



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

Phone: (860) 827-2935 Fax: (860) 827-2950

E-Mail: siting.council@ct.gov

Web Site: portal.ct.gov/csc

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL & CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

September 15, 2023

Deborah Denfeld
Team Lead – Transmission Siting
Eversource Energy
P.O. Box 270
Hartford, CT 06141
deborah.denfeld@eversource.com

RE: **PETITION NO. 1567** - The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy petition for a declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed 1637/1720 Lines Rebuild Project consisting of the replacement and reconductoring of electric transmission line structures along its existing 4.0 mile electric transmission line right-of-way shared by its existing 115-kilovolt (kV) Nos. 1637 and 1720 Lines between Grist Mill Road in Norwalk, Norwalk Junction in Wilton, and Weston Substation in Weston, Connecticut traversing the municipalities of Norwalk, Wilton, and Weston, and related electric transmission line and substation improvements.

Dear Deborah Denfeld:

At a public meeting held on September 14, 2023, 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 recommendation to consider relocation of new mid-span Structure 19803, if feasible, and with the following conditions:

1. Approval of any project changes be delegated to Council staff;
2. Identification of staging areas and provisions for erosion and sedimentation (E&S) controls, if necessary, at the staging area locations prior to the commencement of construction;
3. Submit a copy of the DEEP Stormwater Permit prior to commencement of construction;
4. Submit a plan to control the potential spread of invasive species specifically in the work areas of Copts Brook and adjacent wetlands that are within the Project ROW as shown on Map Sheets 4 and 5 (from Proposed Structure 19809 to Proposed Structure 19805) of the Petition prior to commencement of construction;
5. Incorporate pollinator habitat in the restoration of disturbed areas consistent with CGS §16-50hh, where feasible;
6. Submit a post-restoration wetland and watercourses report;

7. Unless otherwise approved by the Council, if the facility authorized herein is not fully constructed within three years from the date of the mailing of the Council's decision, this decision shall be void, and the facility owner/operator shall dismantle the facility and remove all associated equipment or reapply for any continued or new use to the Council before any such use is made. The time between the filing and resolution of any appeals of the Council's decision shall not be counted in calculating this deadline. Authority to monitor and modify this schedule, as necessary, is delegated to the Executive Director. The facility owner/operator shall provide written notice to the Executive Director of any schedule changes as soon as is practicable;
8. The Council shall be notified in writing at least two weeks prior to the commencement of site construction activities;
9. Any request for extension of the time period to fully construct the facility shall be filed with the Council not later than 60 days prior to the expiration date of this decision and shall be served on all parties and intervenors, if applicable, and the City of Norwalk, and Towns of Wilton and Weston;
10. Within 45 days after completion of construction, the Council shall be notified in writing that construction has been completed **along with a representative photograph of the project**;
11. 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; and
12. This Declaratory Ruling may be transferred or partially transferred, provided both the facility owner/operator/transferor and the transferee are current with payments to the Council for their respective annual assessments and invoices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v. 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. Both the facility owner/operator/transferor and the transferee shall provide the Council with a written agreement as to the entity responsible for any quarterly assessment charges under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50v(b)(2) that may be associated with this facility, including contact information for the individual acting on behalf of the transferee.

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 April 12, 2023, and additional correspondence dated July 9, 2023.

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

Sincerely,



Melanie A. Bachman
Executive Director

MAB/MP/dll

Enclosure: Staff Report dated September 14, 2023

- c: The Honorable Harry W. Rilling, Mayor, City of Norwalk (hrilling@norwalkct.org)
The Honorable Samantha Nestor, First Selectperson, Town of Weston (snestor@westonct.gov)
The Honorable Lynne Vanderslice, First Selectperson, Town of Wilton
(lynne.vanderslice@wiltonct.org)
Kathleen M. Shanley, Eversource Energy (Kathleen.shanley@eversource.com)
Service List dated July 20, 2023

STATE OF CONNECTICUT)

: ss. Southington, Connecticut

September 15, 2023

COUNTY OF HARTFORD)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision and Staff Report in Petition No. 1567 issued by the Connecticut Siting Council, State of Connecticut.

ATTEST:



Melanie A. Bachman
Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council

STATE OF CONNECTICUT)

: ss. New Britain, Connecticut

September 15, 2023

COUNTY OF HARTFORD)

I certify that a copy of the Connecticut Siting Council Decision and Staff Report in Petition No. 1567 has been forwarded by Certified First Class Return Receipt Requested mail, on September 15, 2023, to each party and intervenor, or its authorized representative, as listed on the attached service list, dated July 20, 2023.

ATTEST:



Dakota LaFountain
Clerk Typist
Connecticut Siting Council

LIST OF PARTIES AND INTERVENORS
SERVICE LIST

Status Granted	Document Service	Status Holder (name, address & phone number)	Representative (name, address & phone number)
Petitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E-mail	The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy	Deborah Denfeld Team Lead – Transmission Siting Eversource Energy P.O. Box 270 Hartford, CT 06141 Phone: (860) 728-4654 deborah.denfeld@eversource.com
Party and CEPA Intervenor (granted 07/20/23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E-mail	Jeannie Rubsam Peter Rubsam 60 Clover Drive Wilton, CT 06897 prubsam@yahoo.com	Matthew C. Mason, Esq. Gregory and Adams, P.C. 190 Old Ridgefield Road Wilton, CT 06897 Phone: (203) 571-6317 mmason@gregoryandadams.com



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Petition No. 1567

The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy 1637/1720 Lines Rebuild Project Norwalk, Wilton and Weston

**Staff Report
September 14, 2023**

Introduction

On April 12, 2023, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition from The Connecticut Light and Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource) for a declaratory ruling pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §4-176 and §16-50k, for the 1637/1720 Lines Rebuild Project (Petition or Project) within existing Eversource electric transmission line right-of-way (ROW) in the Towns of Wilton and Weston and the City of Norwalk (municipalities).

The Project consists of the replacement of electric transmission line structures and conductors, and the installation of optical ground wire (OPGW)¹ on the 1637 and 1720 Lines along approximately 4.0 miles of existing ROW between Grist Mill Road in Norwalk, Norwalk Junction in Wilton, and Weston Substation in Weston.

