FAQ

What is the Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project?
Eversource is proposing to construct a new 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line between Sudbury and Hudson, Mass. The new line would run between the Eversource substation in Sudbury, near Buddy Dog on route 20, and the Hudson Light and Power substation in Hudson, passing through our neighborhoods, our business district, and conservation lands of Sudbury, Marlborough, Stow, and Hudson. Here is a graphic of the proposed route.

The proposed project would consist of 8.9 miles of both overhead and underground line. The 7.6-mile overhead portion would be located within an existing Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) railroad bed that runs through Historic Districts, Sudbury neighborhoods as well Conservation areas. The underground portion is proposed for Hudson only.

What does the project actually involve and what will it look like?
The above ground portion will be built on monopoles 75’ to 105’ tall.
Eversource plans to clear-cut an 82 foot wide swath along the rail bed to accommodate the poles, their anchors, and the range of swing in the wires in windy situations. Trees and everything else in the path will be cleared. (Note: 82 feet wide is the length of a blue whale, or as wide as the Massachusetts Turnpike.) The poles will be anchored in concrete into the ground.

The clear-cut affords room for the height of the poles and the accompanying swing of the wires in windy weather. The clear cut would look something like this, an Eversource right of way in Milford, MA.

Part of the ongoing maintenance of the 82 foot wide clear-cut means regular mowing, trimming and applications of herbicides in order to control (kill) the vegetation below and around the poles, so Eversource technicians can maintain
and repair the line. These chemical applications are known to be harmful to humans, wildlife, and of course vegetation.

**Is there an alternative proposed?**

Yes, The Noticed Variation Design route uses the same route as the Preferred Route above, except the route will be underground in the MBTA owned Right-of-Way.

Eversource also considered several below grade road routes. These are shown on the image below as dotted or dashed lines.

These were rejected for a variety of reasons, particularly cost. As of late March 2016, Eversource has told Hudson that it is reconsidering these routes.

There are currently two 115Kv lines already under Sudbury roads. They run from the Sudbury sub-station south of Route 20, along Goodman's Hill Road to Concord Road through the Town Center, down Morse Road. Mossman Road,
across Rte. 117, and down Powder Mill Road to the Maynard sub-station on Old Sudbury Rd.

**Are there solutions that do NOT involve the Sudbury-Hudson grid connection?**

The short answer is YES! An alternate solution was included in the ISO-NE report that involves upgrading the existing Hudson grid connection as an alternative. The initial costing of this solution was $60 million. The initial costing of the Sudbury-Hudson power line was $41 million. Since the Sudbury-Hudson line was significantly less expensive and provided a redundant path to Hudson, that option was selected.

**On what date is Eversource submitting to the Siting Board, and when will we know what their submission contains?**

They have not provided a firm date. We can only assume that they would submit after they have done all of their presentations to each of the four towns. Currently, they are on the calendar to present in Sudbury October 26th.

**Is there any realistic possibility that they will pull out of the Sudbury project altogether?**

We don’t think that it’s likely that they will pull the project prior to going before the Siting Board. The Siting Board might end up pushing this back to ISO New England by denying their petition.

**What steps can Protect Sudbury take once the submission to the Siting Board takes place?**

As an Intervenor, Protect Sudbury may:

- Issue information requests and receive responses
- Present written testimony and witnesses
- Cross-examine witnesses
- File a brief
- Review and comment on the Tentative Decision
- Appeal a final decision

Here is the link to the ESFB handbook: [http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dpu/siting/handbook.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dpu/siting/handbook.pdf)
Are the projected costs of the four Eversource route options still as reported in the Globe article of September 1?


Neither Protect Sudbury nor the Town have been made aware of any changes to Eversource’s proposed routes. It is unlikely we will hear about any until the first Eversource presentation in Hudson on October 17th. Protect Sudbury will try to meet with Eversource prior to that date and perhaps could affect the under street siting and associated cost.

Who Pays for Transmission Lines?

According to Eversource FAQ, "...For projects deemed to be of regional benefit, such as the Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project, the cost of the new transmission facilities are shared by all electric consumers in New England based on the level of energy consumed ("load share")..." Whatever happens, overhead, underground, in Sudbury or somewhere else in New England, if a utility builds new transmission lines, it's us, the consumer who pays.

If we succeed in fighting the overhead lines, what are the cost implications for us as consumers?

According to Eversource FAQ: "...Where lines can be constructed overhead but are put underground instead, there is a high likelihood that most, if not all, of the incremental costs of the underground line construction would be charged to local consumers." That means that any option besides the cheapest is chosen, regardless of the reason – for example, unacceptable impact on the local economy, community, environment, and health – the cost is “localized.”

