

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
ENERGY FACILITIES SITING BOARD**

Petition of Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant)
Pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J for Approval to)
Construct a New Underground 115 kV Electric)
Transmission Line in Weymouth and Hingham, a)
New Substation in Hingham, and a New Tap)
Station in Weymouth, Massachusetts)

EFSB 24-01

Joint Petition of Hingham Municipal Lighting)
Plant and NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a)
Eversource Energy Pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3)
for Individual and Comprehensive Exemptions)
from the Zoning By-law of the Town of Hingham)
and the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of)
Weymouth, Massachusetts)

D.P.U. 24-135

FINAL DECISION

On the Decision:

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Presiding Officer
October 5, 2026

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Abbreviations

<u>A1B2</u>	<u>New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid</u> , EFSB 23-02/D.P.U. 23-45 (2026)
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
<u>Acushnet</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy and New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid</u> , EFSB 21-04/D.P.U. 21-149 (2026)
<u>Beverly-Salem</u>	<u>New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid</u> , EFSB 19-04/D.P.U. 19-77/19-78 (2021)
BMPs	Best management practices
BVW	Bordering vegetated wetland
<u>Colonial 2016</u>	<u>Colonial Gas Company d/b/a National Grid</u> , EFSB 16-01 (2016) (“ <u>Colonial 2016</u> ”)
<u>Colonial 2019</u>	<u>Colonial Gas Company d/b/a National Grid</u> , EFSB 18-01/D.P.U. 18-30 (2019) (“ <u>Colonial 2019</u> ”),
Connell Rink and Pool	William A. Connell Swimming Pool and Skating Rink
COP	Community outreach plan
<u>Cranberry Point</u>	<u>Cranberry Point Energy Storage, LLC</u> , D.P.U. 22-59 (2023)
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DCT	Double-circuit tower
Department	Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities
EFSB	Massachusetts Energy Facility Siting Board
EJ Policy	EEA Environmental Justice Policy, 2021
<u>Exelon West Medway</u>	<u>Exelon West Medway LLC and Exelon West Medway II, LLC</u> , EFSB 15-01/D.P.U. 15-25 (2016)
<u>Eversource Oak Bluffs</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy</u> , DPU 18-155, (2020)

<u>Eversource Westfield</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy</u> ; DPU 18-21 (2019)
G.L. c.	Massachusetts General Laws chapter
<u>GCEP</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy</u> , EFSB 22-03/D.P.U. 22-21 (2024)
GIS	Gas-insulated switchgear
HDD	Horizontal directional drilling
<u>Hillman ESS</u>	<u>Hillman ESS LLC</u> , EFSB 25-08 (2026)
Hingham DPW	Town of Hingham Department of Public Works
HMLP	Hingham Municipal Light Plant
<u>Hopkinton LNG</u>	<u>Hopkinton LNG Corporation</u> , D.P.U. 17-114 (2018)
ICNIRP	International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection
ISO-NE	ISO (Independent System Operator) of New England
kcmil	Kilo circular mil
kV	Kilovolt
MassDEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
MassGIS	Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information
<u>Martorano</u>	<u>Martorano v. Department of Public Utilities</u> , 401 Mass. 257 (1987)
MBTA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
<u>Medway Grid</u>	<u>Medway Grid, LLC</u> , D.P.U. 22-18/22-19 (2023)
MEPA	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
MF	magnetic fields
<u>Mid-Cape Reliability Project</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy</u> , EFSB 19-06/D.P.U. 19-142/19-143 (2022)
<u>Mid-Cape Project Change</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy</u> , EFSB 19-06A/D.P.U. 19-142A/19-143A/23-22 (2025)

mG	Milligauss
<u>Moraga ESS</u>	<u>Moraga Storage, LLC</u> , EFSB 25-07 (2026)
MVA	Megavolt-amperes
NERC	North American Reliability Corporation
<u>Millbury Line</u>	<u>New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid</u> , EFSB 12-1/D.P.U. 12-46/12-47, at 88 (2014).
New Substation	A proposed enclosed substation at the Hingham Transfer Station which would receive electricity from the New Transmission Line and distribute it to HMLP's customers
New Tap Station	A proposed open-air tap station in the Town of Weymouth that would tap into an existing Eversource transmission line
New Transmission Line	An approximately 3.2-mile, 115 kilovolt underground transmission line that would run between the New Tap Station and New Substation
NHESP	Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
NPCC	Northeast Power Coordinating Council
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NTAs	Non-transmission alternatives
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
ORAD	Order of Resource Area Delineation
ORW	Outstanding Resource Water
<u>Park City Wind</u>	<u>Park City Wind, LLC</u> , EFSB 20-01/D.P.U. 20-56/20-57 (2023)
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride
Roadmap Act	An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, St. 2021, c. 8
ROW	Right of way
SF ₆	Sulfur hexafluoride

Siting Board	Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board
<u>Save the Bay</u>	<u>Save the Bay v. Department of Public Utilities</u> , 366 Mass. 667 (1975)
<u>Southcoast Wind</u>	<u>Southcoast Wind Energy LLC</u> , EFSB 22-04/ D.P.U. 22-67/ 22-68, (2024)
<u>Sudbury-Hudson</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy</u> , EFSB 17-02/D.P.U. 17-82/17-83 (2019)
<u>Town of Sudbury</u>	<u>Town of Sudbury v. Energy Facilities Siting Board</u> , 487 Mass. 737 (2021)
SWPPP	Stormwater pollution prevention plan
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
Transfer Station	Town of Hingham Department of Public Works solid waste and recycling transfer station on Hobart Street
<u>Trimount ESS</u>	<u>Trimount ESS LLC</u> , EFSB 25-05/D.P.U. 24-152 (2026)
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USGS	United States Geological Survey
<u>Vineyard Wind</u>	<u>Vineyard Wind, LLC</u> , EFSB 17-05/D.P.U. 18-18/18-19 (2019)
<u>Woburn Wakefield</u>	<u>NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy and New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid</u> , EFSB 15-04/ D.P.U. 15-140/15-141 (2018)
WPA	Wetlands Protection Act

Summary of the Decision

Pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J, Hingham Municipal Light Plant (“HMLP”) requests approval for: (1) a new substation located in Hingham, Massachusetts (“New Substation”); (2) a new tap station located in Weymouth, Massachusetts (“New Tap Station”); and (3) an approximately 3.2-mile, 115 kilovolt (“kV”) underground transmission line (“New Transmission Line”) along public roadways between the New Substation and New Tap Station (collectively, the “Project”). The New Substation and New Transmission Line would be constructed, owned, and operated by HMLP, whereas the New Tap Station would be constructed, owned, and operated by NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (“Eversource”). In addition, pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, HMLP and Eversource (“the Companies”) jointly request individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the Town of Hingham Zoning Bylaw and the Town of Weymouth General Code Chapter 120, Zoning for the construction of the New Substation and New Tap Station, respectively. The Project is expected to cost approximately \$107.6 million, which will be paid solely by HMLP customers. The Decision recommends approval of the Project, with conditions.

HMLP’s existing transmission system, which serves the Town of Hingham, consists of two 115 kV transmission lines connected to HMLP’s existing Hobart Substation, with portions of the two transmission lines supported by double-circuit towers (“DCTs”). The Decision finds that HMLP’s existing system is susceptible to a townwide outage under certain contingency events, including the loss of a DCT. The Decision finds that the Project is needed to maintain reliable electric service for the Town of Hingham and is superior to other transmission and non-transmission alternatives evaluated for cost, reliability, and environmental impacts.

HMLP conducted an examination of potential sites for the New Substation and New Tap Station and potential routes for the New Transmission Line. The Decision finds that the Proposed Route is preferable to the Noticed Alternative Route and Noticed Alternative Variation routes in terms of cost and environmental impacts. Project construction would result in temporary impacts to traffic, noise, and air quality. During operation, the New Substation and New Tap Station would be unstaffed and would not produce audible noise due to the absence of transformers. Construction of the New Substation and New Tap Station would result in the loss of approximately 63 and 221 trees, respectively. The impacts of tree clearing would be mitigated at the New Substation through consultation with the Hingham Conservation Commission, and at the New Tap Station through on-site tree plantings for visual screening.

The Decision also finds the Project would be consistent with current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies of the Commonwealth. The Decision recommends Project approval, with conditions, to ensure a reliable energy supply, with a minimum impact on the environment, at the lowest possible cost. The Decision also finds that granting individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions is required to allow the timely construction and operation of the Project.

Pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J, the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board (“Siting Board”) hereby approves, subject to the conditions set forth below, the Petition of Hingham Municipal Light Plant (“HMLP”) to construct, operate, and maintain a 115 kilovolt underground transmission line and associated facilities in Hingham and Weymouth, Massachusetts. Pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the Siting Board hereby approves, subject to the conditions set forth below, the petition of HMLP and NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (“Eversource”) seeking individual and comprehensive exemptions from the operation of the Town of Hingham Zoning Bylaw (“Hingham Zoning Bylaw”) and the Town of Weymouth General Code Chapter 120, Zoning (“Weymouth Zoning Ordinance”).

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Description of the Proposed Project

HMLP and Eversource propose to construct, operate, and maintain three project components: (1) an open-air tap station (“New Tap Station”) in the Town of Weymouth that would tap into an existing Eversource transmission line; (2) an approximately 3.2-mile, 115 kilovolt (“kV”) underground transmission line (“New Transmission Line”), which would run from the New Tap Station to the existing Town of Hingham Department of Public Works solid waste and recycling transfer station (“Transfer Station”) on Hobart Street; and (3) an enclosed substation (“New Substation”) located at the Transfer Station site, which would receive electricity from the New Transmission Line and distribute it to HMLP’s customers (together, the “Project”) (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1). HMLP would construct, own, and operate the New Substation and the New Transmission Line, whereas Eversource would construct, own, and operate the New Tap Station (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1).¹

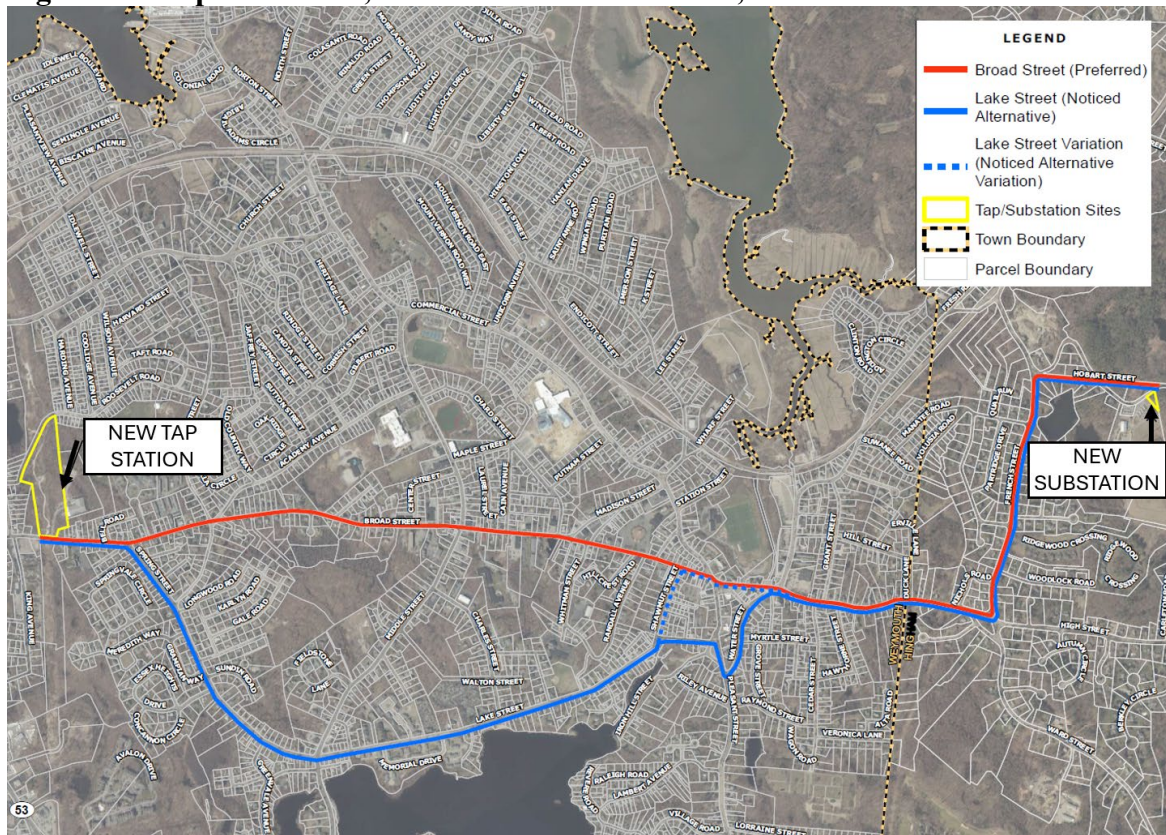
The New Transmission Line would be comprised of a 750-kilo circular mil (“kcmil”) copper conductor, cross-linked polyethylene-insulated cable in a concrete encased manhole and

