



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

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CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

April 6, 2015

Richard J. Reed, PMP
Vice President-Engineering & Project Excellence
The United Illuminating Company
180 Marsh Hill Road
Orange, CT 06477

RE: **PETITION NO. 1138** – The United Illuminating Company petition for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed replacement and relocation of the existing 115-kV transmission lines crossing the Housatonic River located in Stratford and Milford, Connecticut and related switching station improvements.

Dear Mr. Reed:

At a public meeting held on April 2, 2015, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) considered and ruled that the above-referenced proposal would not have a substantial adverse environmental effect, and pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 16-50k, would not require a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need, with the following conditions:

- The facility owner/operator shall remit timely payments associated with annual assessments and invoices submitted by the Council for expenses attributable to the facility under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v.
- This Declaratory Ruling may be transferred, provided the facility owner/operator/transferee is current with payments to the Council for annual assessments and invoices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v and the transferee provides written confirmation that the transferee agrees to comply with the terms, limitations and conditions contained in the Declaratory Ruling, including timely payments to the Council for annual assessments and invoices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v.
- If the facility owner/operator is a wholly owned subsidiary of a corporation or other entity and is sold/transferred to another corporation or other entity, the Council shall be notified of such sale and/or transfer and of any change in contact information for the individual or representative responsible for management and operations of the facility within 30 days of the sale and/or transfer.

This decision is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Council and is not applicable to any other modification or construction. All work is to be implemented as specified in the petition dated January 30, 2015.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the staff report on this project.

Very truly yours,

Robert Stein
Chairman

RS/CMW/lm

Enclosure: Staff Report dated April 2, 2015

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c: The Honorable John A. Harkins, Mayor, Town of Stratford
Gary Lorentson, Planning & Zoning Administrator, Town of Stratford
The Honorable Benjamin G. Blake, Mayor, City of Milford
David Sulkis, City Planner, City of Milford
Bruce McDermott, Esq., UI
Amy Hicks, UI



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Petition No. 1138

The United Illuminating Company

Stratford and Milford, Connecticut

Staff Report

April 2, 2015

On February 4, 2015, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition from The United Illuminating Company (UI) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for its proposed Housatonic River Crossing 115-kV Transmission Line Replacement Project in Stratford and Milford, Connecticut. The proposed project would replace two transmission lines that are currently supported on steel lattice extensions, called “bonnets,” that are on top of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) rail bridge lattice catenary structures. Council members Phil Ashton and Michael Caron and Council staff member Christina Walsh conducted a field review of the proposed project on March 13, 2015. Amy Hicks, Jim Yeske, Samantha Marone, Tony Buccheri, Mohammad Pasha, Ron Rossetti, Shawn Crosbie, and Mark Phillips represented UI at the field review.

UI proposes to replace two 115-kV transmission lines on CDOT rail bridge lattice catenary structures crossing the Housatonic River in Stratford and Milford. Some catenary structures are over 100 years old, and UI installed its transmission lines onto these structures in the 1940s. The existing lattice structures that cross the river are about 200 feet tall.

In 2009, CDOT performed a structural analysis of the rail bridge and existing catenary structures crossing the Housatonic River to determine if the existing structure meets current National Electrical Safety Code design criteria. The analysis found widespread overstresses in all loading scenarios, mainly due to the bonnet extension and transmission conductors. CDOT is in the initiation phase to replace the rail bridge beginning in 2020; hence, UI is proactively proposing moving the conductors immediately.

The project consists of modifications to two overhead transmission lines: the north circuit, which extends approximately 0.5 miles from the western bank of the Housatonic River in Stratford easterly to Milford; and the south circuit, which also extends approximately 0.5 miles from the western bank of the Housatonic River in Stratford easterly to Milford.

The existing north circuit is a single circuit attached to seven existing 115-kV steel bonnets on the rail bridge catenary structures. The conductors would be replaced by a single set of conductors in a vertical orientation supported by seven galvanized steel monopoles. Four of the new monopoles would be located within the Metro North Railroad (MNR) right-of-way (ROW) and three new monopoles would be placed within easements on adjacent properties. The northern conductors would be approximately 180 feet from the existing northern lines. The new monopoles would have an average height of 135 feet.