We have not been able to determine definitively how localized cost is determined. The utility can propose any solution that they want, but it’s ultimately up to ISO New England and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission - FERC. Most costs are either allocated to the entire state (as opposed to the New England Region) or to the particular utilities’ customers within that state. ISO makes an accounting determination and recommendation to FERC; FERC generally goes along with ISO determination. If contested, FERC can open an investigation. After an ISO solution study is issued, that could change through the
stakeholder process. Communities have the ability to provide their input and help shape the solution – the EFSB looks broadly at projects to see what other methods could be reviewed or alternative routes there may be for a transmission line. EFSB looks at project alternatives. Communities could provide a competing non-transmission alternative proposal in their intervention.

What does the potential for a localized cost scenario mean for Protect Sudbury?

It's vital to keeping questioning the validity of Eversource's proposed all-overhead ROW route. The cheapest route filed with the EFSB sets the floor on cost and determines what incremental cost is “localized.” However this is determined, it would mean that Sudbury residents would end up paying some of the extra through the transmission charges on their electricity bills. As the proposal stands at the moment, our choices are both bleak:

- accept the lowest cost, most damaging option – overhead lines along the MBTA right of way, through our business district, people's back yards, and conservation land

- demand a more acceptable option, but incur the extra cost calculated on the current low-ball bid of $37 million (although we won’t know exactly how that cost will be allocated until after the filing with the EFSB– see If we succeed in fighting the overhead lines, does that have any other implications for us as consumers?)

Other route options in Eversource's latest routing design currently are between $75 and $113 million.

What is involved in constructing a below grade (i.e. underground) 115KV line?

Eversource has not provided any details on their preferred below grade construction technique for this proposed Sudbury-Hudson line. However, as a general rule, Eversource uses ‘cut and cover’ construction techniques. This involves constructing a 5’ wide trench along the right of way, installing multiple conduits to carry transmission lines and associated materials, possibly encasing the conduits in concrete, and then covering the installation. In some cases,
Eversource will repave any of the impacted roads when the installation is below a road right of way.

**Do we or the town get to vote on whether to accept the Eversource Proposal?**

NO!

**How will the Eversource project affect real estate values in Sudbury?**

How much it affects your house value depends if you are a direct abutter, in view of the towers, live in an impacted neighborhood, or live in an adjacent neighborhood.

Based upon extensive research and local data on property value impacts of overhead transmission lines, direct abutters can expect: a 10-30% drop in home value. Similarly, properties that are in view of the towers can expect a 6% to 20% drop in home value.

Our research shows that higher-end homes in proximity to overhead transmission lines will experience the greatest declines in property value at the upper end of the estimated ranges.

Abutting properties can expect significantly longer time on the market. And the buyer pool for homes affected by power lines would decrease by about 50% or more.

Property values in neighborhoods impacted by the transmission lines or adjacent neighborhoods will decline. We estimate this will be between 1% and 5%, depending on how close your home is to the power lines.

In terms of tax abatement, only direct abutters, not those simply in view of the towers, can expect a tax abatement (probably 15% in land value only). Non-abutters may experience drop in resale value, but don’t have the tax abatement.

The way the property impact analysis is currently set, we show this will impact Sudbury property values from between $20 million to $64 million, depending on which property impact assumptions you employ. Similarly, it will impact properties along the right of way (including Wayland, Stow, Marlborough, and Hudson from $36 million to $118 million). See infographics and more detail here: [http://www.protectsudbury.org/blog/hearth-and-home/](http://www.protectsudbury.org/blog/hearth-and-home/)

**How can I help with the campaign against Eversource?**

Thanks for asking! You can help by educating, advocating, and fundraising!
Educate: Some of our community still has yet to understand the impact of this project, and you can help spread the word that this is a town wide issue. The fundamental look and feel of the town and this community will change to a more industrial character with fewer green spaces and more wires. Hold a meeting at your church, school, home, book club, tennis league, card club, and let your community know what is coming down the 82 foot wide pike. We provide you with materials and a speaker - check the “Learn More” section of our website. [http://www.protectsudbury.org/learn-more/](http://www.protectsudbury.org/learn-more/)

Advocate: Write and call our elected officials to let them know how you feel about this proposal. We have lists of State and Local officials as well as Eversource contacts: [http://www.protectsudbury.org/letter-writing-campaign](http://www.protectsudbury.org/letter-writing-campaign). You can also write a letter to the editor of the papers that cover our area.