¹ Both the New Substation and New Tap Station are substations, but HMLP calls the latter a tap station to emphasize it being the tap location/point of interconnection between HMLP’s transmission system and Eversource’s regional transmission system, as well as to differentiate the New Tap Station from the New Substation. See Exh. HE-1, at 1-1 to 1-2, 3-3.

duct bank system (Exh. HE-1, at 5-23). HMLP's proposed route for the New Transmission Line (the "Proposed Route" or "Broad Street Route") runs approximately 3.2 miles primarily along public ways and streets (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1). Starting at the New Tap Station, it would run east under Broad Street for approximately 8,500 feet, continues in the same direction where Broad Street becomes High Street, turns north on French Street, and then turns east on Hobart Street until ending at the New Substation at the Hingham Transfer Station (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1).

As an alternative to the Proposed Route, HMLP proposed a Noticed Alternative Route (the "Lake Street Route"), an approximately 3.7-mile underground route that starts at the New Tap Station, heads east on Broad Street, turns southeast onto Spring Street, and transitions into Essex Street, Lake Street, and the east-bound branch of Shawmut Street (Exh. HE-1, at 5-5). The route turns south on Pleasant Street, makes a sharp turn to the north on Water Street, and then turns east on High Street (Exh. HE-1, at 5-5). The Noticed Alternative Route would follow the same path as the Proposed Route when it crosses into Hingham (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1).

Figure 1. Proposed Route, Noticed Alternative Route, and Noticed Variation



Source: Exh. HE-1, at 4-41, Figure 4-9. Modified by staff for legibility.

HMLP also proposed a Noticed Variation of its Noticed Alternative Route, which follows the same route out of the New Tap Station to Broad Street, Spring Street, Essex Street, and Lake Street (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1). Instead of continuing east on Shawmut Street, the Noticed Variation goes north on Shawmut Street and turns east on Broad Street (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1). The Noticed Variation rejoins the Noticed Alternative Route where Broad Street transitions into High Street (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1).

HMLP proposes to locate the New Substation on an approximately 24,000 square foot undeveloped area in the northeastern corner of the 9.7-acre Hingham Transfer Station (“New Substation site”), which is close to HMLP’s existing Hobart Substation (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1). The New Substation would be enclosed, with structures, equipment, and site improvements, including a new gas-insulated switchgear (“GIS”) substation containing circuit breakers, electrical bus work, protection and communications equipment, and a bathroom (Exhs. HE-1, at 1-1; HE-4). The New Substation would include fencing and a retaining wall (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1). HMLP said it does not need, or currently plan to install a transformer at the New Substation as it would be connected to Hobart Substation in a ring-bus configuration; however, there would be space for a future transformer and switchgear at the New Substation site, if, and when the equipment is needed to address load growth from electrification to meet the Town of Hingham’s and the Commonwealth’s climate goals (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1 to 1-2, 4-7, 5-20).²

The New Tap Station would be located on approximately 2.5 acres of land owned by Eversource which contains an existing transmission corridor on Broad Street in Weymouth (“New Tap Station Site”) (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1 to 1-2). The New Tap Station in Weymouth would be an open-air tap station and would include air-insulated switchgear (“AIS”), an electrical control enclosure, four 85-foot shielding masts, three electric overhead-to-underground transition structures, two 210-foot underground transmission interconnections between the existing lines

² The Siting Board’s approval in this Decision is based on the proposed Project described in the Companies’ filings in this proceeding. HMLP must notify the Siting Board if and when the Project seeks to add a transformer and switchgear at the New Substation, or makes other Project Changes. See Section X, below and 980 CMR 1.09(13).

and the New Tap Station, one tangent pole, fencing, an additional parking area with a new access drive for vehicles, and a bathroom structure (Exh. HE-1, at 1-2, 5-9; Tr.1, at 26).

B. Procedural History

On November 13, 2024, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J, HMLP filed a petition with the Siting Board relating to the Project. The Siting Petition was docketed as EFSB 24-01. On the same day, HMLP and Eversource filed a joint petition with the Department of Public Utilities (“Department”) pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3 seeking individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the Hingham Zoning Bylaw in connection with the construction by HMLP of the New Substation, and from the Weymouth Zoning Ordinance, in connection with the construction by Eversource of the New Tap Station. The joint Zoning Petition was docketed as D.P.U. 24-135. On November 21, 2024, the Chair of the Department signed an order referring the Zoning Petition to the Siting Board for review pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69H(2) and 980 CMR 1.09(3). The consolidated proceeding was docketed as EFSB 24-01/D.P.U. 24-135.³

On March 3, 2025, the Siting Board issued a Notice of Adjudication and Public Comment Hearing (“Notice”) for a public comment hearing in Weymouth on March 25, 2025, and for a public comment hearing in Hingham on March 31, 2025. The hearings provided both remote and in-person options for the public. At those hybrid public comment hearings, members of the public provided comments to the Siting Board regarding the proposed Project and raised concerns regarding traffic during construction; potential magnetic field (“MF”) impacts on the Herring Run Brook at Broad Street in Weymouth; the potential impacts to the Back River Watershed; the cost of the proposed Project; the impact on Weymouth residents without a corresponding benefit to their distribution system; potential noise, blasting and construction impacts in Weymouth, alternative locations for the New Substation; compensation to Weymouth for the disruption related to the proposed facilities in Weymouth; safety, environmental and

³ In this Decision, we use the term “Companies” when discussing work, commitments, or other undertakings applicable to both HMLP and Eversource; otherwise, we refer to either HMLP or Eversource as the entity responsible for the work corresponding to the applicable Project component.

health impacts of the proposed New Tap Station; the history of power outages in Hingham; load growth expectations; the alternative route within Hingham; and access to recreation areas and residences during construction. The Siting Board received written comments that echoed these concerns.

The Siting Board received the following timely filed petitions to intervene in this proceeding: Robert C. and Naomi B. Preble (collectively, the “Prebles”); Karen Rund; and the Town of Weymouth. The Siting Board received timely filed petitions for limited participant status from Don and Judy DiCristofaro (collectively, the “DiCristofaros”); Judy Kelley; and Susan and Larry Wetzel (collectively, the “Wetzels”). On July 2, 2025, the Siting Board granted the petitions to intervene by the Town of Weymouth, Karen Rund, and the Prebles. Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant and NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 24-01/D.P.U. 24-135, Ruling on Petitions to Intervene and On Petitions for Limited Participant Status at 4-5 (July 2, 2025). The Siting Board also granted petitions for limited participant status submitted by the DiCristofaros, Judy Kelley, and the Wetzels. Id. at 5-6.

HMLP and Eversource responded to two rounds of discovery questions from staff and one round from the Prebles. The Siting Board conducted evidentiary hearings on September 29 and September 30, 2025. At the conclusion of hearings, approximately 107 exhibits were entered into the evidentiary record.

HMLP presented testimony from seven witnesses: (1) Thomas Morahan, HMLP’s general manager; (2) Thomas E. Converse, P.E., president and principal engineer, LIG Consultants, P.C.; (3) Tracy Adamski, AICP, vice president, Tighe & Bond, Inc.; (4) Charles Salamone, P.E., principal, Cape Power Systems Consulting, LLC; (5) P.J. O’Sullivan, senior advisor, Rasky Partners, Inc.; (6) Dr. Christopher M. Long, principal, Gradient, LLC (“Gradient”); and (7) Mark Cordeiro, principal, Power Line Models, Inc. In addition, Eversource presented four witnesses: (1) John Gerety, project manager for Eversource; (2) Moesha Outar, project engagement for transmission for Eversource; (3) Matthew Watkins, president of Watkins Strategies LLC; and (4) Christopher P. Newhall, supervisor in Eversource’s Licensing and Permitting Department.

HMLP and Eversource filed initial briefs on November 14, 2025. The Town of Weymouth filed a reply brief on December 12, 2025. HMLP filed a reply brief on December 23, 2025.

On September 1, 2026, HMLP filed a copy of a Host Community Agreement (“HCA”) between HMLP and the Town of Weymouth executed on August 31, 2026 (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att.) . Notably, the HCA provides that HMLP and the Town of Weymouth will coordinate construction activities to take place in Weymouth to accommodate the timing of construction of planned infrastructure improvement projects within Weymouth (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1). Specifically, the HCA terms provide that if the Siting Board approves HMLP’s Proposed Route for the New Transmission Line and Hingham Town Meeting approves bonding for the Project, HMLP and Weymouth agree to coordinate construction of HMLP’s New Line with Weymouth’s Jackson Square Redevelopment and Broad Street Bridge Replacement Project, which are important infrastructure improvement projects planned for Weymouth (Att. EFSB-G-4(S1) at 2-4). In addition, HMLP agrees to pay Weymouth a total of \$500,000 for the reconfiguration of the existing parking lot located at the William A. Connell Swimming Pool & Skating Rink⁴ in Weymouth, which is in the vicinity of the proposed Eversource New Tap Station (Att. EFSB-G-4(S1) at 4-5). HMLP also will pay the Town of Weymouth the sum of \$649,537 for the removal and resetting of granite curbs and removal and replacement of asphalt sidewalks along the route of the proposed transmission line (Att. EFSB-G-4(S1) at 5-6).

In Section 6(c) of HCA, provided the Siting Board’s Final Decision approves HMLP’s Proposed Route, Weymouth agrees to take responsibility for permanent repaving of the roads along the route of the New Transmission Line within twelve months of HMLP’s completion of construction as well as temporary repaving of the roads immediately after construction (). HMLP will pay the Town of Weymouth the sum of \$2,028,877 for this curb-to-curb repaving along the Proposed Route (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att.at 5). If the Siting Board does not approve the Proposed Route, HMLP and the Town of Weymouth agree to engage in discussions

⁴ The parking lot is under the control by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (“DCR”); the Town of Weymouth entered into a Lease Agreement with DCR to manage and control the premises and the surrounding property (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) at 4).

regarding commitments related to an alternative route (Att. EFSB-G-4(S1) at 4.6). In turn, the Town of Weymouth agrees not to appeal or otherwise object to the Siting Board's approval of the Petition to Construct and the Joint Zoning Exemption Petition and to support approvals of other boards and departments in connection with permitting that may be required of HMLP or Eversource regarding the proposed Project (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att. at 2) .

The Department and the Siting Board have stated that while an HCA is part of the record in a proceeding, and aligns with the basis of some of the conditions imposed, the HCA is a private agreement between signatories, and it is not appropriate to incorporate the full HCA into a decision. See Medway Grid, D.P.U. 22-18/22-19, at 16 (2023); Exelon West Medway LLC and Exelon West Medway II, LLC, EFSB 15-01/D.P.U. 15-25, at 6 (2016) (“Exelon West Medway”); see also Hopkinton LNG Corporation, D.P.U. 17-114, at 6 (2018) (“Hopkinton LNG”). The HCA is a contract negotiated outside of the aegis of the Board, separately from the proceeding. See Medway Grid at 16; Woburn-Wakefield at 94.