On April 11, 2023, in compliance with Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) §16-50j-40, Eversource provided notice of the proposed Project to the municipalities and abutting property owners.

On April 13, 2023, the Council sent correspondence to the municipalities stating that the Council has received the Petition and invited the municipalities to contact the Council with any questions or comments by May 12, 2023. No comments were received from any of the municipalities.

Under RCSA §16-50j-40, neither Eversource nor the Council is required to provide notice to the state agencies listed in CGS §16-50j(g) when a petition for a declaratory ruling for modifications to an *existing facility* is submitted to the Council. On April 27, 2023, the Council on Environmental Quality submitted comments on the Project.²

Under CGS §16-50x, the Council retains exclusive jurisdiction over the existing electric transmission line and substation facility sites. Under RCSA §16-50j-2a(29), “site” means a contiguous parcel of property with specified boundaries, including, but not limited to, the leased area, right-of-way, access and easements on which a facility and associated equipment is located, shall be located or is proposed to be located. The Council cannot delegate its statutory authority to any other entity and it is not required to abide by comments from state agencies.³

¹¹ OPGW contains a conductor for lightning protection and fiber optics for communications between substations. The new OPGW would be installed overhead for approximately 1.4 miles from Grist Mill Road to Norwalk Junction. The remaining approximately 2.6 miles of the Project would re-use existing overhead OPGW.

² https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CSC/3_Petitions-mediaLibrary/Petitions_MediaLibrary/MediaPetitionNos1501-1600/PE1567/ProceduralCorrespondence/PE1567-SACRCDPI_CEQ.pdf

³ *Corcoran v. Connecticut Siting Council*, 284 Conn. 455 (2007)

Pursuant to CGS §4-176(e) of the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act, an administrative agency is required to take action on a petition within 60 days of receipt. On May 11, 2023, pursuant to CGS §4-176(e), the Council voted to set the date by which to render a decision on the Petition as no later than October 9, 2023, which is the 180-day statutory deadline for a final decision under CGS §4-176(i).

The Council issued interrogatories to Eversource on May 23, 2023. Eversource submitted responses to the interrogatories on June 9, 2023.

Also on June 9, 2023, Jeannie and Peter Rubsam (Rubsam), abutting property owners to the Eversource ROW at 60 Clover Drive in Wilton, requested party or intervenor/CEPA intervenor status. Rubsam indicates there is a proliferation of invasive vegetation in the ROW, Copts Brook and the wetlands adjacent to Copts Brook that impedes wildlife habitat and water flows in the culvert beneath Clover Drive. Rubsam requests an Invasive Species Management Plan be developed and implemented for the line segments adjacent to wetlands and watercourses along the Project ROW.

On July 20, 2023, the Council granted party and CEPA intervenor status to Rubsam. Also on July 20, 2023, a revised schedule was developed with an August 3, 2023 deadline for the exchange of interrogatories between parties and intervenors. Eversource and Rubsam did not exchange any interrogatories.

Notice and Community Outreach

Eversource initiated outreach to the municipalities in January 2023. It did not receive any additional comments from the municipalities since the filing of the Petition with the Council.

Eversource initiated outreach to property owners along the Project route in January 2023. All abutting property owners were notified of the Project and provided information as to how to obtain additional information, as well as how to submit comments to the Council. Eversource received comments from six abutting property owners regarding structure locations, safety, visibility, property values, and noise.⁴ Eversource met with these abutting property owners and discussed potential visual mitigation and ROW restoration.

During the construction phase of the Project, Eversource would maintain contact with the municipalities and abutting property owners to inform them of construction activities.

Existing Facility Site

The existing facility site includes approximately 4.0 miles of existing Eversource ROW that extends through commercial and residential areas and undeveloped land. It also crosses several wetlands, the Norwalk River, Copts Brook, and the West Branch of the Saugatuck River. Approximately 1.4 miles of the ROW is between Grist Mill Road and Norwalk Junction; and 2.6 miles of the ROW is between Norwalk Junction and Weston Substation.

The ROW was established in 1923.

Eversource's easement for the existing ROW grants Eversource rights to enter upon the right of way to construct, repair, maintain, replace, inspect, operate, and remove upon, infrastructure related to the conduction of electricity. The easements also grant rights to trim, cut, and remove vegetation within the ROW.

The ROW is approximately 150 to 240 feet wide between Grist Mill Road and Norwalk Junction. The ROW is 80 feet wide between Norwalk Junction and Weston Substation, except for a short section west of Weston

⁴ The abutting property owner at 19 Old Weston Road in Weston expressed concerns about potentially increased noise levels at Weston Substation; however no Project work is proposed at Weston Substation and no increase in noise levels at the substation is expected.

Substation where the ROW is approximately 165 feet wide. The entire ROW is maintained.⁵ No expansion of the ROW is proposed.

Vegetation maintenance was last performed in portions of the Project ROW in 2021. Additional vegetation maintenance was performed during summer of 2023.

Project Development

The purpose of the Project is to improve system reliability on the 1637 and 1720 Lines by replacing electric transmission line structures that are deteriorated as well as to upgrade conductors on both lines and install three mid-span structures to meet National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards.

Prior to submitting this Petition, Eversource performed structure replacement work in Sub-Petitions 1293-WT-01 and 1293-WI-01 for the 1637/1720 Lines that were approved by the Council on March 8, 2021 and May 17, 2021, respectively. Such work was completed on June 30, 2021, and February 18, 2022, respectively.

From Structure 963 at Grist Mill Road, Norwalk to Weston Substation, the 1637 and 1720 Lines are supported on a total of 40 structures (32 double-circuit lattice structures and eight single-circuit monopoles). Once the Project is complete, all of the existing lattice structures at the Project site will have been replaced.

The Project is identified in the 2023 Eversource Forecast of Loads and Resources Report and the March 2023 Independent System Operator – New England (ISO-NE) Regional System Plan Asset Condition List.⁶ There are no generation facilities listed on the ISO-NE interconnection queue associated with the proposed Project.

