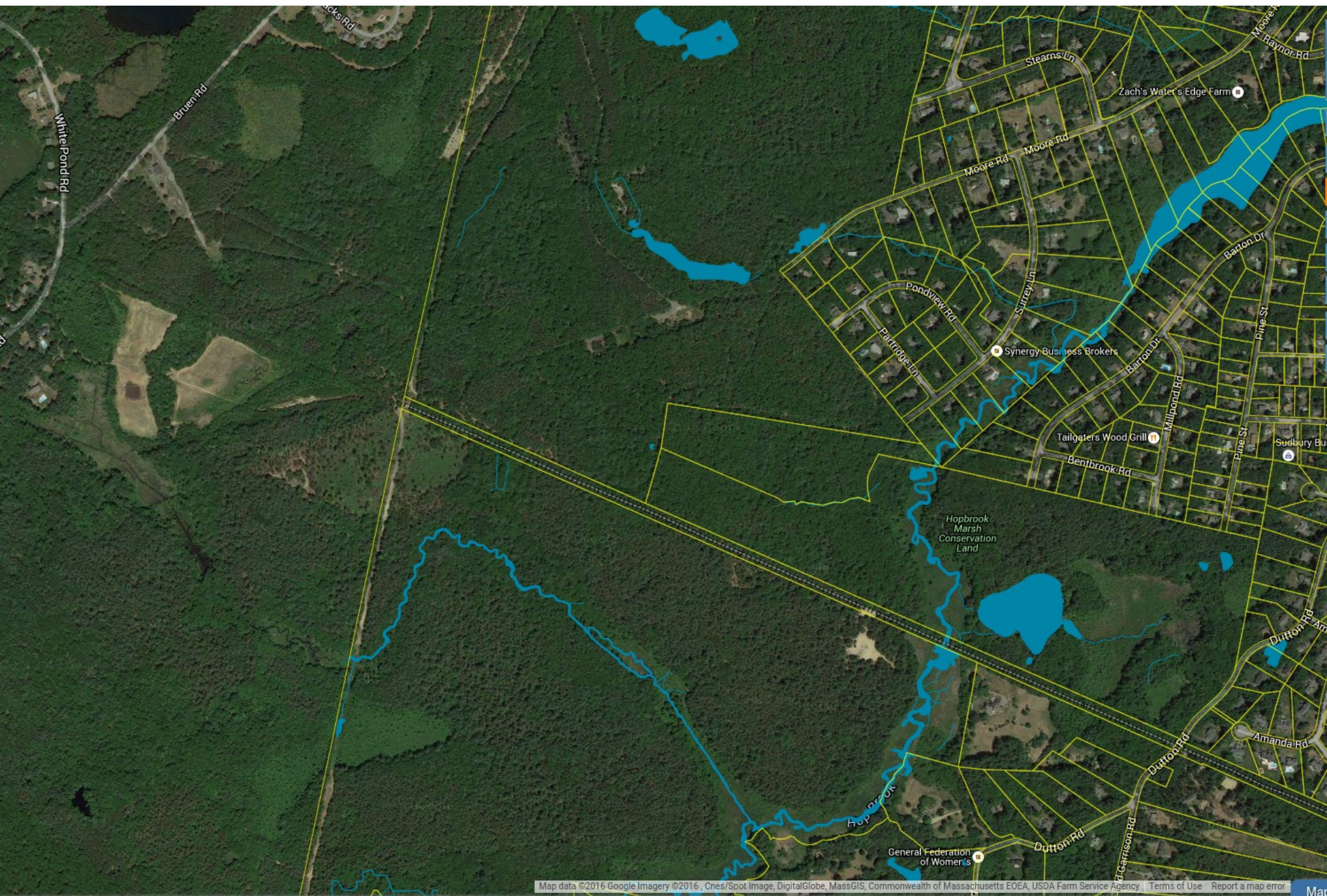


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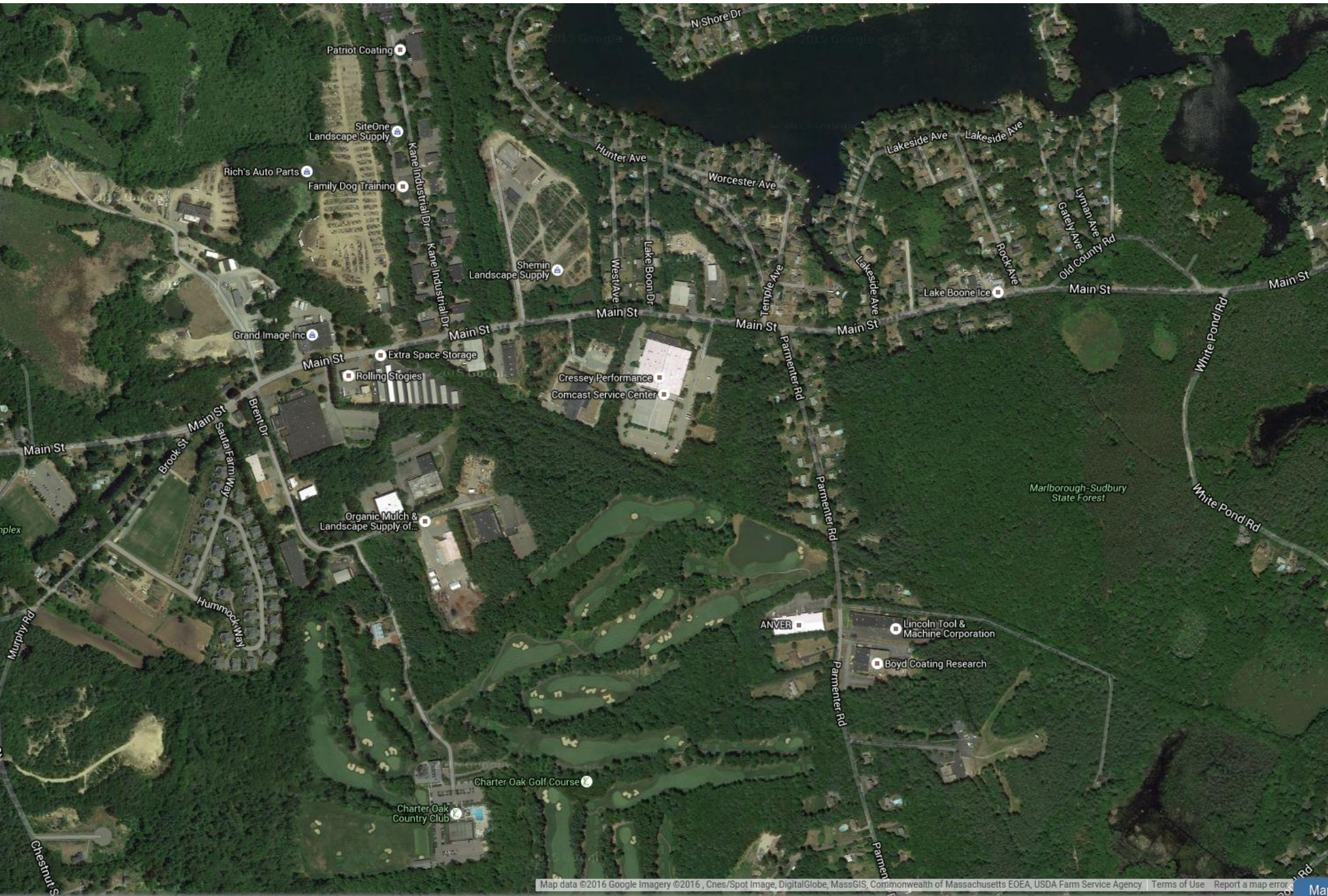
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500 m  
1000 ft

State Plane, NAD  
665760, 296323





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500 m  
1000 ft

State Plane, NAD83  
658095, 296610



# Memorial Forest trail

(photo courtesy of Jan Hardenbergh)





Trail with power poles  
(but the trees would be gone, too!)



# *Timeline for Sudbury-Hudson Powerline Project*

March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Group Strategy Meeting
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Sudbury Board of Selectmen Meeting
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Eversource Open House – Hudson
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Eversource Open House – Sudbury
April 2016	Eversource files with Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB)
~ June 2016	EFSB conducts local hearing(s) to solicit community input
2017	EFSB Decision
2017	Construction Begins
2019	Power Line In Service

## *Strategy – initial*

- To pursue an alternate underground route that follows the existing roadways in Sudbury by directing the Board of Selectman to convince Eversource to submit a proposal that does not include the MBTA ROW.

# *Advantages of this Strategy*

- Influences which proposal is submitted to the Siting Board instead of forcing us to defend against those that are - which is a huge uphill battle
- Gets the Board of Selectman working on our side to support what we want rather than pursuing what they think we want or need
- Will not decimate our conservation lands
- Will not erode our property values
- Will not cause any additional environmental destruction