On September 18, 2026, Siting Board staff distributed a Tentative Decision to the Siting Board members and all parties for review and comment. The parties were given until September 25, 2026, to file written comments. The Board received timely written comments from HMLP, Eversource, and the Town of Weymouth. On September 30, 2026, the Siting Board conducted a hybrid public meeting to consider the Tentative Decision, at which the parties presented oral arguments. After deliberation, the Board directed staff to prepare a Final Decision approving HMLP's Section 69 Petition and the Companies' Zoning Petition, subject to certain conditions set forth below.

II. JURISDICTION AND STANDARD OF REVIEW UNDER G.L. C. 164 § 69J

G.L. c. 164, § 69J provides that the Siting Board should approve a petition to construct if the Siting Board determines that the petition meets certain requirements, including that the plans for the construction of the applicant's facilities are consistent with the policies stated in G.L. c. 164, § 69H to provide a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth, with a minimum impact on the environment, at the lowest possible cost, and are consistent with current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies of the Commonwealth.

See Town of Sudbury v. Energy Facilities Siting Board, 487 Mass. 737, 746-747 (2021).

Pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J, a project applicant must obtain Siting Board approval for the construction of proposed energy facilities before a construction permit may be issued by another state agency.

G.L. c. 164, § 69G defines a “facility” to include “a new electric transmission line having a design rating of 69 [kV] or more and which is one mile or more in length on a new transmission corridor.” HMLP’s proposed new 115 kV underground transmission line would be approximately 3.2 miles long and run almost entirely in the public way. Therefore, the proposed 115 kV transmission line is a “facility” with respect to Section 69G and the Project is subject to Siting Board jurisdiction.

The Siting Board requires that an applicant demonstrate that its proposal meets the following requirements: (1) that additional energy resources are needed (see Section III, below); (2) that, on balance, the proposed project is superior to alternative approaches in terms of reliability, cost, and environmental impact, and in its ability to address the identified need (see Section IV, below); (3) that the applicant has considered a reasonable range of practical facility siting alternatives and that the proposed facilities are sited in locations that minimize costs and environmental impacts while ensuring a reliable energy supply (see Section V, below); (4) that environmental impacts of the Project are minimized and the project achieves an appropriate balance among conflicting environmental concerns as well as among environmental impacts, cost, and reliability (see Section VI, below); and (5) that plans for construction of the proposed facilities are consistent with the current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies of the Commonwealth (see Section VII, below).

III. NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

A. Standard of Review

The Siting Board reviews the need for proposed transmission facilities to meet reliability, economic efficiency, or environmental objectives. G.L. c. 164, §§ 69H, 69J. When demonstrating the need for a proposed transmission facility based on reliability considerations, a petitioner applies its established planning criteria for construction, operation, and maintenance of

its transmission and distribution system. Compliance with the applicable planning criteria can demonstrate a “reliable” system. See New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid, EFSB 23-02/D.P.U. 23-45 at 7 (2026) (“A1B2”); NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy and New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid, EFSB 21-04/D.P.U. 21-149, at 8 (2026) (“Acushnet”); NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 22-03/D.P.U. 22-21, at 15 (2024) (“GCEP”).

Accordingly, to determine whether system improvements are needed, the Siting Board:

- (1) examines the reasonableness of the petitioner’s system reliability planning criteria;
- (2) determines whether the petitioner uses reviewable and appropriate methods for assessing system reliability over time based on system modeling analyses or other valid reliability indicators; and (3) determines whether the relevant transmission and distribution system meets these reliability criteria over time under normal conditions and under certain contingencies, given existing and projected loads. See A1B2 at 7-8; Acushnet at 8; GCEP at 16.

B. Companies’ Description

HMLP is a municipally owned electric utility that provides service to the approximately 10,500 metered customers within the Town of Hingham, which includes roughly 24,000 residents (Exh. HE-1, at 2-1). HMLP stated that its territory is served by a single bulk power substation, Hobart Substation, which is located next to the Hingham Transfer Station (Exh. HE-1, at 2-2). HMLP stated that the existing substation contains three power transformers each with a maximum rating of 40 megavolt-amperes (“MVA”) (Exh. HE-1, at 2-1). According to HMLP, with any single transformer out of service, Hobart Substation can supply 80 MVA on a firm basis with the remaining two transformers (Exh. HE-1, at 2-1). HMLP reported that Hobart Substation has a historic annual peak demand of 57 MVA (Exh. HE-1, at 2-1).

The Hobart Substation is supplied by two overhead 115 kV transmission lines that tap into Eversource's 478-503 and 478-508 transmission lines in Weymouth, approximately 3.3 miles away (Exh. HE-1, at 2-1 to 2-2). HMLP stated that the two existing overhead transmission lines mostly run alongside the Greenbush rail line with the end of the transmission lines traveling along local Hingham roadways (Exh. HE-1, at 2-2). HMLP explained that an

initial 2.3-mile section of the transmission lines extending from the tap of Eversource's lines in Weymouth are owned by National Grid, and the remaining section of the transmission lines are owned and maintained by HMLP (Exh. HE-1, at 2-2). HMLP stated that the two transmission lines are supported by mix of 49 wood and metal transmission structures, including 22 double-circuit towers ("DCT") in which both transmission lines share the same structure (Exh. HE-1, at 2-3).

HMLP claims that the current configuration of its system is susceptible to both N-1 contingency events, such as the loss of a single element that would result in the loss of both circuits, and N-1-1 contingency events, such as the loss of one line followed by the loss of the second line, that could result in the simultaneous loss of service from the transmission lines serving Hobart Substation (Exh. HE-1, at 2-1; HMLP Brief at 1). Specifically, HMLP explained that the loss of a single line while the other line is out of service for maintenance could result in an extended outage lasting from 8 to 48 hours, and the loss of a single DCT may result in townwide outages lasting a week or more (Exh. HE-1, at 2-2 to 2-3). HMLP listed train derailments, automobile crashes, transmission structure damage, and extreme weather conditions as potential events that could result in the loss of a DCT (Exhs. EFSB-N-2; EFSB-N-5; Tr. 1, at 70-71). HMLP explained that it lacks the specialized crews and equipment to repair or replace a damaged tower, and the availability of the necessary personnel or equipment may be uncertain during extreme weather events (Tr. 1, at 78-81). HMLP indicated that state and regional climate reports showed that extreme weather events have risen in frequency and severity over recent years, and that the continuation of this trend poses a risk to electrical infrastructure (Exhs. EFSB-N-5; EFSB-G-7).

HMLP provided the outage history since 2015 of the two transmission lines feeding Hobart Substation, noting that there were 34 instances where a line was out for either damage or maintenance (Exhs. EFSB-N-6; EFSB-N-6(1); EFSB-N-6(2); HE-1, at 2-6). HMLP described an event in 2018 where extreme weather damaged one of the transmission lines and resulted in an outage lasting over eight hours (Exhs. HE-1, at 2-6; EFSB-N-6). HMLP described another instance in 2022 where a damaged transmission line took nearly 24 hours to repair, putting Hingham at risk of a townwide outage from an N-1-1 contingency event (Exhs. HE-1, at 2-6;

EFSB-N-6(1), at 2). Additionally, HMLP stated that in 1991, a failed insulator tripped both transmission circuits offline resulting in interrupted service to Hingham for 24 hours (Exh. HE-1, at 2-6).

While its assets are not bulk electric system and pool transmission facilities, HMLP stated that it follows good utility practice when assessing its system reliability performance as a transmission owner and load-serving entity providing service, which includes following certain national and regional reliability standards it is not mandated to adopt (Exhs. HE-1, at 2-5; EFSB-N-3). HMLP determined that these standards serve as a sound basis for evaluating its system's reliability performance (Exh. HE-1, at 2-5). Specifically, HMLP stated it strives to adhere to the following reliability and planning standards from the North American Reliability Corporation ("NERC"), Northeast Power Coordinating Council ("NPCC"), and ISO New England ("ISO-NE"):

- NERC TPL-001-4 Transmission System Planning Performance Requirements;
- NPCC Regional Reliability Reference Directory #1, "Design and Operation of the Bulk Power System";
- ISO-NE Planning Procedure 3, "Reliability Standards for the New England Area Pool Transmission Facilities"; and
- ISO-NE Planning Procedure 5-3, "Guidelines for Conducting and Evaluating Proposed Plan Application Analyses."

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 2-5.

HMLP stated that these standards include assessment of the impacts associated with N-1 and N-1-1 contingency events when evaluating reliability performance (Exh. HE-1, at 2-5). HMLP indicated that given its past experience with extended outages and the risk of future contingency events resulting in loss of power to Hingham customers, its system is not consistent with the NERC, NPCC, and ISO-NE standards that it seeks to comply with and therefore HMLP must take action to bring its system into compliance (Exh. HE-1, at 2-6; HMLP Brief at 25-26). HMLP argues that its existing system needs additional energy resources to conform to the reliability and planning standards established by these oversight entities (Exh. HE-1, at 2-6; HMLP Brief at 28-29).

HMLP stated that its system has a historic annual peak demand of 57 MVA and it anticipates that even with projected load growth in Hingham over the next ten years, it will not

exceed the existing 80 MVA firm capacity of the system (Exhs. HE-1, at 1-2, 1-5; EFSB-N-7). Therefore, HMLP asserts that this Project is not needed for capacity purposes in the near term (Exh. HE-1, at 1-1; HMLP Brief at 7). However, HMLP noted that the Town of Hingham and the Commonwealth have adopted climate goals that rely on widespread electrification efforts (Exhs. HE-1, at 1-1; EFSB-N-4; EFSB-G-7). The Town of Hingham has a goal of net zero by 2040 (Exh. EFSB-N-4). To that end, HMLP stated that it provides several services and programs to promote electrification to its customers, including educational services, energy assessments, and rebates for certain electric technologies (Exh. EFSB-N-4). HMLP stated that with full electrification of its service territory, its winter peak load is projected to reach up to 110 MVA, which would exceed the current system capacity (Exhs. HE-1, at 1-2; EFSB-N-7). HMLP explained that, since the proposed New Substation site has space for a future transformer and switchgear, the Project would provide the additional benefit of addressing the long-term peak load growth projected under the system's full electrification scenario (Exhs. HE-1, at 1-13; EFSB-N-4; EFSB-N-7).

C. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth did not address Project need on brief.

D. Analysis and Findings on Need

HMLP is not required to follow certain NERC, NPCC, and ISO-NE reliability standards that apply to bulk electric system and pool transmission facilities. However, HMLP has determined that these standards serve as a sound basis for evaluating its system reliability and it seeks to adhere to these standards. HMLP argues that its existing system, which is served by two 115 kV transmission lines feeding into the Hobart Substation, needs additional energy resources to meet reliability and planning standards established by these oversight entities.

The record shows that HMLP's system is susceptible to N-1 and N-1-1 contingency events that could leave the entire Town of Hingham without power for an extended period. The existing lines supplying Hobart Substation are supported in part by 22 DCTs, and the record explains that the loss of any one of these towers could result in a townwide outage lasting a week

or more due to the time needed to procure equipment and hire specialized workers to restore the lost tower. The record also shows that HMLP's network is at risk of an outage resulting from a line being lost while the other is offline for maintenance. HMLP provided a history of its system outages within the last decade that demonstrated that these reliability issues have previously led to extended outages on one or both of the existing lines.