Cost

The total estimated cost of the Project is approximately \$159.59M. The entire Project cost would be eligible for regional cost allocation as it is associated with Pool Transmission Facilities.⁷ Pending a final determination from ISO-NE, total costs are expected to be allocated⁸ as follows:

Eversource Connecticut ratepayers ⁹	19.2%	(\$30.64M)
Other Connecticut ratepayers ¹⁰	6.0%	(\$9.58M)
<u>Other New England ratepayers¹¹</u>	<u>74.8%</u>	<u>(\$119.37M)</u>
Cost Total	100%	(\$159.59M)

Proposed Project

The Project is proposed to address identified asset condition deficiencies by replacement of deteriorated structures and to upgrade conductors. It includes the replacement of 26 double-circuit steel lattice structures with 26 double-circuit monopoles; replacement of 6 double-circuit steel lattice structures with 12 single-circuit monopoles; replacement of two single-circuit monopoles with two single-circuit monopoles; installation of three mid-span double-circuit monopoles; and removal of ten double-circuit steel lattice structures and one wood pole that support a de-energized circuit and a distribution circuit.

⁵ According to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, “full right-of-way” means the portion of land for which a utility has documented legal rights to build and maintain transmission facilities. Managing a narrower maintained right-of-way, rather than the full right-of-way, is a relatively common industry practice, though not a best practice.

⁶ Entry #352

⁷ ISO-NE defines Pool Transmission Facilities as facilities rated 69-kV or above owned by the participating transmission owners over which ISO-NE has operating authority in accordance with the terms set forth in the Transmission Operating Agreements.

⁸ These allocations are estimates based on 2021 actual loads.

⁹ Electrical service customers of Eversource and located within Connecticut.

¹⁰ Electrical service customers located within Connecticut but outside of Eversource’s service territory.

¹¹ Electrical service customers located within New England but outside of Connecticut.

The Project requires taller structures to meet NESC standards, including, but not limited to, conductor clearance requirements. The NESC is the authoritative code for ensuring the continued practical safeguarding of persons and utility facilities during the installation, operation and maintenance of electric power and communications utility systems, including substations, overhead lines and underground lines.

NESC clearance requirements for conductor sway due to wind (blowout) are based on established horizontal clearance requirements during specific wind events to buildings (9.1 feet of clearance to the ROW edge for 115-kV conductors). Transmission lines are designed with the assumption that a building could be erected at any location along the ROW edge. To provide a buffer for construction tolerance, Eversource typically designs transmission corridors to have 11 feet of clearance to the ROW edge during specific wind events. Eversource proposes to install new mid-span structures along the ROW to restrain the conductors from blowout caused by wind conditions. Typical conductor span lengths on Eversource 115-kV lines are 800 feet or less.¹²

NESC clearance requirements for conductor uplift and insulator swing were factored into the transmission line design. Conductor uplift is a condition where wire on a structure pulls up on the hardware instead of hanging down vertically. It typically occurs in spans where structures are located at different ground levels or have different heights. The amount of insulator swing on a transmission line depends on conductor tension, temperature, wind velocity, insulator weight, ratio of weight span to wind span, and line angle. These issues can be mitigated by taller structures in certain locations to increase the load tension of the insulators and the span weight load of the conductors.

1637/1720 Grist Mill Road to Norwalk Junction

The 1637/1720 Lines are 115-kV lines that extend along the entire 4.0-mile Project ROW. In this line segment, the lines are supported by mostly double-circuit lattice structures with some single-circuit steel poles supporting spans over the railroad corridor and Kent Road installed in approximately 1949. The lines consist of 556 kcmil aluminum conductor steel reinforced (ACSR).

Project work consists of the following:

- a) Replace 11 double-circuit steel lattice structures with 11 double-circuit galvanized steel monopoles;
- b) Replace 2 double-circuit steel lattice structures with 4 single-circuit steel monopoles;
- c) Replace 2 single-circuit weathering steel poles with two single-circuit galvanized steel poles to match the adjacent 3403 Line;
- d) Install one double-circuit galvanized steel monopole for mid-span support;
- e) Replace 556-kcmil ACSR conductor with 1590-kcmil aluminum conductor steel supported (ACSS) conductor;
- f) Transfer the existing OPGW on the 1720 circuit to the replacement structures;
- g) Install new OPGW on the 1637 circuit; and
- h) Remove 10 double-circuit lattice towers and one wood pole currently supporting a de-energized circuit and a distribution circuit.

1637/1720 Norwalk Junction to Weston Substation

In this line segment, the 1637/1720 Lines are supported by mostly double-circuit lattice structures with some single-circuit steel poles supporting spans at the bend in the ROW west of the West Branch Saugatuck River installed in approximately 1949. The lines consist of 556-kcmil ACSR. No work is proposed at Weston Substation.

Project work consists of the following:

- a) Replace 15 double-circuit steel lattice structures with 15 double-circuit weathering steel monopoles;

¹² Petition 1527, response to Council interrogatory 19.

- b) Replace 4 double-circuit steel lattice structures with 8 new single-circuit weathering steel monopoles;
- c) Install two double-circuit weathering steel monopoles for mid-span support;
- d) Replace existing 556-kcmil ACSR conductor with 1590-kcmil ACSS conductor; and
- e) Transfer existing OPGW to the replacement structures.

Project Construction

Eversource would establish temporary equipment staging areas near the Project site prior to construction.

Eversource would utilize existing ROW access roads to the extent possible during construction. Where existing access roads are not present, new permanent gravel roads would be established. Multiple access roads are required so that equipment can access various construction zones along the ROW without relying on one point of access for long ROW segments. Construction matting would be utilized to install temporary access roads to protect sensitive areas (e.g. wetlands, lawn, meadow, and cultural resources areas) to reach certain structure locations.

Eversource would obtain Department of Transportation Encroachment Permits to cross Routes 7, 33 and 53.