The existing south circuit is currently attached to seven existing 115-kV steel bonnets on catenary structures. The existing conductors would be replaced with seven new galvanized steel monopoles, four of which would be installed within the MNR ROW and three would be on easements on adjacent properties. The southern conductors would be approximately 150 feet from the existing northern lines. The new monopoles would have an average height of 135 feet.

UI considered using weathering steel for the proposed monopoles but prefers using galvanized tubular transmission monopoles. Neither the weathering steel or galvanized steel monopoles are painted. In UI's experience, maintenance of weathering steel monopoles is greater than galvanized steel. It is difficult to paint over or remove graffiti on weathering steel.

The proposed project would temporarily impact 520 square feet of wetland area for the placement of construction mats on access roads. Additionally, 8,700 square feet of wetland vegetation clearing is required for Structure 862N on the northern circuit and 8,800 square feet of wetland vegetation clearing is required for Structure 862S on the southern circuit. No vernal pools or amphibian breeding habitat areas were observed at the project location. UI would install soil erosion and sediment controls in accordance with the *2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control*. Erosion and sediment controls would be maintained throughout the construction of the project and remediation of the disturbed area.

The peregrine falcon, a state-listed threatened species, is known to occur in the project area. To minimize impact to the peregrine falcon, UI would hire an expert to monitor the falcon during construction near the identified habitat that may occur during the breeding season of March 1 through July 31; and minimize noise during construction as much as possible.

UI took several soil samples from the project area in both Milford and Stratford. Based on the results of soil sample analysis, all material would be transported offsite to a permitted landfill for disposal. One groundwater sample was taken from the project area in Milford and one from the project area in Stratford. UI would obtain the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection General Permit – Groundwater Remediation Wastewaters to Sanitary Sewer.

The proposed project is not expected to have a significant visual impact on the surrounding area. The proposed structure heights would be higher along the rail line but structures spanning the river would be lower than existing river crossing structures.

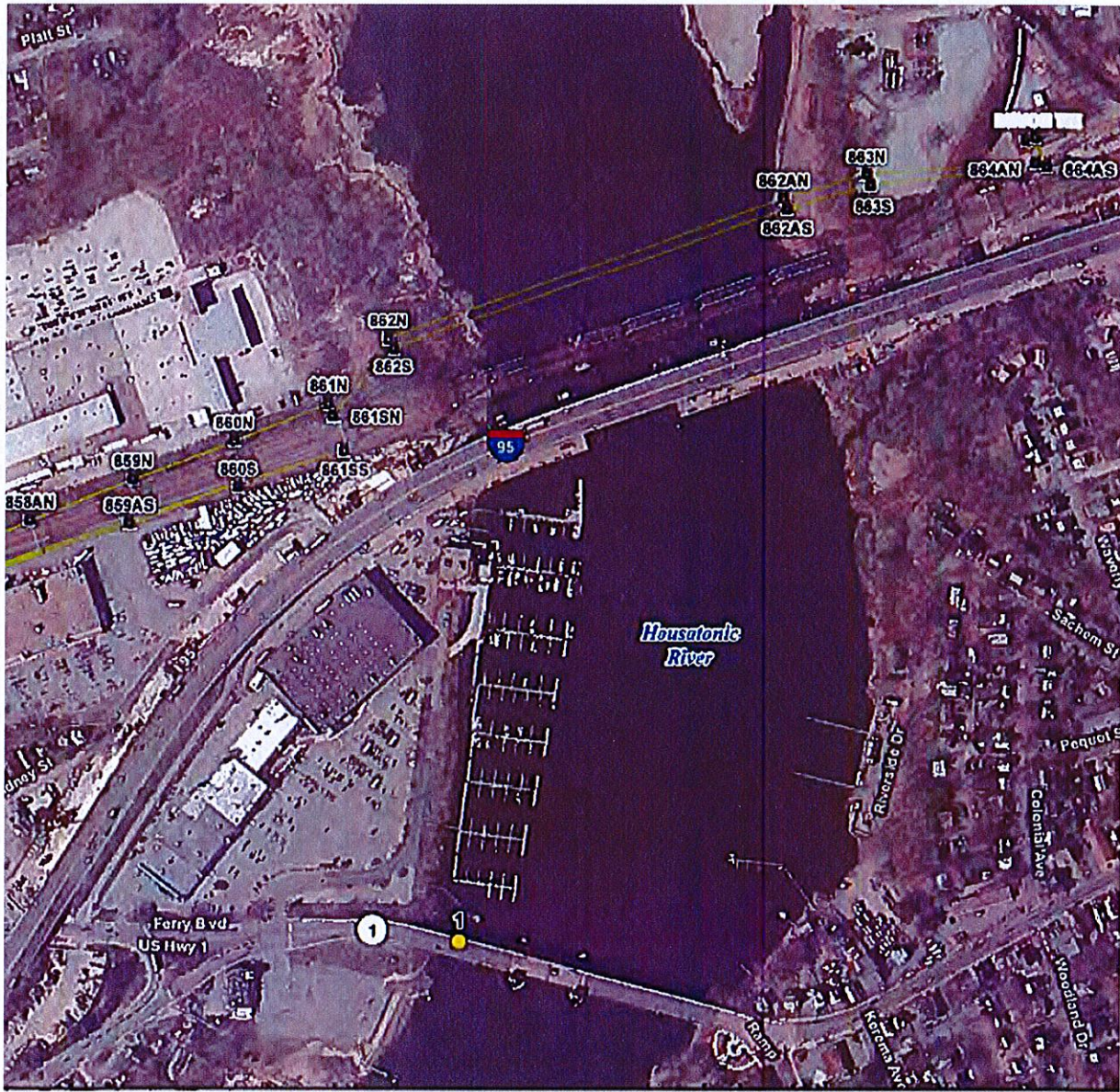
The proposed project would have no adverse effects on historic properties.