HMLP contends that although this Project⁵ is needed for reliability and not capacity purposes, it provides the added benefit of enabling future capacity growth. The record shows that HMLP has a historic peak load of 57 MVA, and that projections for load growth over the next ten years would not exceed the Hobart Substation current firm capacity limit of 80 MVA. Under full electrification, the record shows that the projected winter peak load would exceed the HMLP system's firm capacity. Although no additional capacity would be added with the Project at the outset, the New Substation reserves space for the future addition of a transformer and switchgear that would provide additional system capacity and enable long-term electrification efforts of HMLP and its customers.

The Siting Board concurs that the NERC, NPCC, and ISO-NE standards are an appropriate method for HMLP to assess its transmission system reliability needs. The Siting Board finds that HMLP has adequately demonstrated that its existing system is susceptible to reliability risks and that there is a need for the addition of new energy resources to maintain a reliable electric supply to the Town of Hingham. Additionally, the Siting Board notes that the Project would position HMLP to serve longer-term capacity needs arising from future electrification efforts in Hingham.

⁵ At the April 30, 2022, Town Meeting, voters authorized the Hingham Select Board to transfer a portion of the transfer station site to HMLP for use for a new substation. See Exh. RR-EFSB-6. HMLP plans to seek Hingham Town Meeting approval to authorize the Town to issue bonds for a portion of Project costs at the Spring 2027 Annual Town Meeting (Exh. RR-EFSB-6(S1)).

IV. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO MEETING THE IDENTIFIED NEED

A. Standard of Review

G.L. c. 164, § 69J requires a project proponent to present alternatives to the proposed facility, which may include: (1) other methods of transmitting or storing energy; (2) other sources of electrical power; or (3) a reduction of requirements through load management. In implementing its statutory mandate, the Siting Board requires a petitioner to show that, on balance, its proposed project is superior to such alternative approaches in terms of cost, environmental impact, and ability to meet the identified need. In addition, the Siting Board requires a petitioner to consider reliability of supply as part of its showing that the proposed project is superior to alternative project approaches. See A1B2 at 16; Acushnet at 25; GCEP at 30.

B. Companies' Analysis of Alternative Approaches to Meet Need

HMLP stated that any alternative solution must be able to meet the existing firm load capability of 80 MVA and be available under both N-1 and N-1-1 contingency conditions for at least eight hours, and preferably, up to a week or more (Exh. HE-1, at 3-2, 3-29). HMLP emphasized that an alternative solution must provide the 80 MVA firm load capacity, and not just the historic 57 MVA peak capacity, to avoid a need for recurring project expansions every time new loads are added to the system (Exh. EFSB-PA-3). HMLP explained that during a contingency event, it may take 8 to 48 hours to restore a single circuit and a week or longer to restore a DCT structure, thus defining the minimum time required for an alternate solution to operate to prevent extended outages to Hingham (Exhs. HE-1, at 3-1; EFSB-N-2). After identifying and analyzing the following non-transmission and transmission alternatives, HMLP concluded that the proposed Project is superior to alternative approaches in terms of cost, environmental impact, and ability to meet the identified need (Exh. HE-1, at 3-31; HMLP Brief at 44-45).

1. Non-Transmission Alternatives

HMLP evaluated several non-transmission alternatives, including a “no-build” scenario, energy conservation or interruption of load, wind and solar resources, battery storage, and mobile

generators (Exhs. HE-1, at 3-1, 3-29; EFSB-PA-5). HMLP dismissed the no-build alternative because its existing system has an identified transmission reliability need (Exhs. HE-1, at 3-1; EFSB-N-3). HMLP likewise dismissed the option of conserving energy or interrupting load as a viable solution because this solution does not address the identified need, *i.e.*, customers would be without power during a contingency event where both lines are lost (Exh. HE-1, at 3-29).

HMLP estimated that to meet the firm load capability of 80 MVA, at least 35 land-based 2.5-megawatt wind turbines would be needed, each requiring approximately 30 acres of land for siting (Exh. HE-1, at 3-29). HMLP stated that Hingham lacks sufficient available land to construct this quantity of wind turbines, and such a development would result in significant land use impacts (Exh. HE-1, at 3-29). HMLP noted that environmental impacts and insufficient available land within Hingham likewise prevent solar power generation from being a viable non-transmission alternative (Exh. HE-1, at 3-30). Furthermore, HMLP stated that offshore wind would not be viable since the infrastructure required for interconnection to the existing system would result in extensive environmental permitting and impact mitigation (Exh. HE-1, at 3-29). HMLP indicated that these renewable resource alternatives would also be cost prohibitive due to the associated equipment and land acquisition costs (Exh. HE-1, at 3-29 to 3-30; EFSB-PA-5).

Due to the intermittency of wind and solar power generation, HMLP explained that these solutions would also require battery storage capacity to be able to consistently meet the firm load need (Exh. HE-1, at 3-29 to 3-30). HMLP estimated that the cost of solar coupled with storage would be in excess of \$160 million (Exh. HE-1, at 3-30). HMLP also concluded that the use of standalone batteries would be prohibitively costly (Exh. EFSB-PA-11). Furthermore, HMLP stated that a battery solution would be insufficient to address the identified need since typical units have a duration of two to four hours, and therefore would be unable to provide power to customers during a longer duration outage (Exhs. EFSB-PA-5, EFSB-PA-11).

When assessing the potential to use mobile generators as an alternative, HMLP determined that such a solution would require approximately 15 mobile units, each of which may take between three to four hours to safely connect and energize during an outage (Exh. EFSB-PA-5; Tr. 1 at 107-108). HMLP explained that because the non-transmission alternative must address a reliability concern arising from unpredictable events, mobile

generation units would need to be available at all hours of the year (Exh. EFSB-PA-10; Tr. 1, at 106). HMLP estimated that the annual cost of having mobile generators available year-round may exceed \$12 million per year and therefore would be significantly more expensive than the proposed Project over its lifetime; furthermore, diesel generators would have significant noise and air impacts (Exhs. EFSB-PA-5; EFSB-PA-10).

2. Transmission Alternatives

In evaluating transmission alternatives, HMLP considered only primarily underground options because there are no existing transmission line rights-of-way (“ROWs”) within Hingham (Exh. HE-1, at 3-3). HMLP determined that the tap point for a new transmission line would need to be located in an adjacent or nearby town since the only transmission lines within Hingham are the two lines currently serving the Hobart Substation (Exh. HE-1, at 3-3). HMLP identified three lines owned by Eversource to the north of Hingham and three lines owned by National Grid to the south as potential tap points (Exh. HE-1, at 3-3). HMLP also considered two transmission alternatives that involved eliminating the N-1 contingency from the existing system by redesigning the existing lines rather than adding a third transmission line (Exh. HE-1, at 3-3).

HMLP presented the following transmission alternatives:

- Option 1: 2.5-mile underground transmission line from Eversource’s Edgar Substation in Weymouth to a new substation at Hingham Shipyard;
- Option 2 (the Proposed Project): 3.2-mile underground transmission line from a tap point on Eversource’s 478-502 line in Weymouth to a new substation near the existing Hobart Substation in Hingham;
- Option 3 and Option 3 variation: 4.2-mile underground or 5.12-mile underground and aboveground transmission line from National Grid’s North Abington Substation to a new substation at South Hingham Industrial Park;
- Option 4: 7.5-mile overhead and underground transmission line from National Grid’s Norwell Substation to Union Street to Hobart Street;
- Option 5: 3.25-mile underground transmission line from a tap point on Eversource’s 478-502 circuit in Weymouth to Hobart Street along a Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (“MBTA”) rail line;
- Options 6A: replacement of the DCTs currently serving HMLP with separate, single monopoles; and

- Option 6B: underground placement of one of the existing lines serving HMLP.

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 3-4.

HMLP explained that considerable feeder work would be required to integrate Option 1 with the distribution system, significantly increasing the cost of this option (Exh. HE-1, at 3-6). HMLP stated there are no municipal parcels available in the vicinity of the Hingham Shipyard to construct a new substation, and the underground line construction would present challenges due to its proximity to a heavily trafficked roadway (Exh. HE-1, at 3-3). For these reasons, HMLP stated that Option 1 was not a viable alternative (Exh. HE-1, at 3-3).

HMLP explained that Option 2, its proposed Project, would meet the identified reliability need and allow for an additional transformer at the New Substation (Exh. HE-1, at 3-11). HMLP stated that this alternative would cost an estimated \$107.6 million (Exh. EFSB-C-1(S1)). HMLP indicated that, compared to the other transmission alternatives, this option presented fewer distribution system integration issues as the New Substation would be located adjacent to the Hobart Substation (Exh. HE-1, at 3-11). HMLP asserts this option is preferable in terms of meeting the identified need while minimizing cost and environmental impacts, noting that both the New Tap Station and New Substation would be outside of wetland resource areas and set back from residential abutters (Exh. HE-1, at 3-11; HMLP Brief at 38-39).

HMLP presented two transmission paths for Option 3: a 4.2-mile-long option that would cross through rare and endangered species habitat, wetland resource areas, and Outstanding Resource Waters (“ORWs”), or a 5.12-mile-long option that would have fewer environmental impacts but a higher cost and reliability-related exposure due to a portion of the circuit being above ground (Exh. HE-1, at 3-12, 3-16). HMLP noted that both Option 3 and Option 3 Variation would require substantial feeder work to integrate the new substation with the existing system (Exh. HE-1, at 3-15). HMLP estimated that the cost of Option 3 and Option 3 Variation would be \$145 million and \$153.5 million, respectively, not including the costs of distribution upgrades, land acquisition for the new substation and tap, or transmission easements (Exh. HE-1, at 3-15). HMLP determined that this alternative satisfies the identified need, but it would be inferior to the proposed Project in terms of cost, environmental impacts, and reliability (Exh. HE-1, at 3-17).

HMLP stated that for Option 4, the new transmission line would cross rare and endangered species habitat, wetlands, ORW, and protected open space, including portions of the line that would be above ground and inside the boundaries of the Wampatuck State Park (Exh. HE-1, at 3-19). According to HMLP, this solution would require nearly 25 miles of reconductoring of other circuits to avoid N-1-1 contingency conditions, at a cost of roughly \$36.6 million, in addition to the cost of the new 7.5-mile transmission line (Exh. HE-1, at 3-19). HMLP stated that it eliminated Option 4 from consideration due to the extensive environmental impacts and significant cost of transmission line work (Exh. HE-1, at 3-20).

HMLP explained that Option 5 would tap into the same Eversource transmission line as its proposed Project (Option 2), but at a location closer to where this line intersects with the MBTA right of way (“ROW”) (Exh. HE-1, at 3-20). HMLP stated that the transmission line would follow a similar route as the existing HMLP lines (Exh. HE-1, at 3-20). HMLP explained that constructing a new underground line within this ROW would present significant challenges due to limited physical space, construction time constraints imposed by the MBTA that would limit much of the work to nighttime construction hours, and the need to have the circuit cross rail lines (Exh. HE-1, at 3-20, 3-22). Additionally, HMLP identified several required wetlands crossings and five bridge crossings along this transmission path (Exh. HE-1, at 3-22). Due to the environmental impacts and the construction and timing constraints, HMLP eliminated Option 5 from further consideration (Exh. HE-1, at 3-22).

HMLP presented two alternatives for redesigning the existing lines to eliminate the N-1 DCT failure scenario: Options 6A and 6B (Exh. HE-1, at 3-22). In Option 6A, HMLP explored the replacement of all DCT structures with monopole structures (Exh. HE-1, at 3-23). HMLP determined that, at locations where the rail line curved, there was limited space to put a second structure within the ROW, therefore requiring the poles to be placed in adjacent residential areas (Exh. HE-1, at 3-23). Therefore, HMLP determined that the visual impacts of Option 6A were unacceptable (Exh. HE-1, at 3-23).

In Option 6B, HMLP stated that one of the existing transmission lines would be placed underground (Exh. HE-1, at 3-25). HMLP identified similar space and construction constraints for constructing within the existing ROW as those in Option 5 (Exh. HE-1, at 3-25).