Construction areas would be isolated by establishing erosion and sedimentation (E&S) controls in accordance with the *2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control* and Eversource's April 2022 Best Management Practices Manual for Massachusetts and Connecticut (BMPs).¹³ Typical E&S control measures include, but are not limited to, straw blankets, silt fencing, gravel anti-tracking pads, soil and slope protection, water bars, check dams, berms, swales, plunge pools, and sediment basins.

A project-specific Stormwater Pollution Control Plan (SWPCP) would be developed for registration under a DEEP General Permit for Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities (General Permit). The General Permit requires the designing qualified professional to conduct the SWPCP Implementation Inspection that confirms compliance with the General Permit and the initial implementation of all SWPCP control measures for the initial phase of construction. The SWPCP also requires a qualified inspector to inspect the work areas at least once per week and within 24-hours after a rain event that meets certain permit criteria.

The Project is eligible for certification through the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)/DEEP Self-Verification Notification process in regard to wetland impact. The self-verification notification forms would be submitted to the USACE-New England District and DEEP prior to the start of Project construction, as required by the SWPCP.

At each transmission line structure location, a work pad would be constructed to stage material for final on-site assembly and/or removal of structures, to pull conductors and to provide a safe, level work base for construction equipment. Work pad dimensions would vary based on site specific conditions such as terrain, proximity to the existing and replacement structures, and the type of construction activities.

Work pads for the project would typically be 100 feet by 80 feet for a single structure but could be 80 feet by 80 feet in some wetland and water resource areas. Pull pads, necessary to accommodate machinery needed for pulling conductors through an angled structure would be approximately 150 feet by 80 feet. Most of the work/pull pads would be composed of gravel. Temporary work pads would be used in sensitive areas such as wetlands, lawns, meadows, and cultural resource areas.

¹³ [2022 Eversource Best Management Practices MA_CT](#)

38 of the proposed structures would have drilled caisson foundations, and 5 of the structures would be directly embedded into the ground. Foundation installation work would require the use of equipment such as drill rigs, pneumatic hammers, augers, dump trucks, concrete trucks, grapple trucks, and light duty trucks. If groundwater is encountered, pumping trucks or other equipment would be utilized. The water would then be discharged in accordance with local, state and federal requirements. New structure sections, components and hardware would be delivered by flatbed truck to the structure locations for assembly using a crane and bucket trucks.

After the new structures are installed, the new conductors and OPGW (or transfer of existing OPGW) would be performed. Conductor and OPGW installation/transfer would be performed using conductor reels, pulling and tensioning rigs, and bucket trucks. The existing structures would be removed after the conductors and OPGW is installed.

After the new structures/conductors/OPGW are installed and the existing structures are removed, ROW restoration activities would commence. Restoration work would include the removal of construction debris, signage, flagging, temporary fencing, and construction mats and work pads that are designated for removal or mitigation. Affected areas would be re-graded as practical and stabilized via a pollinator-friendly seed mixture or other measures before removing temporary E&S controls. ROW restoration would be performed in accordance with Eversource BMPs and in consultation with affected property owners.

Upon completion of the project, access roads and work pads located in uplands would be left in place to facilitate future transmission line maintenance. If a property owner requests their removal, Eversource would discuss mitigation options with the landowner.

Except for concrete trucks, no construction equipment or vehicle washing would be allowed in the ROW. In accordance with Eversource's BMPs, concrete truck wash-out would occur only in upland areas of the ROW (a minimum of 50 feet from wetlands) to avoid or minimize the potential for impacts to water resources. All wash-out areas would include measures to control and contain wash-water and collect the cement wash-off for off-site disposal.

Project-related traffic would be expected to be temporary and highly localized in the vicinity of ROW access points along public roads and at the staging area. Due to the phasing of construction work, project-related traffic is not expected to significantly affect transportation patterns or levels of service on public roads. Construction warning signs along public roads would be installed near work sites and flaggers or police personnel would be used to direct traffic, if necessary.

Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures

Work would generally occur within a maintained ROW. Tree clearing would be necessary within the 165-foot wide ROW in the vicinity of proposed replacement Structure 19791. Tree trimming, minor vegetation removal and/or mowing within the managed transmission line ROW corridor may be required to improve work site access, and to develop and/or restore off-ROW access roads and to meet NESC and Eversource conductor clearance standards. Vegetation in the work areas would be cut to an above ground height of 6-8 inches to limit soil disturbance.

Vegetation removal/tree trimming would typically be accomplished using mechanical methods using flat-bed trucks, brush hogs or other types of mowing equipment, skidders, forwarders, bucket trucks for canopy trimming, and chippers. In resource sensitive areas, Eversource would utilize low-impact methods including, but not limited to, consideration of soil and weather conditions during vegetation removal; maximizing use of uplands for clearing access routes; utilizing hand clearing methods for wetland and vernal pool areas; utilizing appropriately sized equipment to minimize impacts; and cutting brush close to the ground (i.e. not perform grubbing) where practical to retain soil stability. Vegetation removal activities would be performed in accordance with Eversource BMPs.

A total of 20 wetland areas and 11 watercourses/waterbodies occur along the ROW or in adjacent off-ROW areas. The Project would result in 400 square feet (0.01 acre) of permanent wetland impacts associated with the 5 replacement structures that would be located within wetlands. The replacement structures are proposed within the wetlands in accordance with the overall Project design and structure alignment.

Temporary wetland impacts related to project construction matting would total approximately 2.64 acres. The Project would require 7 temporary watercourse crossings, using wood matting, for work pads and access roads. Construction activities within wetlands and over watercourses would be conducted in accordance with Eversource's BMPs.

A total of 2 vernal pools (VP) were identified proximate to but outside of the ROW. Eversource would conduct work proximate to these areas in accordance with Eversource's BMPs as well as Project specific VP protective measures, which include, but are not limited to, selective tree/shrub vegetation clearing with hand tools where necessary, avoidance of clearing (as practicable) during periods of peak vernal pool species breeding and migration, establishment of E&S controls, use of temporary matting, and avoidance of permanent disturbance that could cause permanent habitat alteration or changes in local drainage patterns.