The proposed project is scheduled to be in service by the end of the second quarter of 2016. Construction would commence during the third quarter of 2015.

Electric and magnetic field (EMF) levels on the north and south edges of the right-of-way would mostly increase but would remain in compliance with the Council's EMF Best Management Practices.

UI notified local municipal officials and abutting property owners of the proposed project. Both the Town of Stratford and the City of Milford provided UI with letters of support for the project. One abutting property owner that operates a shopping center and marina, provided comments to the Council concerning dust generated from construction and increased EMF levels and public perception of it.

Council staff recommends approval of this project.



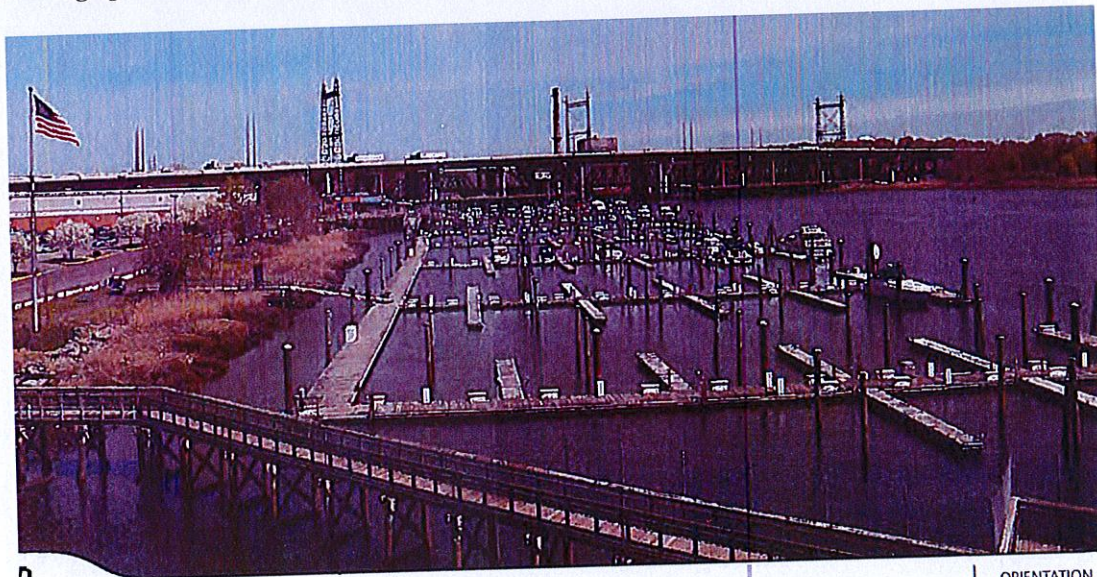
mission Line



Overview of project area.



Photograph of existing railroad catenary structures with UI's conductors.



D	LOCATION	ORIENTATION
	WASHINGTON BRIDGE (24mm Focal Length)	NORTH

Photosimulation of proposed monopoles north of existing rail bridge.