Additionally, HMLP stated that neither Option 6A nor Option 6B would fully satisfy the reliability need, since the system would still be susceptible to N-1-1 contingencies, and for this reason eliminated the options from further consideration (Exh. HE-1, at 3-24 to 3-25).

HMLP also considered the use of grid-enhancing technologies and advanced transmission technologies for the Project (Exh. EFSB-G-3). HMLP explained that although these technologies offer some improvements to reliability by enhancing transmission component capacities, improving equipment response times, or improving the efficiency of the transmission system, they would not be able to address the contingency risks of HMLP's existing system (Exh. EFSB-G-3). HMLP stated it would consider the feasibility and cost of incorporating advanced transmission technologies into the proposed Project as the design advances (Exh. EFSB-G-3).

3. Distribution Alternatives

HMLP argues that there are no viable alternatives based solely on distribution system additions or modifications since a transmission system outage at Hingham's sole substation would interrupt service to all distribution facilities serving the Town of Hingham (Exh. HE-1, at 3-28; HMLP Brief at 30-31). HMLP further explained that its distribution system connections, or interties, with nearby electric distribution company systems could not adequately supply Hingham with electricity in case of an emergency (Exh. EFSB-PA-2). According to HMLP, the use of potential distribution interties to National Grid's system would at most only provide 30 to 35 percent of the capacity needed to supply Hingham (Exhs. EFSB-PA-7; Tr. 1, at 94-97). HMLP noted that there would likely be additional constraints on National Grid's system that would further reduce the available capacity during an emergency, and therefore distribution interties are an insufficient solution to addressing the Project need (Exh. EFSB-PA-7; Tr. 1, at 94-97).

C. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth expresses concern whether HMLP has met its burden under G.L. c. 164, § 69J to present alternatives including: (1) other methods of transmitting or storing

energy; (2) other sources of electrical power or natural gas; or (3) a reduction of requirements through load management (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 2). The Town of Weymouth argues that non-transmission alternatives would not have impacts on the roadways, sidewalks, or environmental areas of neighboring communities (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 3). Nevertheless, the Town of Weymouth states that it would rely upon the Siting Board to decide whether there are other reasonable alternative methods to meet acceptable reliability standards without causing a substantial impact to Weymouth (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 6)⁶.

In response, HMLP argues that it fully and comprehensively identified and analyzed a wide array of non-transmission and transmission alternatives, including two transmission alternatives that did not involve construction in Weymouth (HMLP Reply Brief at 3). HMLP provided the reasons rejected alternatives could not meet the identified need and reiterated that the Project is the superior option (HMLP Reply Brief at 3-4).

D. Analysis and Findings

HMLP assessed several non-transmission, distribution, and transmission alternatives to the proposed Project. The record shows that adding no new resources or relying on energy conservation measures would not address identified system reliability issues. HMLP considered whether renewable energy resources, mobile generators, or batteries could meet the firm load requirements of Hingham in the event of a transmission loss contingency event. The record demonstrates that each of these options requires significant land acquisition, and Hingham lacks sufficient available land to develop new renewable energy resources without extensive impacts to the environment, Hingham, and surrounding communities. Furthermore, the record shows that the costs over time of deploying new renewable energy resources to meet the identified need would be considerably higher than that of the proposed Project.

⁶ On September 1, 2026, HMLP submitted an HCA between HMLP and the Town of Weymouth (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att.). At page 2 of the HCA, the Town of Weymouth agrees not to appeal or otherwise object to the Siting Board's approval of the Petition to Construct and the Joint Zoning Exemption Petition and further agrees to support approvals of other boards and departments in connection with permitting that may be required of HMLP and/or Eversource.

The use of potential distribution ties to nearby National Grid feeders would only be able to provide roughly one-third of HMLP's firm capacity under best-case assumptions. The record demonstrates that this is insufficient to address the reliability need during an N-1 or N-1-1 contingency event, leading HMLP to reject this option.

Of the seven transmission alternatives presented, the record shows that Option 2 (the Project) is superior in terms of minimizing environmental impacts, ease of integration with the existing distribution system, and minimizing cost. Additionally, Option 2 would facilitate future buildout to increase HMLP's distribution capacity to meet its long-term electrification demand. The Siting Board directs HMLP to evaluate the feasibility and cost of incorporating advanced transmission technologies and grid-enhancing technologies into the proposed Project, and to submit a report on this evaluation to the Siting Board prior to the start of construction.

The Siting Board finds that HMLP sufficiently examined the potential for alternative approaches to meet the identified need and concurs that the Project is superior to other alternatives with respect to providing a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth with minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost.

V. ROUTE AND SITE SELECTION

A. Standard of Review

G.L. c. 164, § 69J requires a petition to construct to include a description of alternatives to the facility, including "other site locations." Thus, the Siting Board requires an applicant to demonstrate that it has considered a reasonable range of practical siting alternatives and that its proposed facilities are sited in locations that minimize cost and environmental impacts while ensuring a reliable supply. To do so, an applicant must meet a two-pronged test. First, the applicant must establish that it developed and applied a reasonable set of criteria for identifying and evaluating alternative routes in a manner that ensures that it has not overlooked or eliminated any routes that, on balance, are clearly superior to the proposed route. Second, the applicant generally must establish that it identified at least two noticed sites or routes with some measure of geographic diversity. See A1B2 at 23; Acushnet at 36-37, GCEP at 37. But see Colonial Gas Company d/b/a National Grid, EFSB 16-01, at 28-29 (2016) ("Colonial 2016"); Colonial Gas

Company d/b/a National Grid, EFSB 18-01/D.P.U. 18-30, at 40-42 (2019) (“Colonial 2019”), where the Siting Board found the company’s decision not to notice an alternative route to be reasonable.

B. Companies’ Approach to Route and Site Selection

HMLP employed a list of criteria to evaluate potential sites for the New Substation and New Tap Station (Exh. HE-1, at 4-1 to 4-2). HMLP then used an iterative approach to identify, evaluate, and rank possible routes for the New Transmission Line between these two sites through a scored ranking process (collectively, the “Routing Analysis”) (Exh. HE-1, at 4-2, 4-22 to 4-23).

1. Site Selection Process

Through a desktop analysis, HMLP evaluated a list of sites for the New Substation and another list of sites for the New Tap Station against physical space requirements and potential siting constraints (Exh. HE-1, at 4-5). The desktop analysis covered the following Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information (“MassGIS”) data:

- Area of Critical Environmental Concern (“ACEC”)
- Certified Vernal Pools/Potential Vernal Pools
- Chapter 91
- Environmental Justice Populations
- Floodplains
- Historic and Archeological Resources
- Land Use/Adjacent Land Use
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (“MassDEP”) Wetland / National Wetlands Inventory (“NWI”) Wetlands
- Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (“NHESP”) Priority/Estimated Habitat Rare Species
- Potential to Encounter Subsurface Contamination
- Prime Farmland
- Protected Open Space/Potential Article 97
- Sensitive Receptors
- Surface Water Supply Watershed/Public Water Supply Protection Area

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 4-5 to 4-6.

a. New Substation Site

HMLP focused on selecting a site for the New Substation in proximity to the existing Hobart Substation in Hingham such that the new and existing substations would be able to connect in a ring-bus configuration, which would allow one substation to back-feed the other (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7). HMLP ruled out the option to acquire privately-owned properties for the New Substation because it would require a lengthy and uncertain process involving the Hingham Select Board, a Town Meeting vote, and a public bidding process (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7, n.22).

In turn, HMLP identified a total of eleven town-owned parcels for the New Substation (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7; 4-12). Except for one parcel, a former HMLP facility on parcel 107-0-28 at 308 Cushing Street, HMLP determined that none of the parcels or a combination of the parcels could accommodate the minimum one-acre area required for an open-air substation (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7, 4-12).⁷ HMLP also determined that locating the New Substation at 308 Cushing Street would require seven additional miles of transmission line, which would result in reduced reliability and additional costs for distribution system integration (Exhs. HE-1, at 4-12; EFSB-RS-1, citing Exh. EFSB-PA-1). Consequently, HMLP proceeded to identify areas within the ten remaining parcels that could instead accommodate an enclosed GIS substation (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7). HMLP stated it would prefer a minimum of 20,000 square feet, or approximately half an acre to site an enclosed substation (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7).

Except for the Transfer Station site, HMLP stated that the majority of sites were less than one acre and all of the sites contained wetland resources that further constrained buildable areas (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7). Because the Hingham Conservation Commission would not approve work within 50-foot wetland buffers,⁸ HMLP eliminated eight of the ten parcels that did not have

⁷ According to HMLP's description, an open-air substation would serve the same function of an enclosed GIS substation but has a larger land area requirement (Exh. HE-1, at 4-7).

⁸ HMLP stated the Town of Hingham has local wetland requirements in addition to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act ("WPA"), which extends jurisdiction to additional resource areas and buffer zones, including a 50-foot no-touch buffer zone (Exh. EFSB-W-2). According to the Companies, like Hingham, the Town of Weymouth also has local wetland requirements that extend jurisdiction to additional resources areas, and buffer zones, including a 50-foot no-touch buffer zone (Exh. EFSB-W-2).

adequate area for an enclosed substation, leaving two site options—parcel 106-0-4, street address 0 Old Hobart Street (the Transfer Station and HMLP’s proposed New Substation site) and parcel 106-0-61, which is 34,000 square feet and has the street address 0 Hobart Street (Exh. HE-1, at 4-9 to 4-12).

During its assessment of parcel 106-0-61 for the New Substation, HMLP received significant concerns from the public regarding the use of the property and its proximity to residences (Exh. HE-1, at 4-11). These public concerns, alongside feedback from the Hingham Select Board and Advisory Committee, resulted in HMLP selecting the Transfer Station parcel as the New Substation site (Exh. HE-1, at 4-11 to 4-12).