The DEEP-approved SWPCP would contain details regarding the E&S control measures that would be implemented to protect wetlands and vernal pools. E&S controls would also be inspected weekly by a qualified inspector, as required by the SWPCP. The Project would comply with the SWPCP, USACE self-verification procedures, and Eversource's BMPs. In addition, the qualified inspector would be on-site to monitor environmental resource protections as established in Eversource's BMP's and within the DEEP Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) Determination letter. An Environmental Monitor will conduct weekly inspections of resource areas for the duration of Project construction.

Eversource identified existing invasive species within Project upland and wetland work areas. Invasive species mitigation measures would be conducted in accordance with Eversource's BMPs. Additional measures to control the potential spread of invasive species include, but are not limited to, the cleaning of temporary mats to prevent the introduction of invasive species into wetlands, the cleaning of vehicles, equipment, materials, gear, footwear or clothing of all visible soil and plant material on site known to contain invasives or as near as practical to the invasive area, prior to leaving the Project site.

The Project ROW extends across 100-year Federal Emergency Management Agency-designated flood zones associated with the Norwalk River and Copts Brook. Eversource would utilize temporary matting for work pads and access roads and utilize Eversource BMPs to avoid or minimize adverse effects to flood storage capacity and hydrology.

The Project is located within a DEEP-designated Aquifer Protection Area located south of High Acre Road in Weston and including proposed replacement Structure 19791. No public or private water supply wells are located within the Project ROW. Eversource would conduct work in accordance with its BMPs which include provisions for the proper storage, secondary containment, and handling of diesel fuel, motor oil, grease, and other lubricants, to protect subsurface water quality.

The Project ROW is not located within the DEEP regarding DEEP Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) buffer area; thus, Eversource did not consult with DEEP regarding the NDDB.

Eversource also consulted with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information, Planning and Consultation (IPaC) service regarding federally-listed species that may be present within the Project area. The IPaC report identified the northern long-eared bat (NLEB), a federally-listed and state-listed Endangered Species. Per USFWS NLEB guidance, Eversource performed an analysis using the USFWS NLEB planning tool which determined the Project would not likely have an adverse effect on NLEB. There are no known NLEB maternity roost trees within 150 feet of the Project area, and no known NLEB hibernaculum is located within the municipalities; thus, no Project-related impacts to NLEB are expected.

A Phase 1A Cultural Resources Assessment (Phase 1A) of the Project area determined that one historic district (Kettle Creek Historic District) and two archeological sites are located within 500 feet of the Project ROW. The Project would not impact any of these resources.

The Phase 1A also identified six work area locations within the ROW that have a moderate to high potential for archaeological sensitivity. A pedestrian survey was performed in October 2022, and the results of the survey indicated that no additional archaeological investigations within the Project area are recommended, and no impacts to significant cultural resources are expected to result from the Project. The State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the survey results and noted that the Project would have no adverse effect on historic properties.

No recreational open space parcels or trails are located within or proximate to the ROW. Route 33 (Westport Road) in Wilton is a state-designated scenic road between Old Ridgefield Road and the Ridgefield-Wilton Town Line. The Project is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on this scenic road because the ROW already crosses this road in the vicinity of Structure 19805. The existing lattice structure would be replaced with a monopole at this location.

Disturbed areas would be stabilized using temporary E&S controls such as straw mulch, compost filters, and biodegradable erosion control blankets until final stabilization has been achieved. Seed mixes would be applied in uplands to revegetate disturbed areas. In accordance with Eversource's BMPs, different seed mixes would be used depending on the terrain and soil type of the disturbed areas and may consist of grasses and pollinator habitat.

In accordance with the SWPCP, monthly inspections would be conducted to monitor stabilization measures. A qualified inspector or a qualified professional engineer would inspect the areas and confirm compliance with the post-construction stormwater management requirements.

The Project would require increasing the height of many replacement structures to meet NESC clearance requirements within the existing ROW. Existing structures to be replaced on the lines range from 61 to 101 feet above ground level. The new mid-span and replacement structures on the lines would range from 84 feet to 157 feet above ground level, with an average height increase of 24.7 feet. The three mid-span structures would have heights of 111.5 feet, 121.5 feet and 157 feet. Three replacement structures would increase in height by 35 feet or more, and of those, one is adjacent to Arrowhead Road in Wilton (increase of 38.5 feet); one is adjacent to Danbury Road in Wilton (increase of 39.5 feet); and one is adjacent to Newton Turnpike in Wilton (increase of 39.5 feet).

Due to the increase in structure heights to comply with NESC clearance criteria, there would be indirect visual impacts to the surrounding area. The use of weathering steel replacement structures would blend in with the surrounding wooded landscape for the Norwalk Junction to Weston Substation portion of the Project. The use of galvanized steel replacement structures south of Norwalk Junction would be more consistent with the existing galvanized finishes of the 3403 Line poles. Galvanized steel structures cost approximately 4-6% more compared to weathering steel structures.

Public Safety

There would be no permanent changes to existing ROW sound levels after completion of the Project. Noise associated with construction activities is exempt from DEEP Noise Control Regulations. Notwithstanding, any construction-related noise would be short-term and localized in the vicinity of work sites.

Federal Aviation Administration obstruction evaluation filings are not required for the replacement structures, and no marking or lighting would be required.

Electric fields (EF) are produced whenever voltage is applied to electrical conductors and equipment. Electric fields are typically measured in units of kilovolts/meter (kV/m). As the weight of scientific evidence indicates that exposure to electric fields, beyond levels traditionally established for safety, does not cause adverse health effects, and as safety concerns for electric fields are sufficiently addressed by adherence to the NESC, as amended, health concerns regarding Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) focus on MF rather than EF. The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) has established a guideline of 4.2 kV/m.

The Project route contains an existing transmission line that emits magnetic fields (MF). In the United States, no state or federal exposure standards for 60-Hertz MF based on demonstrated health effects have been established, nor are there any such standards established worldwide. However, the ICNIRP has established a level of 2,000 milliGauss (mG), based on extrapolation from scientific experimentation, and the International Committee on Electromagnetic Safety (ICES) has calculated a guideline of 9,040 mG for exposure to workers and the general public, and recognized in the Council's *Electric and Magnetic Field Best Management Practices for the Construction of Electric Transmission Lines in Connecticut*.

