

Report of Meeting

Date and Time: Thursday, February 29, 2024, 6:00 – 7:00 PM

Location: Zoom Webinar Meeting

Subject: Replacement of Signal Substations at Cos Cob and New Haven
Public Information Meeting

Attendees

Public Attendees (8)

- Phyllis Schondorf
- Partrick LaRow
- Chetta Heng
- Sergio Martinez
- James Michel
- Francia Alvarez
- Pat Rogers
- George Hopley

Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)

- Yure Kuljis
- Seamus Flannery
- Nabil Chowdhoury

Consultant Team

- Rodney Bascom, Garg Consulting Services, Inc. (Garg)
- Ashish Patel, Garg
- Paul Goodwin, Garg
- Eugene Chuang, Garg
- Jeannie Tran, Garg
- Thomas Luy, Garg
- Jim Gillies, Garg
- Dawei Shi, Garg
- Marcy Miller, FHI Studio
- Laura Nagle, FHI Studio

Welcome / Introductions

Marcy Miller, of FHI Studio, welcomed participants to the virtual public information meeting for the Replacement of the Cos Cob and New Haven Signal Substations. M. Miller shared information for the public meeting including calling in, participating during the discussion, media inquiries, and Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) Title VI and Civil Rights information. She presented the agenda, which consisted of:



1. Opening Remarks
2. General Project Overview
3. Cos Cob Substation Overview
 - Site Design
 - Impacts
4. New Haven Substation Overview
 - Site Design
 - Impacts
5. Q & A Session
6. Adjournment

Members of the project team, from CTDOT and the consultant team, introduced themselves.

Technical Presentation

Ashish Patel, of Garg, provided an overview of the scope of work for the project. He said that this work stems from a Federally funded program to replace / upgrade railroad signal power infrastructure on the Metro North Railroad, New Haven Main Line at Cos Cob and New Haven. He described how both substations are past their useful life, and because of their outdated technology equipment, are difficult and expensive to keep in working condition. This affects the operational reliability and train service on the rail line.

Cos Cob Substation

A. Patel provided an overview of the Cos Cob substation. He displayed a Google Earth map of the existing site and described the conditions. He noted that the Cos Cob Park entrance and the site entrance are both from Sound Shore Drive. He described the existing substation brick and mortar building that houses the signal power equipment, noting that the building is in good shape and will remain in place for storage once the existing equipment is removed from the building. This site has a total of two motor-alternator sets, which receive 60Hz local utility power and convert it to 100Hz signal power.

A. Patel discussed the proposed site design. He stated that it is critical to keep the existing signal substation running during the construction of this project. The proposed site is adjacent to the existing site. The proposed site is on the corner of Sound Shore Drive and the Cos Cob Park entrance, adjacent to Eversource transmission pole and Track 4. The site is owned by the State of Connecticut. The existing retaining wall will be replaced with a cast-in-place concrete retaining wall with decorative form liner along Sound Shore Drive and Cos Cob Park entrance driveway. The wall will include a new 8-foot-high fence on top, which will serve as fall protection.

The new signal substation will be constructed as a prefabricated walk-in metal-enclosed building. Four signal power transformers will be installed on the back side of the signal substation building. The incoming and outgoing cables will be constructed in underground concrete encased duct banks. The new signal power switching structures will be installed to support new signal power disconnect switches and aerial wires. Another cast-in-place retaining wall will be constructed on the north of railroad adjacent to north parking lot at Station Drive. This retaining wall will provide safe working ground for the railroad personnel at the north signal power switching structure.

A. Patel described a plan view of the proposed site layout and elevation views of the proposed signal substation and new cast-in-place concrete retaining wall. He also showed a photograph of a similar prefabricated walk-in signal substation enclosure.



The southwest cast-in-place concrete retaining wall construction, during the initial phase of construction, may impact pedestrian vehicular traffic at Sound Shore Drive and entrance to Cos Cob Park driveway. The existing sidewalk leading to Cos Cob Park may be temporarily relocated during this construction, which is expected to last four months. Proper Maintenance of Traffic (MPT) signage and a temporary construction fence will be provided during this construction.