b. New Tap Station Site

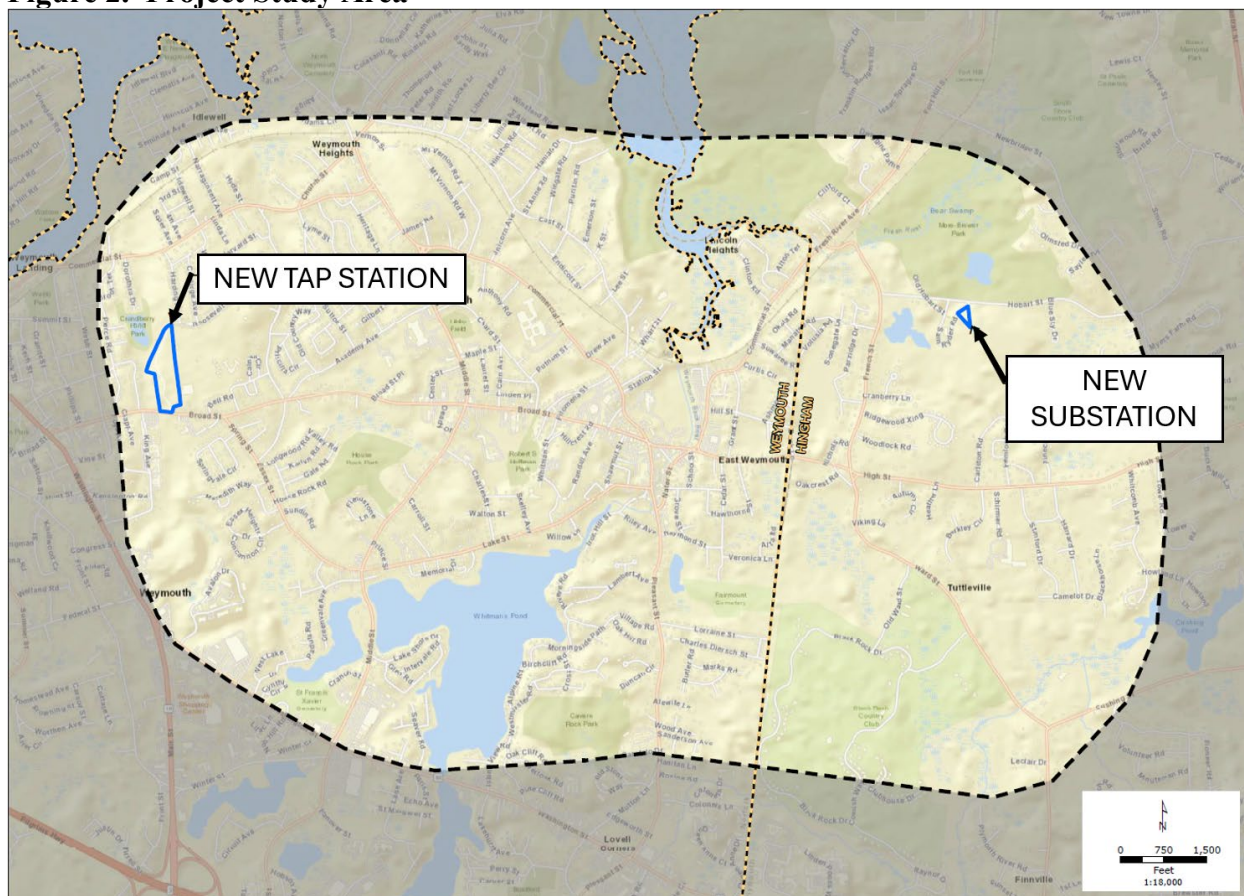
For siting the New Tap Station, HMLP focused on connecting to Eversource’s transmission lines in Weymouth and assessed a total of 15 parcels within and adjacent to the existing Eversource electric transmission ROW (Exh. HE-1, at 4-12). HMLP first assessed five parcels at the intersection of the Eversource ROW with Broad Street—one owned by Eversource, two owned by National Grid, and two parcels owned and used for parking by Electros witch (Exh. HE-1, at 4-12). HMLP reached out to Electros witch and learned that the lots it owned were not available for this Project (Exh. HE-1, at 4-12). HMLP ruled out the two parcels owned by National Grid due to limited usable areas constrained by wetland resource areas (Exh. HE-1, at 4-12 to 4-13). Consequently, HMLP identified the Eversource-owned parcel 20-220-1 as the only site with adequate unconstrained area for the New Tap Station, noting it has an additional benefit of being within an existing utility ROW and not near residential or sensitive abutters (Exh. HE-1, at 4-12 to 4-13).

Additionally, HMLP assessed ten additional properties along the ROW bounded by the Weymouth Fore River to the north and Route 53 to the south (Exh. HE-1, at 4-13). HMLP determined that the majority of the parcels were heavily constrained by wetland resource areas and one parcel was protected open space (Exh. HE-1, at 4-13 to 4-14). While four privately-owned parcels at the southern end of the ROW would have adequate space for the New Tap Station, HMLP did not pursue them further because the connection from these lots to the New

Substation would either increase the length of the new transmission by one mile within roadways or require wetland resource area crossings (Exh. HE-1, at 4-13 to 4-14). Therefore, HLMP maintains parcel 20-220-1 is the only viable site for the New Tap Station (HMLP Brief at 49).

2. Establishing General Route Selection Objectives/Criteria and Defining Routing Study Area

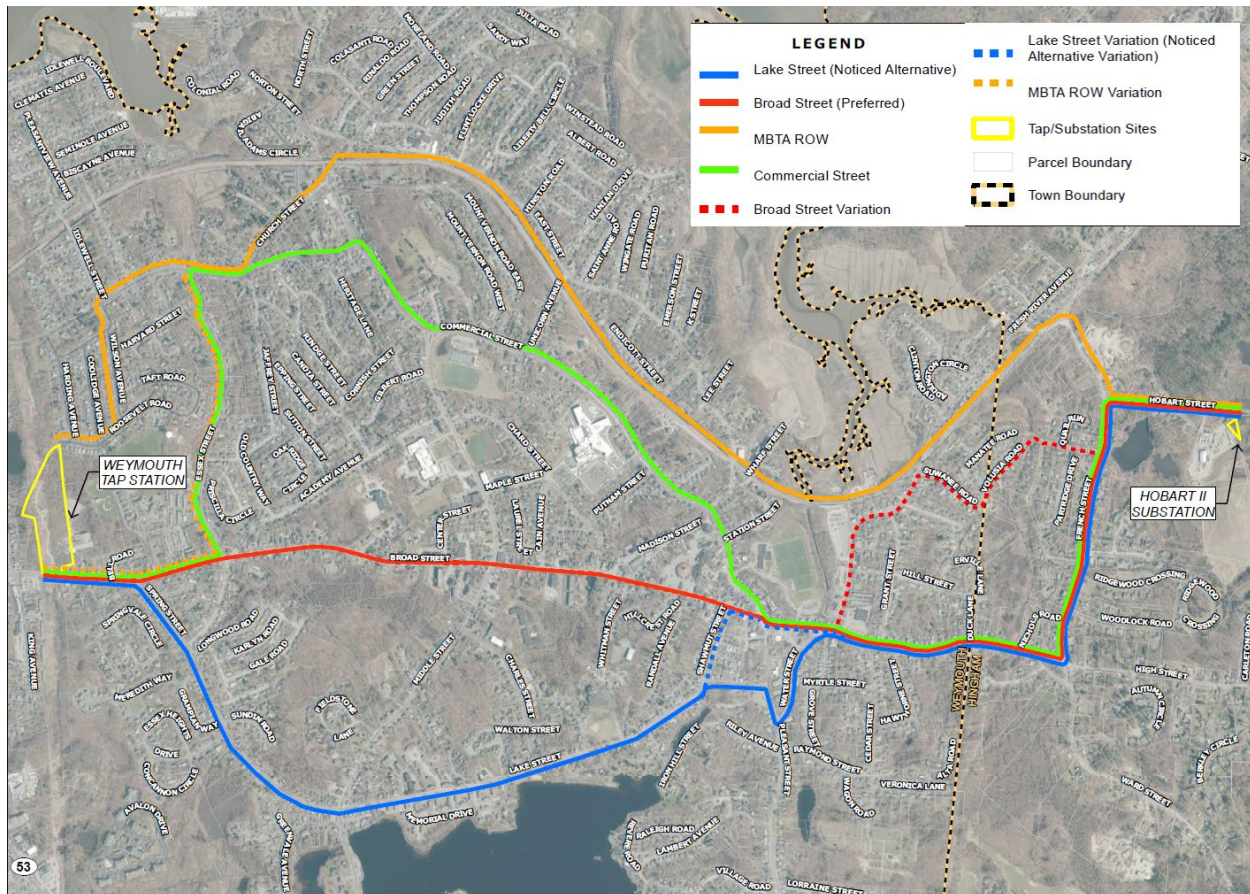
HMLP established the following objectives for evaluating technically feasible routes that would connect the New Substation to the New Tap Station: (1) comply with all applicable statutory requirements, regulations and state and federal siting agency policies; (2) achieve a reliable, operable and cost-effective solution; (3) maximize the reasonable, practical and feasible use of existing linear corridors; (4) minimize the need to acquire property rights; and (5) maximize the potential for direct routing options over circuitous routes (Exh. HE-1, at 4-2). HMLP demarcated a geographic “Project Study Area” to concentrate its investigation of potential routes (Exh. HE-1, at 4-16). The Project Study Area was bounded by the New Substation and New Tap Station in the east and west, respectively, and the MBTA railway in the north, and Lake Street in Weymouth and High Street in Hingham in the south (Exh. HE-1, at 4-16). According to HMLP, the Project Study Area included primarily residential areas and commercial corridors, as well as several wetlands resource areas and protected open space (Exh. HE-1, at 16). Figure 2 illustrates the Project Study Area.

Figure 2. Project Study Area

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 4-18, Fig. 4-3. Modified by staff for legibility.

3. Identifying the Universe of Routes

Based on its routing objectives and in consideration of stakeholder input (including from the public, and Town of Weymouth and Town of Hingham officials), HMLP reviewed U.S. Geological Survey (“USGS”) maps, MassGIS data, and aerial photography and completed field reconnaissance to develop potential routes that could support a new underground transmission line in a reasonably direct path between the New Substation and New Tap Station (“Universe of Routes”) (Exh. HE-1, at 4-16). The resulting Universe of Routes comprised seven route options, as shown in Figure 3; the route in solid red is the Companies’ proposed route (Exh. HE-1, at 4-16).

Figure 3. Universe of Routes

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 4-19, Fig. 4-4. Modified by staff for legibility.

HMLP conducted an initial screening process for these seven routes, which included reviewing: (1) publicly available data to consider existing abutting land uses and the presence of natural resources; (2) constructability constraints; and (3) information received from meetings with municipal officials and staff (Exh. HE-1, at 4-21). HMLP eliminated two routes from further consideration after finding them to have constructability constraints, including insufficient space for the duct bank construction, staging of the railway crossing, and manhole installation (Exh. HE-1, at 4-21). The five remaining candidate routes would travel underground on existing public roadways and would not cross state highways or MBTA corridors, thus avoiding interference with road and rail traffic (Exh. HE-1, at 4-22).

4. Weighting and Scoring Candidate Routes

HMLP evaluated the five remaining candidate routes through a scored ranking process that reflected the defined routing objectives, public feedback, and environmental and constructability factors (Exh. HE-1, at 4-22). Table 1 summarizes the candidate routes.

Table 1. Candidate Routes Summary

Candidate Route	Route Length (miles)	Streets	Major Waterbody Crossing	Major Conservation Areas
Broad Street (Project)	3.2	Broad Street, High Street, French Street Hobart Street	Herring Run Brook	Hoffman Park, Ridgewood Crossing Conservation Area, Brewer Reservation and More-Brewer Park
Broad Street Variation	3.1	Broad Street, High Street, Commercial Street, Suwanee Road, Volusa Road, Manatee Road, French Street, Hobart Street	Herring Run Brook	Hoffman Park, Ridgewood Crossing Conservation Area, Brewer Reservation and More-Brewer Park
Commercial Street ⁹	4.3	Broad Street, Spring Street, Essex Street, Academy Avenue, Middle Street, Shawmut Street, Lake Street, Commercial Street, High Street, French Street, Hobart Street	Herring Run Brook, Tide Mill Brook	More-Brewer Park, Central Park, King Oak Hill Park, Legion Memorial Field, Ridgewood Crossing Conservation Area, Brewer Reservation
Lake Street	3.7	Broad Street, Spring Street, Essex Street, Lake Street, Shawmut Street, Pleasant Street, Water Street, High Street, French Street, Hobart Street	Herring Run Brook	Hoffman Park, Ridgewood Crossing Conservation Area, More-Brewer Park

⁹ HMLP clarified that the Commercial Street Candidate Route does not include Spring Street, Academy Avenue, Middle Street, Shawmut Street, and Lake Street, which were inadvertently included in this table. See HMLP Comments on the Tentative Decision filed September 25, 2026, at 2.

Candidate Route	Route Length (miles)	Streets	Major Waterbody Crossing	Major Conservation Areas
Lake Street Variation	3.6	Broad Street, Spring Street, Essex Street, Lake Street, Shawmut Street, Broad Street, High Street, French Street, Hobart Street	Herring Run Brook	More-Brewer Park, Lovell Playground, Central Park

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 4-20, Table 4-4.

To score the candidate routes, HMLP assessed 14 criteria across natural environment, technical, and built environment categories, and assigned a weight to each based upon potential for temporary and permanent impacts and stakeholder input received (Exh. HE-1, at 4-22). HMLP's weighting scale ranged from one to five, with one indicating the lowest importance and five indicating the greatest importance, as shown in Table 2 (Exh. HE-1, at 4-22 to 4-23).