MF at or beyond the edges of the ROW are expected to increase for most of the Project but would decrease by 3.4 mG along the eastern edge of the ROW for the Kent Road to Norwalk Junction segment. The highest calculated MF level is 26.1 mG at the edge of the ROW, well below the ICNIRP and ICES recommended exposure standards.

Construction Schedule

Construction is expected to begin in third quarter 2023 with an anticipated in-service date by the end of 2024. Normal work hours would be Monday through Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Sunday work hours or evening work (i.e. after 7:00 p.m.) may be necessary due to delays caused by inclement weather and/or outage constraints.

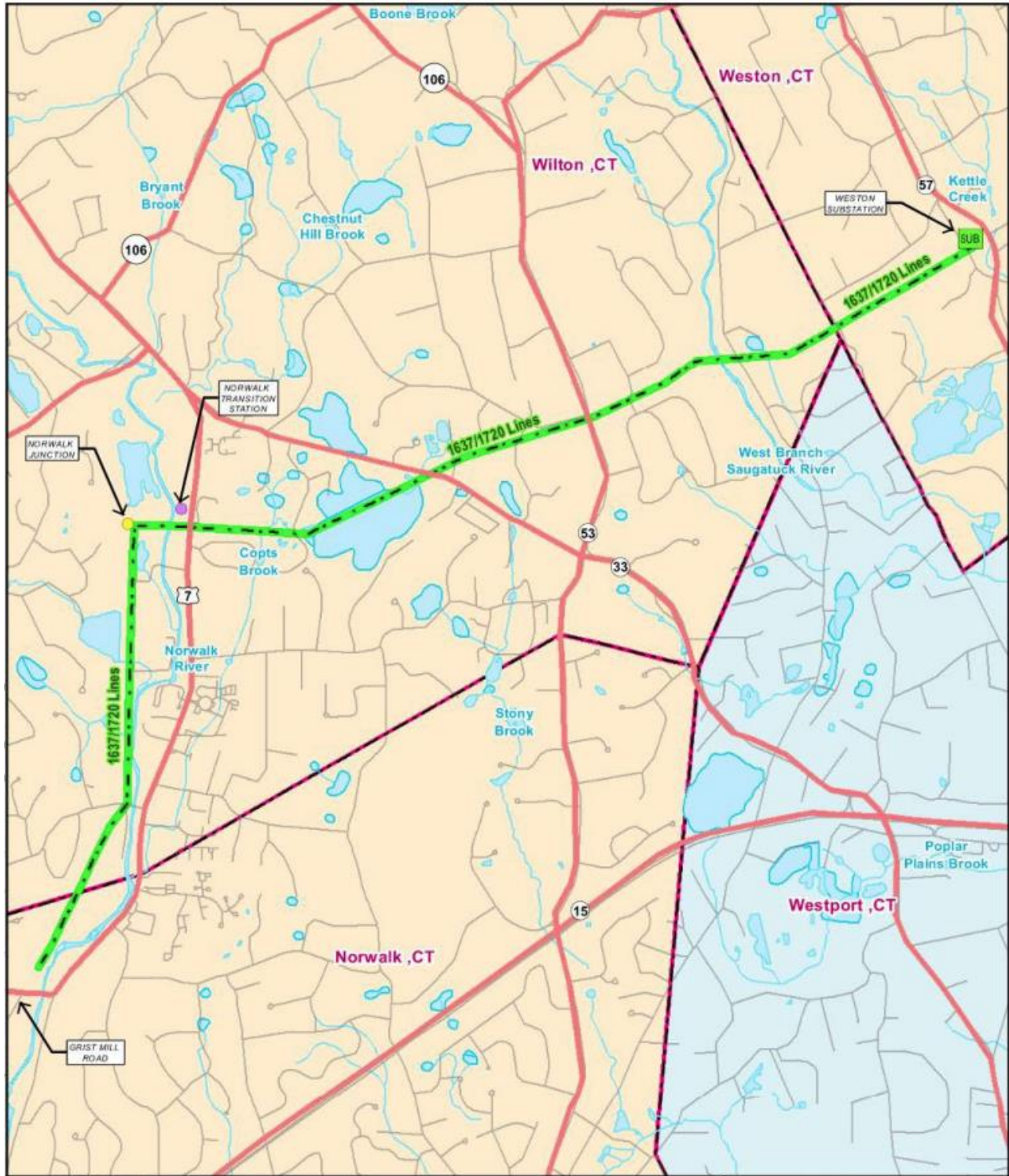
Conclusion

If approved, staff recommends the following conditions:

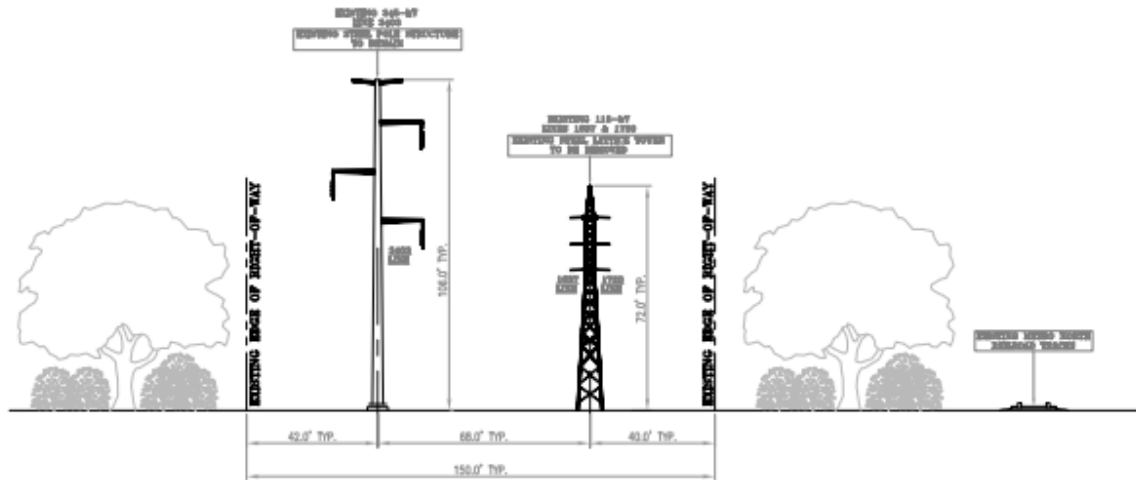
- 1) Approval of any project changes be delegated to Council staff;
- 2) Identification of staging areas and provisions for erosion and sedimentation (E&S) controls, if necessary, at the staging area locations prior to the commencement of construction;
- 3) Submit a copy of the DEEP Stormwater Permit prior to commencement of construction;