Contact Eversource and let them know you oppose the project: JoAnne O’Leary, Eversource Community Relations Representative (508)-305-6898 Joanne.OLeary@eversource.com

Fundraise: Protect Sudbury has retained Burns & Levinson to represent our interests and funds are needed to mitigate legal costs. Donate online or, send a check to:

Protect Sudbury, Inc., 79 Robert Best Road Sudbury, MA 01776

*Protect Sudbury, Inc. is a section 501(c)(4) tax exempt corporation. For more information on our gift policies please go to: [http://www.protectsudbury.org/donation-policy](http://www.protectsudbury.org/donation-policy)*

Where can I get flyers and handouts to give to friends and neighbors?

We have flyers for printing out available on our website: [http://www.protectsudbury.org/flyers](http://www.protectsudbury.org/flyers)

What do Street Captains do?

Street captains help spread the word to their neighborhoods about the Eversource proposal and encourage people to get involved. Street captains organize teams to go door to door with informative flyers (a great volunteer project for high school students for which they can receive community service hours). Street Captains are the direct contacts for Protect Sudbury working group members. Although totally optional, many street captains are also hosting neighborhood open houses, so that residents may have their questions answered directly by Protect Sudbury Board members. Please email us
at streetcaptains@protectsudbury.org and we will send you helpful info to get you started! Our Street Captain Coordinators are Chris and Bill Densel and they’d love to hear from you.

**What are the open houses I’ve heard about?**
Street Captains invite neighbors to open houses to learn more about how the proposed Eversource transmission line project along the MBTA rail bed will affect each of us. A top local realtor is present at each open house to speak on the impact this project, if passed, will impact our real estate/property values. This is a great opportunity to ask any questions you may have about this important issue affecting all of us. If you are interested in learning more, please contact streetcaptains@protectsudbury.org to find out when one is being held in your neighborhood.

**What impact will Eversource’s proposal have on the town?**
The project as proposed will:

- cut through or along side three historic districts of the town including the King Philip Historic District, Wayside Inn Historic District, and the George Pitts Tavern Historic District
- cause irreparable damage to our residential neighborhoods
- lower property values
- increase our health risks
- harm conservation land and the protected species that live there
- cut through the heart of an important and unfragmented forest in Massachusetts, and a local beloved recreation area

**How do I get a yard sign?**

**What business areas and neighborhoods will the project impact?**
The line in Sudbury will run as follows: https://www.google.com/maps/@42.3873646,-71.5232589,15.05z/data=!4m2!6m1!1szdpmuCHCDyFg.kRx-5ZKYiSSg
The transmission lines would run from the Eversource substation south of Route 20 behind Buddy Dog, along the railroad right of way behind Mill Village and along Maple Ave, crossing Route 20 to Station Road at Lotus Blossom and down Station Road to cross Union Ave.
It then continues on the railroad right of way past the back of Cavicchio's Greenhouses through the back of Chiswick Park, behind Trailside Circle, Bridle Path, across Horsepond Road, parallel to Jarman and Stonebrook Roads, across Peakham Road, parallel to Robert Best, Austin, and Bulkley, and Amanda Roads, and across Dutton Road just north of Old Garrison Road and into the conservation land.

**What conservation areas does it run through?**

Hop Brook Marsh Conservation Land, Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, **Sudbury Valley Trustees Memorial Forest**, and Marlborough State Forest. These lands are all one parcel, as described by Sudbury Valley Trustees: "Straddling the border of Sudbury and Marlborough, lies 615 acres of public and private open space dedicated primarily to conservation. This includes the
General Federation’s Memorial Forest and Wildlife Sanctuary, two tracts of Marlborough State Forest, and conservation lands owned by Town of Sudbury and City of Marlborough. Its wetlands and clear streams, mosaic of oak and pine forests, and undulating terrain combine to provide habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife. Our Memorial Forest Nature Sightings page highlights some of this wildlife, featuring some great photos and videos. The extensive and varied trail system of old woods roads makes it accessible to walkers and nature watchers with little impact to the resources. As development continues to urbanize the remaining open space in Sudbury and Marlborough and neighboring towns of Hudson and Stow, this natural area only increases in local and regional significance.

Eversource plans to create a gravel access road for their utility trucks to run in conservation areas, which compounds the damage this project will do in conservation lands. Sudbury Valley Trustees currently places limitations on bicycles and ATVs in Memorial Forest; horses, bicycles, dogs and motorized
vehicles are not allowed in Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge. With this plan Eversource will have right to drive their trucks through our conservation land and neighborhoods to maintain the power lines.