The existing entrance to the Cos Cob railroad station from Sound Shore Drive will remain open during the construction phase. The existing sewer, water and electricity to Cos Cob Park will not be affected by this project. The noise pollution will be minimal because majority construction will take place during daytime, except signal power structural installation work and final substation cut-over work will take place during nighttime due to railroad operational impact.

New Haven Substation

A. Patel next provided an overview of the New Haven substation. The existing signal substation is in the New Haven Rail Yard, adjacent to Fair Street and Union Street in New Haven. The existing signal substation is called Fair Street Sub 1091. He displayed a Google Earth map of the existing site and described the conditions. He described the existing substation building that houses the signal power equipment, noting that there are a total of two signal feeders that come out from the substation and power the railroad. The antiquated signal power equipment has one motor-alternator set, which receives 60Hz local utility power and convert it to 100Hz signal power. He added that the building will be demolished once a new substation is operational.

The proposed site is adjacent to Heath Drive, off Water Street. The new substation will be called Heath Drive Sub 1087. The new signal substation will be constructed as a prefabricated walk-in metal-enclosed building. The installation of the proposed signal substation building requires an elevated platform. The incoming and outgoing cables will be constructed in the underground concrete encased duct banks. The fabrication of the entire substation enclosure will take place at the manufacturer's factory. After successful testing at the factory, the signal substation will be delivered to the project site. The contractor will use a crane to unload the substation from the delivery truck to the substation vault foundation. The crane will be set up on the state property adjacent to the proposed signal substation foundation. The substation delivery and unloading process should take approximately four hours. During installation, the pedestrian and vehicular traffic will be guided by traffic police.

A. Patel described a plan view of the proposed site layout and elevation views of the proposed signal substation and new cast-in-place concrete retaining wall. He also showed a photograph of a similar prefabricated walk-in signal substation enclosure.

The existing Old Vision Trail will experience temporary short-term closure during construction of underground concrete encased duct banks. The noise pollution will be minimal because the majority of the construction will take place during the daytime, except signal power structural installation work and final substation cut over work that will take place during nighttime due to railroad operational impact.

Schedule

Both sites will be constructed simultaneously. The final design will be completed by September 2024. The contractor will sign the contract with the State and the State will issue a Notice-to-Proceed to the contractor in April 2025. Construction will also begin in April 2025. The estimated date for final construction completion is November 2028.

M. Miller closed the presentation with an overview on how the public can provide comments and stay involved in the project.



The meeting presentation and recording are posted at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOTNHLPower301-520>.

Question & Answer Session

Verbal Comments

Francia Alvarez: The Eversource work a few years ago caused a lot of landscape disruption. Will there be a lot of landscape disruption or impacts from this work?

Response: There will be a small disturbance to the Greenwich site adjacent to Cos Cob park entrance and Sound Shore Drive during the retaining wall construction. While the contractor will work from the state property side, there may be times when they need to access the work or travel through other properties. There is one tree on State property that will be removed. Several trees that are adjacent to the park will not be impacted. The project team will coordinate with the Town and tree warden, Gregory Kramer, before work commences.

Francia Alvarez: Can you provide a link to the survey?

Response: The survey link is listed in the chat and can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/CTDOT-Feedback>.

Written Comments

General Comment: Will this recording be posted online?

Response: Yes, the recording and slide deck will be posted to the project website.

James Michel: The Town of Greenwich Department of Public Works (DPW) is requesting an additional meeting with internal staff to discuss the work at the substation and need for various approvals. We would like to be contacted at [email address] to coordinate a future meeting. We have a few concerns related to constructability and placement of the precast building, the closure of the sidewalk, as well as the aesthetics of the area to coordinate with the park.

Response: The project team, Seamus Flannery, will reach out to DPW to set up a meeting. The project team looks forward to this discussion.

Pat Rogers: I sent a question in advance asking about the increase in electromagnetic waves and the impact on human health. Can you answer this question?

Response: This is a replacement of the existing facility, so no new electromagnetic will be emitted, other than what is emitted today. In addition, the voltage is significantly lower than what would be emitted at an Eversource substation. There are no projected human health impacts.

Adjournment

M. Miller thanked the participants for their time and closed the meeting at 6:55 PM.