- 4) Submit a plan to control the potential spread of invasive species specifically in the work areas of Copts Brook and adjacent wetlands that are within the Project ROW as shown on Map Sheets 4 and 5 (from Proposed Structure 19809 to Proposed Structure 19805) of the Petition prior to commencement of construction; and
- 5) Incorporate pollinator habitat in the restoration of disturbed areas consistent with CGS §16-50hh, where feasible.

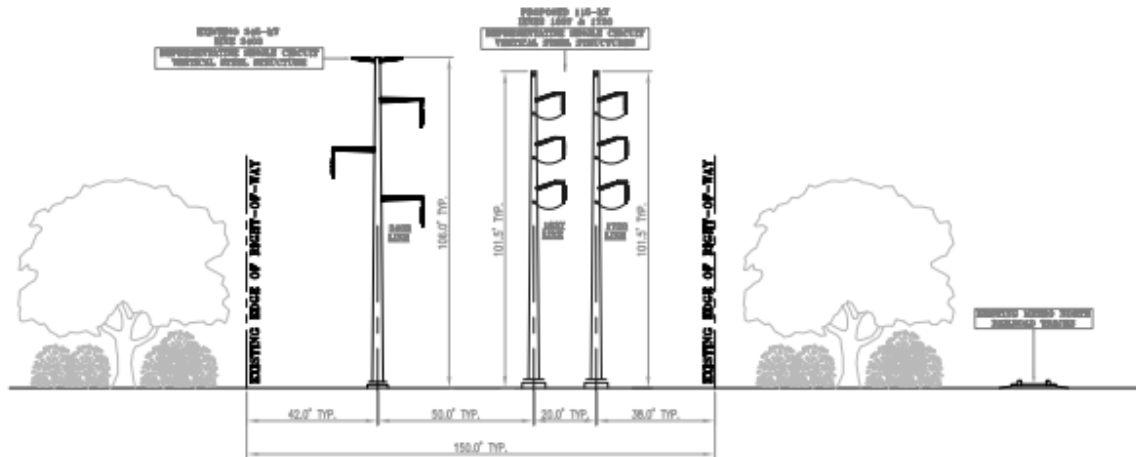
Project Location



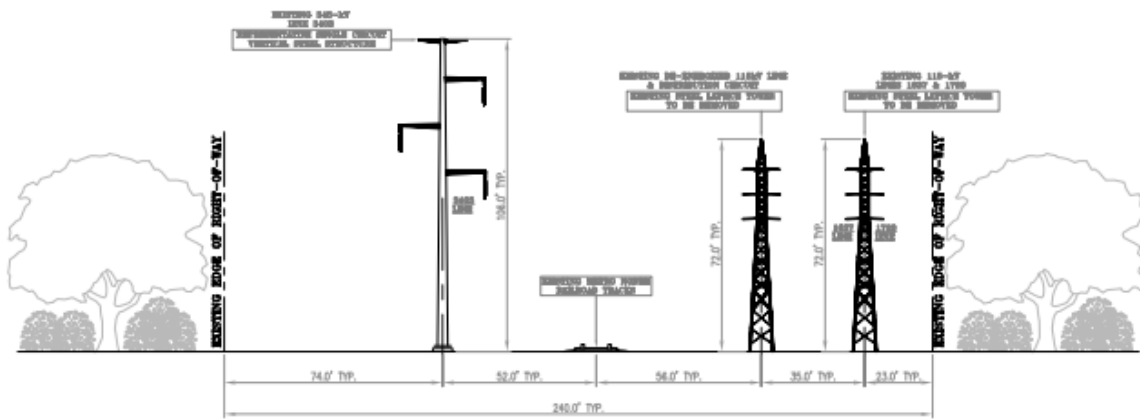
Project ROW Profiles



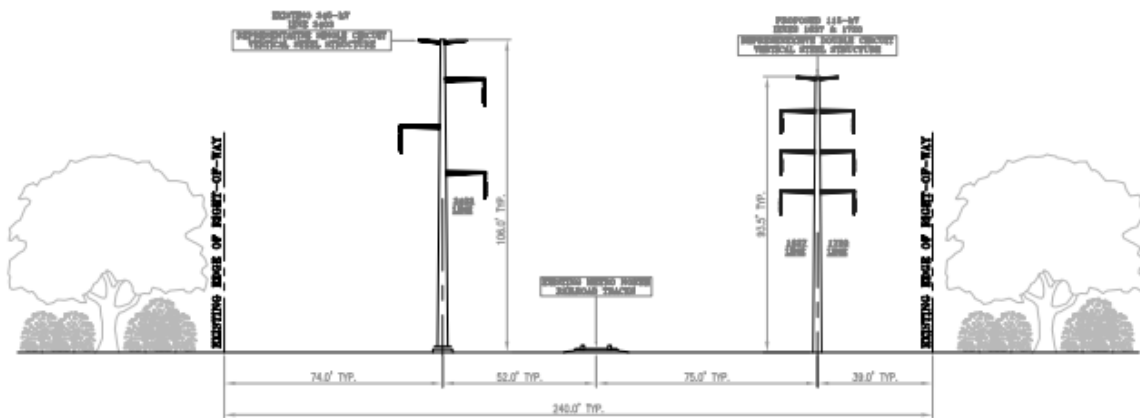
**EXISTING R.O.W. CONFIGURATION
TYPICAL DOUBLE CIRCUIT STEEL LATTICE TOWER DESIGN
LOOKING FROM GRIST MILL RD. TO NORWALK JCT.
IN THE TOWNS OF NORWALK & WILTON CT**