What other volunteer skills do you need?
Thanks for asking. Protect Sudbury is an all volunteer effort. We need all sorts of skills from fundraising for our legal fund to spreading the word, and everything in between. See our help wanted page for more specific details (http://www.protectsudbury.org/help-wanted) and contact us if you’d like to help volunteers@protectsudbury.org
This is a grass roots effort – if you have an idea, let us know, or just run with it. We love ideas, but we love action even more!

What Historic Districts does it run through?
The project will cut through or along side three historic districts of the town including the King Philip Historic District, Wayside Inn Historic District, and the George Pitts Tavern Historic District.
GEORGE PITTS TAVERN HISTORIC DISTRICT
ADOPTED APRIL 9, 2008
(ARTICLE 37 OF THE 2008 SUDBURY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING)
How do I contact my elected representatives?

Contact details for local, state, and federal representatives can be found here:

http://www.protectsudbury.org/letter-writing-campaign

When you get a good response, don’t forget to thank them!

How do I contact Eversource?

Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Line Project – Project Manager
Bev Schultz, 781-441-8345, Beverly.Schultz@Eversource.com

Community Relations Specialist (Municipalities)
JoAnne O’Leary, 508-305-6898, Joanne.OLEary@Eversource.com

Project Outreach Specialist (business/residential)
Mark Kimball, 860-728-4663, Mark.Kimball@Eversource.com

What position have our local commissions, officials, and environmental groups taken on the Eversource proposal?
See [links](http://www.protectsudbury.org/official-support/) here for letters of support and positions statements here: http://www.protectsudbury.org/official-support/

Official statements and letters include the Town Manager, Sudbury Board of Selectmen, the Sudbury Historical Society, Sudbury Historic Districts Commission, the Conservation Commission, our elected state and federal representatives, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and Mass. Audubon.

It’s important to realize that although official support is an essential part of the fight to stop Eversource, it doesn’t de facto mean this project will not go forward. These commissions don’t get a final say or even a vote.

**How do I donate to Protect Sudbury’s legal fund?**

You can donate by check, paypal or credit card.

To donate by check, please mail a check to:

Protect Sudbury, Inc., 79 Robert Best Road, Sudbury, MA 01776

To donate by paypal or credit card, click here: [http://www.protectsudbury.org/donate/](http://www.protectsudbury.org/donate/)

**Why does Protect Sudbury need its own lawyer if the town has one?**

Legal representation provides us a 'place at the table’ and the ability to direct and lead all legal efforts in a manner that is consistent with the organization’s overall goals. Having our own legal counsel helps to guide and direct our efforts in the most effective way possible moving forward.

Having dual legal representation for Protect Sudbury and the Town is in no way redundant. The Town has important legal status as an Intervenor before the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) and can exercise certain rights that are unique to that status to help achieve our goal.

Likewise, an organization such as Protect Sudbury, has unique legal status before the ESFB, and can advocate and lobby for aspects of our cause that are not available to the Town. Every group appearing before the EFSB as an Intervenor must have legal representation. That’s why we have secured [Burns & Levinson](http://www.burnsandlevinson.com) to represent our interests and why we are collecting donations to our legal fund ([http://www.protectsudbury.org/donate/](http://www.protectsudbury.org/donate/)).

**How did Protect Sudbury choose Attorney Kanoff?**
Volunteers on the legal subgroup gathered input from the community and conducted their own research on firms with relevant experience and expertise. After a thorough search of firms with relevant experience and numerous interviews we solicited proposals from several different firms. Each proposal was examined and graded on 8 different criteria such as utility experience, firm reputation, and experience with groups such as ours. Richard Kanoff scored very high in each category.

- He is the chair of Burns & Levinson energy & facility practice group and has been in practice since 1974.
- Richard has extensive experience representing both utilities and community groups in the utility siting process and has appeared before both state and federal agencies responsible for approving siting plans.
- He is the lead attorney for community groups just like ours in Mass and NH in the battle with Kinder Morgan on their proposed gas pipeline. Recently, due to opposition, Kinder Morgan withdrew its gas pipeline proposal.
- Richard a former Assistant Attorney General in the Utilities Division in MA.
- Burns & Levinson is a large and well-respected law firm that enjoys a regional and national ranking by US News and World Report. The firm also has other departments that it can draw upon that may become useful during our fight such as real estate litigation and environmental.