Table 2. Routing Analysis Criteria Weights Summary

Category	Criterion	Assigned Weight
Natural Environment	Permanently Protected Open Space/ Article 97 Lands	4
	Public Shade Trees	4
	Wetland Resource Areas/ River Crossings	4
	ORW/ ACEC Crossings	4
	Potential to Encounter Subsurface Contamination	3
Technical/ Constructability	Existing Road/ROW Width	4
	Existing Utility Density	5
	Hard Angles (> 30 degrees)	4
	High Impact/Trenchless Crossings	5
Built Environment	Adjacent Residential Land Uses	5
	Adjacent Commercial and/or Industrial Land Uses	4
	Sensitive Receptors	5
	Historic and Archaeological Resources	1
	Traffic Impacts	4

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 4-36, Table 4-6.

Prior to incorporating any weighting, HMLP assessed each criterion and identified the candidate route that had the highest value for that criterion (Exh. HE-1, at 4-23). HMLP then

normalized the data for the other routes against this value to arrive at a “ratio score” for each candidate route on a scale of zero to one, with the lowest ratio score representing the route with the lowest potential for impact (Exh. HE-1, at 4-23). Next, for each criterion, HMLP multiplied the ratio score by the criterion’s assigned weight to produce a weighted score (Exh. HE-1, at 4-23). For each candidate route, HMLP added the weighted scores for a “total weighted score” (Exh. HE-1, at 4-23). HMLP then sorted the total weighted scores in order from low to high to identify a given candidate route’s “rank” (Exh. HE-1, at 4-23). Besides ranking the candidate route by their total weight scores, HMLP evaluated the estimated cost for each candidate route (Exh. HE-1, at 4-38 to 4-39). HMLP noted that many factors can affect the actual cost of a transmission line project, including the cost and availability of materials and equipment, labor, the presence of contaminated soils and the potential for work hour restrictions imposed by the local community or other entities (Exh. HE-1, at 4-38). HMLP also considered but found no substantial difference in the candidate routes with regard to reliability because all candidate routes would be underground and have relatively small differences in design (Exh. HE-1, at 4-39).

Table 3 shows the criteria score, criteria rank, cost estimates, and cost rank for the five candidate routes. The lowest criteria score equates to the lowest potential for impact (Exh. HE-1, at 4-38).

Table 3. Candidate Route Criteria Scores, Estimated Costs, and Ranking

Candidate Route	Natural Environment	Technical Constructability	Built Environment	Total Criteria Score[^]	Criteria Rank	Estimated Cost*	Cost Rank
Broad Street (Project)	13.4	9.9	17.1	40.4	2	\$47.7M	2
Broad Street Variation	16.2	11.2	17.0	44.4	5	\$46.2M	1
Commercial Street	15.4	15.5	11.3	42.2	4	\$64M	5
Lake Street	13.4	15.1	11.8	40.3	1	\$55.1M	4
Lake Street Variation	14.0	14.6	12.8	41.4	3	\$53.6M	3

* On September 2, 2026, HMLP submitted an updated cost estimate for the New Transmission Line along the Proposed Route (Broad Street) (Exh. EFSB-C-1(S1)). Table 3 compares the original cost estimates for the different routes.

^ Sums corrected by staff.

Source: Exhs. EFSB-RS-2, Table 4-9 Corrected, Table 4-10 Corrected.

5. Selecting a Proposed Route

Through its Routing Analysis, HMLP determined that the Lake Street Route, which was first in criteria ranking and fourth in cost ranking, and the Broad Street Route, which was second in criteria ranking and second in cost ranking, were the two best ranked routes (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40). To further evaluate these two routes, HMLP had consultations with the Town of Weymouth and Town of Hingham and held multiple open houses to solicit feedback (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40). Weymouth officials indicated that the timing of the Project is important, as there are plans to construct street improvements along Lake Street prior to the construction of the New Transmission Line (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40). In addition, Weymouth officials indicated that there are more residences along Lake Street, including housing units with Environmental Justice Populations directly adjacent to the Lake Street Route, whereas the Broad Street Route would run through a proposed redevelopment in Jackson Square, Weymouth (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40). HMLP also noted concerns about construction traffic impacts along Broad Street (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40). Lastly, the Weymouth Conservation Agent and Herring Run Warden requested HMLP to look at a variation of the Lake Street route near Water Street, which avoided the segment that would otherwise run parallel to the Herring Run Brook (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40).

Considering these factors, HMLP selected the Broad Street Route as its Proposed Route and the Lake Street Route and Variation as the Noticed Alternative Route, indicating that it is prepared to move forward with either of these route options (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40). HMLP maintains that it balanced considerations of environmental impacts, reliability, and costs in identifying routes to meet the identified need of the Project, consistent with the Siting Board requirements (Exh. HE-1, at 4-40; HMLP Brief at 65, 67). Moreover, HMLP highlighted that its Routing Analysis benefited from significant and extensive input from a wide range of stakeholders (HMLP Brief at 67).

6. Geographic Diversity

HMLP asserts that its Routing Analysis was based on a reasonable set of criteria for identifying and evaluating alternative routes with a significant measure of geographic diversity and consistent with Siting Board precedents, which ensured that HMLP had not overlooked or eliminated any routes that, on balance, are clearly superior to the proposed route (HMLP Brief at 67). HMLP asserts that its proposed site for the New Substation in Hingham and site for the New Tap Station in Weymouth are locations that would minimize costs and environmental impacts while ensuring a reliable energy supply (HMLP Brief at 67).

C. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth supports HMLP's Proposed Route along Broad Street but expresses concerns about the proposed trenchless crossing under the Herring Run Brook and the Broad Street Bridge, and potential disruption to the Town of Weymouth's infrastructure improvement and development projects planned next to the Proposed Route (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 5-6). See Land Use and Land-based Resource section (Section VI.C.1) for discussion on these Project impacts.

D. Analysis and Findings

The Siting Board requires applicants to consider a reasonable range of practical siting alternatives and proposed facilities be sited in locations that minimize cost and environmental impacts. In past decisions, the Siting Board has found various criteria to be appropriate for identifying and evaluating route options for transmission lines and related facilities. These criteria include natural resource impacts, land use impacts, community impacts, cost, and reliability. The Siting Board has also found the specific design of scoring and weighting methods for chosen criteria to be an important part of an appropriate route selection process. See Acushnet at 48; GCEP at 86; NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 19-06/D.P.U. 19-142/19-143, at 48 (2022) ("Mid-Cape Reliability Project")

The record shows that HMLP's approach to route and site selection, which began with identifying sites for the New Substation and New Tap Station, was grounded in ensuring reliability to meet the Project need identified in Section IV, which includes requiring a location

that would allow HMLP to back-feed the existing Hobart Substation. The record also illustrates that HMLP evaluated a number of alternative parcels in different parts of the Town of Weymouth and Town of Hingham for the New Tap Station and New Substation, respectively, through an iterative process until HMLP found the most feasible sites in terms of costs and environmental impacts. For the New Substation, HMLP engaged the Hingham Select Board and Advisory Committee, Hingham Department of Public Works, Hingham Conservation Commission, and the community when evaluating the two final site options and incorporated their feedback. The Siting Board considers HMLP's selection of the New Substation and New Tap Station Sites acceptable and consistent with the Board's precedents. See GCEP at 86, 102; Park City Wind at 54-55; Vineyard Wind, LLC, EFSB 17-05/D.P.U. 18-18/18-19, at 32-34 (2019) ("Vineyard Wind").

For the New Transmission Line route, the record reflects that HMLP developed a Universe of Routes that could support a new underground transmission line and could provide a reasonably direct route between the New Substation and New Tap Station. HMLP eliminated two routes due to space and constructability constraints. The record further shows HMLP developed a quantitative scoring system to evaluate five candidate routes based on the environmental impacts and technical constraints. HMLP also evaluated them alongside estimated cost and reliability. The record indicates that HMLP considered the Broad Street Route and the Lake Street Route the best ranked routes (when considering both criteria ranking and cost ranking) and selected the Broad Street Route after having consultations with the Town of Weymouth and Town of Hingham officials, and the community via open houses. The Town of Weymouth, in its brief, supported the Proposed Route over the Noticed Alternative Route.

The Siting Board considers HMLP's approach to route selection, including the general criteria used in developing the potential routes and the scoring system for the candidate routes, acceptable and consistent with the Board's precedents. Acushnet at 48-50; GCEP at 87, 102; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 48. Regarding the selection of the Broad Street Route as HMLP's Proposed Route, the Board considers it reasonable for HMLP to consider additional factors beyond the quantitative candidate route scoring, including cost, the municipalities'

priorities and preferences, and potential coordination efforts between the Project and the Town of Weymouth and Town of Hingham's planned projects.

Based on the site selection and route selection process described above, the Siting Board finds that HMLP has: (1) developed and applied a reasonable set of criteria for identifying and evaluating alternative sites for the New Substation and New Tap Station and alternative routes for the New Transmission Line in a manner that ensures that it has not overlooked or eliminated any sites or routes that are on balance clearly superior to the proposed Project; and (2) identified a range of transmission line routes with some measure of geographic diversity.

VI. ANALYSIS OF PROJECT IMPACTS

A. Standard of Review

In implementing its statutory mandate under G.L. c. 164, §§ 69H and 69J, the Siting Board requires a petitioner to show that its proposed facility minimizes costs and environmental impacts while ensuring a reliable energy supply. To evaluate the proposed facility, the Siting Board first determines whether the petitioner has provided sufficient information regarding environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures to enable the Siting Board to make such a determination. The Siting Board then examines the environmental impacts of the proposed facilities and determines: (1) whether environmental impacts would be minimized; and (2) whether an appropriate balance would be achieved among conflicting environmental impacts as well as among environmental impacts, cost, and reliability. Finally, the Siting Board compares the routes to determine which is superior with respect to providing a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth with a minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost. See A1B2 at 30-31; Acushnet at 50; GCEP at 102-103.

B. General Description of Project Construction

HMLP anticipated the overall Project construction to last approximately 24 months (Exh. HE-1, at 5-29). Assuming receipt of all necessary permits and approvals, HMLP anticipated Project construction to commence in Spring 2027 with a target completion by mid-2029 (HMLP Brief at 12, citing Exh. HE-1, at 5-29).

1. New Transmission Line

According to HMLP, there would be four principal phases to construct the New Transmission Line, which would take place over approximately 24 months: (1) manhole/splice chamber installation; (2) trenching, duct bank installation, and temporary pavement patching; (3) cable pulling, splicing and testing; and (4) final pavement restoration (Exh. HE-1, at 5-23). HMLP provided approximate durations for the anticipated construction activities occurring within each 500-foot trench segment, shown in Table 4 (Exh. HE-1, at 5-23 to 5-24). All phases of construction would not necessarily be completed in one segment prior to advancing to another segment (Exh. HE-1, at 5-25). HMLP noted that the Town of Hingham has a winter moratorium for in-street construction; HMLP would work with its contractor and the Hingham Department of Public Works (“Hingham DPW”) to coordinate construction work in the winter months, including any exemptions to the moratorium (Exhs. EFSB-CM-5; HE-1, at 5-30).

Table 4. Approximate Durations for Construction Activities within Each Trench Segment

Activity	Approximate Duration per Segment
Open Trenching	Four to seven days
Survey and Layout	One day
Pavement Cutting	One day
Trench Excavation and Shoring	Two to five days
Duct Bank Installation	Six to eleven days
Conduit Installation	One to three days
Duct Bank Concrete Placement/Curing/Shoring Removal	Three to five days
Backfill/Temporary Pavement Placement	Two to three days
Manhole Installation	16 to 19 days
Manhole installation	Seven to ten days
Cable pulling	Four days (two in each pull direction)
Cable splicing	Five days
Pavement Restoration	Two to three months along the entire route
Mill and overlay work	Two to three months along the entire route
Trenchless Crossing	Two to four weeks
via HDD including set up, installation, and demobilization	Two to four weeks
via pipe jacking including set up, installation, and demobilization	Four weeks

Source: Exhs. HE-1, at 5-24, Table 5-1; 5-29; EFSB-CM-2.