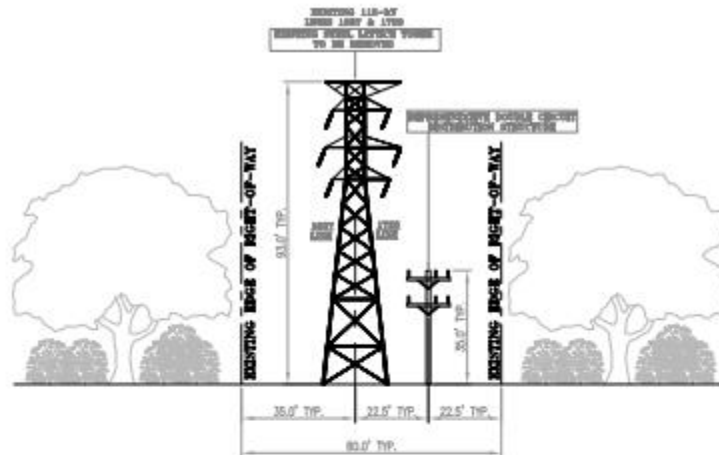
**PROPOSED R.O.W. CONFIGURATION
TYPICAL SINGLE CIRCUIT STEEL POLE DESIGN
LOOKING FROM GRIST MILL RD. TO NORWALK JCT.
IN THE TOWNS OF NORWALK & WILTON, CT**



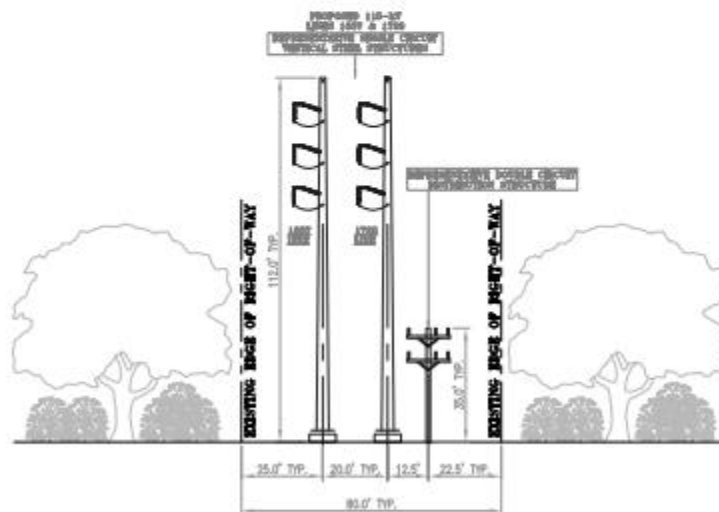
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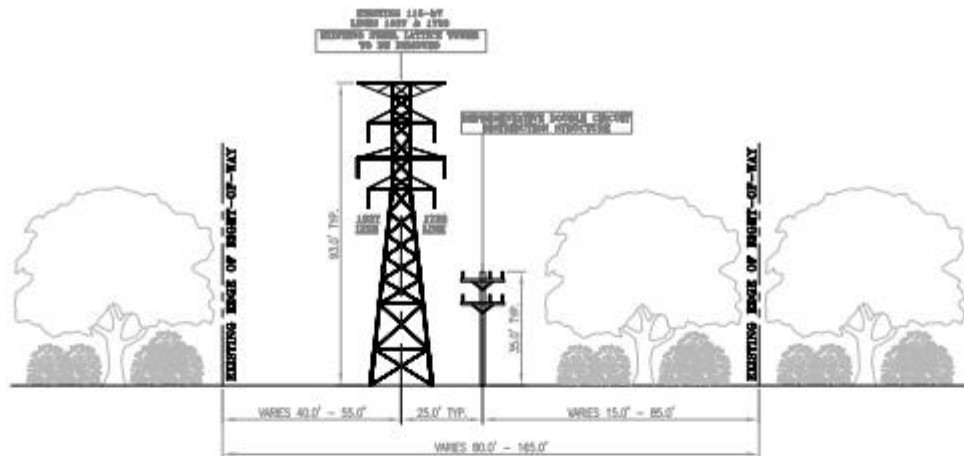
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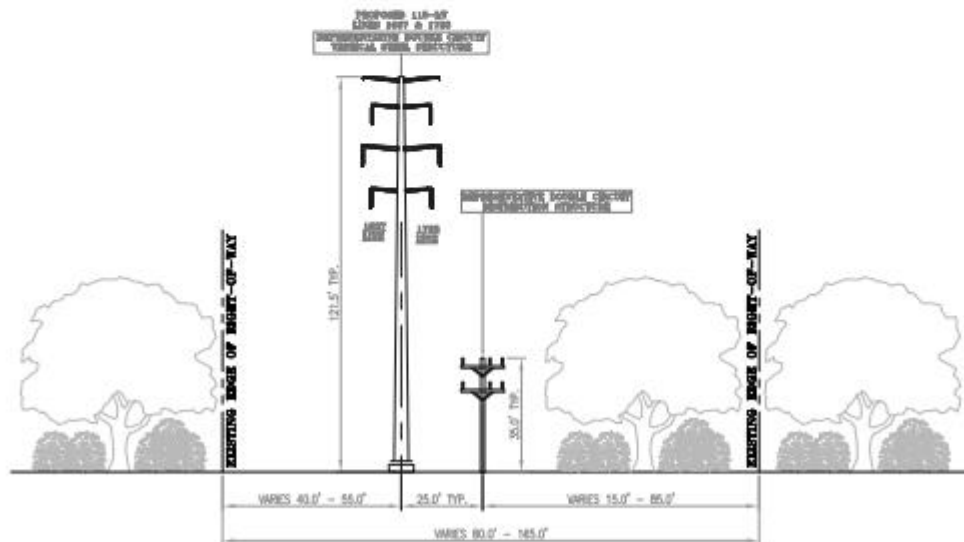
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