How are the funds raised used in our legal fight?

Herbicide treatment is part of Eversource’s ongoing plan to maintain the clear cut along the lines. Is herbicide spraying safe?

The short answer is not in this context. Although the herbicides used by Eversource are approved for use by the state, there is good cause for concern. Regular spraying in environmentally sensitive areas is harmful to the plants and animals that inhabit those areas since they are subject to consistent higher levels of exposure. In addition, one of the approved herbicides for use in vegetation control is glyphosate, a substance deemed as a “probable carcinogen” by the IARC, the World Health Organization’s cancer assessment agency, and currently banned in several countries. Another approved herbicide used by Eversource, fosamine ammonium (Krenite), has had no human health risk assessment as it’s not approved for residential use, yet it’s used on rights of way that are cleared right up to abutter’s properties.

Is Eversource building us a rail trail?
No. Eversource’s proposal involves construction of a non-continuous service road which they claim can be used as a base for a rail trail. The proposal does NOT include construction of the trail, nor maintenance of the service road for other than Eversource purposes. Eversource’s proposal does not include repair/replacement of the bridges along the proposed MBTA route.

Eversource’s proposal involves a clear cutting of trees of either an 82 foot (overground towers) or roughly 32 foot (underground lines) as determined by the utility company. Protect Sudbury has no official position on the rail trail itself, but recommends that the town reject the current Eversource proposal through the MBTA right of way on economic, aesthetic, and environmental grounds whether or not Eversource claims their “service road” is a “base layer” for a rail trail. If Sudbury wants to be part of the Mass. Central Rail Trail that is planned to connect Boston to Northampton, that’s something for the town to decide, not a private utility. Most rail trails are 12-20 feet wide and would have considerably less aesthetic and environmental impact.

Looking for proof? Watch this February 2016 video of Eversource Project Manager Bev Schultz.

or read the transcript:

**We are not proposing a bike path.** We’re proposing an access road that can be utilized. I would like to point out that, I was mentioning that there are some existing bridges. We do not plan to make use of those bridges. We don’t really know the condition of those bridges nor their ability to support our very large construction and maintenance vehicles. So we will come from either direction from roads when we need to get to any part of the right of way. There are a number of roads that cross over the right of way.

**Sudbury loses power a lot, why won’t this project help?**

Power outages tend to be caused by downed local distribution power lines, not transmission line issues. Massachusetts currently has a surplus of energy. Local power losses aren’t related to transmission capabilities. Sudbury’s past power outages have occurred along the distribution lines from the substation to the consumers, not in the transmission lines delivering power to the substation. The intention of the new transmission line is to provide a redundant feed to Hudson so that power can be sourced through Sudbury and beyond to the western suburbs, currently served only through the Northboro Road substation.
What’s the difference between transmission lines and distribution lines?
Transmission lines are high capacity power lines that bring electricity from a generating station into local substations. Distribution lines carry power from local substations to homes and businesses. Eversource’s proposal is 115 KV transmission lines, which are much higher voltage than the lines you see strung on phone poles around town. This project is transmission lines which is why the poles are so tall.

Can’t we all switch power companies to hurt Eversource’s bottom line?
Choosing a competitive supplier will not hurt Eversource or their bottom line. The company has no skin the game of supplying power. They do not own generation assets and do not make any margin on power. In fact, they encourage customers to switch. See link to Eversource website below. The power supplied to customers is purchased by Eversource and passed on to customers at their cost. This is the law in Massachusetts to promote competition. No regulated utility in Massachusetts makes money (or loses money) on the sale of power; it only makes money on the distribution and transmission of power.

Switching would lower revenues, but would also lower costs by the exact same amount. Generally, utilities report "net revenues" and savy investors don't look at the Revenue line of an electric utility but the net revenue line. Indeed if a customer's switching did somehow cause Eversource to lose money, i.e. a buyer on a fixed price option, where power has already been purchased by Eversource to supply them at the agreed on price, Eversource can recoup whatever it lost through an adjustment on the customer's bill. (see linked adjustment wording and article from the Globe.)
Eversource would probably be thrilled if customers switched away from the utility since at the end of the day sales of power come with the added risk of customers defaulting on their bills. Sudbury residents could stop paying their bills, but then we'd all ruin our credit and lose access to electric service. The only way to impact Eversource is to disconnect entirely from the grid. Solar with battery storage back up. No amount of switching will impact them in the least and would probably improve their risk profile.

Choose a MA Energy Supplier | Compare MA Energy Prices | Eversource


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