HMLP explained it would install manholes along the New Transmission Line route to facilitate cable installation and splicing and to allow access for maintenance and future repairs (Exh. HE-1, at 5-25). Next, HMLP would conduct open-cut trenching, which involves saw cutting the road pavement; removing pavement by pneumatic hammers or excavators and excavating the trench to the required depth with a backhoe or excavator (Exh. HE-1, at 5-25 to 5-26). HMLP would remove any rock encountered during excavation by mechanical means (Exh. HE-1, at 5-26). HMLP would survey existing utilities and design the New Transmission Line to avoid utility conflicts, and work with the utility owners to maintain agreed-upon separation measures (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-26; EFSB-CM-1; Tr. 1, at 132-135).

According to HMLP, it would use trenchless installations/crossings as necessary to minimize impacts to environmental resource areas and utilities (Exh. HE-1, at 5-28). HMLP would employ pipe jacking and HDD as two trenchless crossing methods for this Project (Exh. HE-1, at 5-28). HMLP stated pipe jacking is typically used for crossings spanning less than 200 feet whereas HDD is typically used for comparatively deeper and longer crossings (Exh. HE-1, at 5-28 to 5-29). An HDD installation generally requires a larger temporary construction footprint than pipe jacking because the boring equipment is larger and the support equipment requires more space (Exh. HE-1, at 5-29). While HMLP expected limited use of trenchless crossings and limited crossing spans in this Project, including one proposed crossing across the Herring Run Brook and across other infrastructure at Jackson Square in Weymouth to be constructed via HDD, HMLP deferred making decisions regarding trenchless crossings to the detailed design stage (Exh. HE-1, at 5-28; Tr. 1, at 135-136).

Next, HMLP would proceed with duct bank installation, involving: (1) assembling and lowering the conduits into the trench; (2) filling the area around the conduits with thermal concrete; (3) backfilling the trench with fluidized thermal backfill or native soil depending on local requirements; and (4) installing a temporary pavement patch (Exh. HE-1, at 5-26). According to HMLP, the typical duct bank would consist of three 6-inch-diameter polyvinyl chloride ("PVC") conduits for the 115 kV cables, one 4-inch-diameter PVC conduit for a protection and communications cable, and two 2-inch diameter PVC conduits to carry a ground continuity conductor and a possible temperature monitoring cable (Exh. HE-1, at 5-23). See

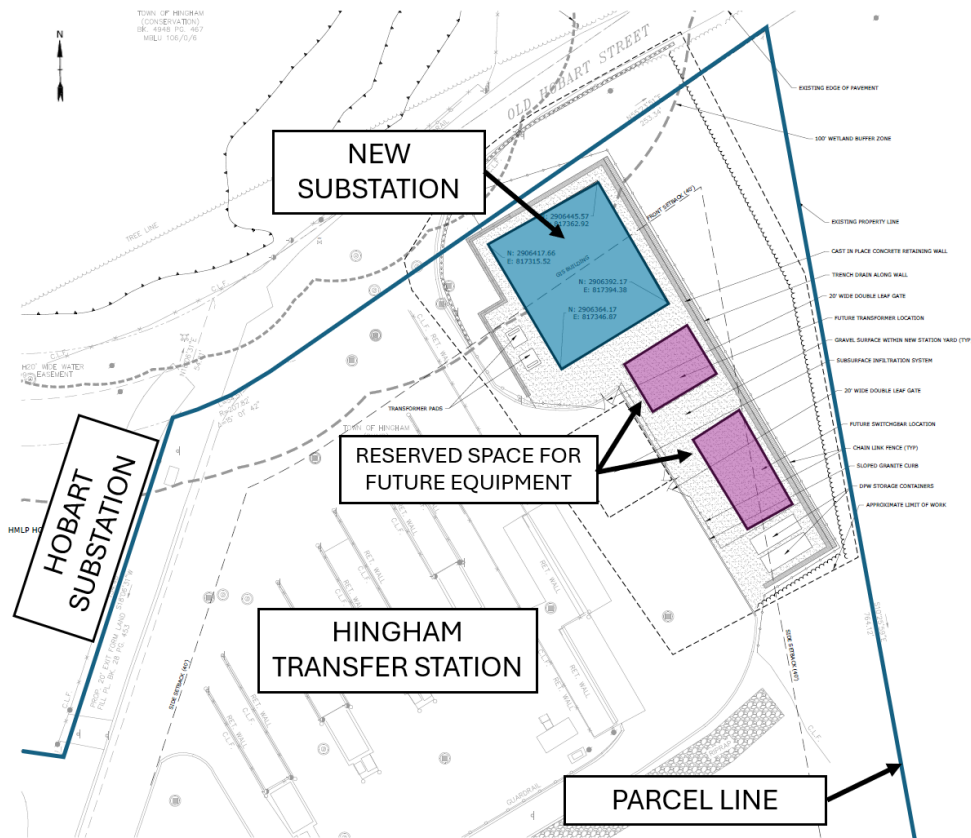
Figure 6 in the MF section (Section VI.C.8) for the typical cross sections of duct bank. HMLP would install cables between two or more adjacent manholes by pulling a cable reel from one manhole to another via a mandrel and pulling line, and then a hydraulic cable pulling winch and tensioner (Exh. HE-1, at 5-27).

HMLP would then splice the adjacent cable sections together inside the manholes (Exh. HE-1, at 5-27). Additionally, HMLP would pull and splice one set of grounding and auxiliary control cables and two sets of fiber optic cables for communication and cable system protection (Exh. HE-1, at 5-27 to 5-28). Afterwards, HMLP would field-test the complete cable system from the New Tap Station to the New Substation and energize the New Transmission Line (Exh. HE-1, at 5-28).

Upon completion of the New Transmission Line installation, HMLP would temporarily pave the streets impacted by construction (Exhs. HE-1, at 26; EFSB-G-4(S1)(1) Att. at 5). According to the HCA executed between HMLP and the Town of Weymouth, HMLP would pay the Town of Weymouth for permanent curb-to-curb road re-pavement along the New Transmission Line, which would occur within twelve months of Project completion (Exh. EFSB-CM-2(S1)).

2. New Substation

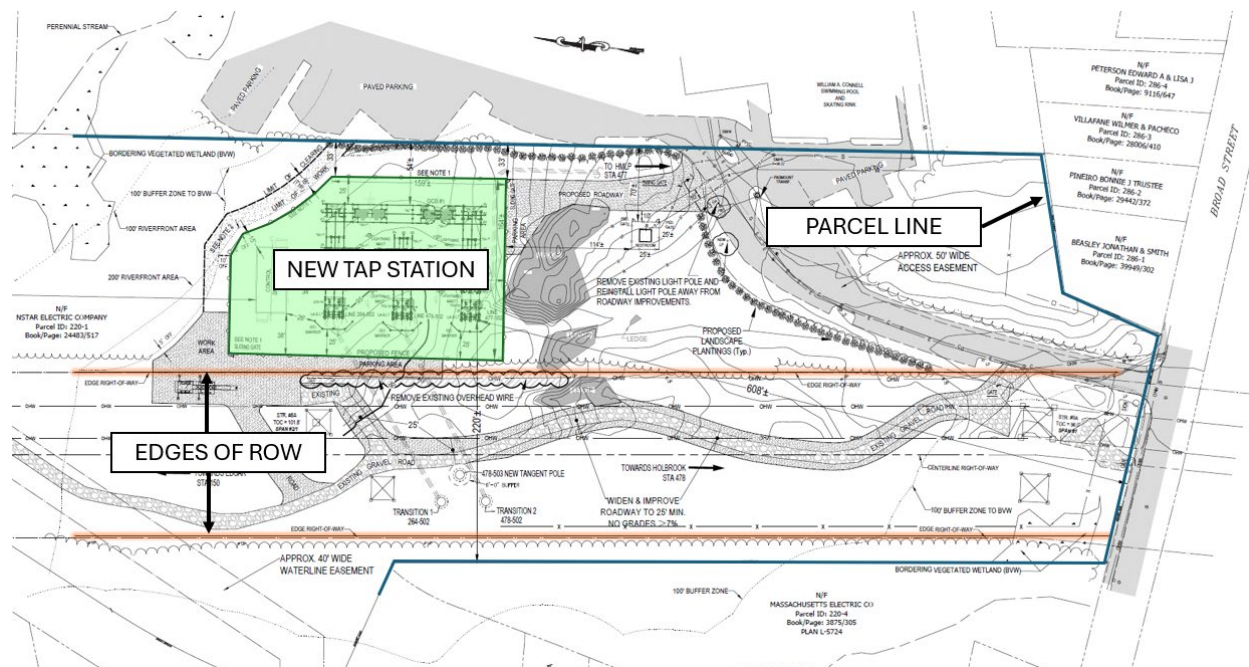
HMLP would construct the New Substation over an approximately 12- to 18-month period (Exh. HE-1, at 5-20). According to HMLP, the construction would involve site preparation and installation of equipment, structures, and foundations (Exh. HE-1, at 5-15). Site preparation includes site clearing and grading, retaining wall construction, and stormwater management system construction (Exh. HE-1, at 5-15). The installation of equipment, structures, and foundations includes the construction of the GIS substation enclosed in a 54 x 64 x 25 feet building, fencing installation, pad-mounted auxiliary power transformer installation, and preparation of the reserved space for a future transformer and switchgear, as well as for the Transfer Station's roll-offs relocated by the Project (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-15; EFSB-S-2, at 2).

Figure 4. New Substation Site Plan

Source: Exh. HE-2, Exhibit D. Labels and color added by staff for legibility.

3. New Tap Station Construction by Eversource

Eversource would construct the New Tap Station over an approximately 18-month period, which would involve site preparation and the installation of new poles, electrical equipment, support structures, and foundations (Exh. HE-2, at 29). This construction includes the installation of the AIS equipment, electrical control house, two electric transition structures, one tangent pole, security fencing, and vegetated screening and the construction of associated parking and a new vehicular access drive (Exh. HE-2, at 29; Tr. 1, at 26).

Figure 5. New Tap Station Site Plan

Source: Exh. HE-2, Exhibit F(S1). Labels and color added by staff for legibility.

4. Community Outreach Plan

HMLP would, in coordination with Eversource, develop a community outreach plan (“COP”) that informs the Town of Weymouth and Town of Hingham, as well as the public and other stakeholders, of Project construction updates (Exh. EFSB-G-2; Tr. 1, at 29-33). Eversource would also develop its own COP in relation to the construction of the New Tap Station (Tr. 1, at 33-34).

5. Decommissioning

HMLP and Eversource stated they designed and intended the useful life of the Project to be in perpetuity, with ongoing operations and maintenance protocols (Exh. EFSB-G-8). The Companies explained that energy facilities operated by utility companies such as HMLP and Eversource are not “decommissioned” but instead, are maintained, upgraded, and replaced, as needed (Exh. EFSB-G-8). Accordingly, neither HMLP nor Eversource has any Project-specific plans for the decommissioning and site restoration of the Project sites (Exh. EFSB-G-8).

C. Environmental Impacts

The Siting Board notes that the Noticed Alternative Route and the Noticed Variation differ only along an approximately 2,000-foot-long stretch of the proposed pathways (see Exh. HE-1, at 4-31, Fig. 4-7). Due to the substantial similarities between these two alternatives in terms of environmental impacts, the Siting Board considered only the environmental impacts of the Proposed Route and the Noticed Alternative Route in the analysis below. In this section, the Siting Board also assesses the environmental impacts of the New Substation and the New Tap Station.

1. Land Uses and Land-Based Resources

a. Companies' Description

i. Land Uses

Both the Proposed Route and the Noticed Alternative Route would traverse existing roadways (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1 and 5-5). HMLP assessed the land uses within 100 feet of the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route using MassGIS data, summarized in Table 5 (Exh. HE-1, at 5-36). HMLP also identified the numbers of residential units, commercial and/or industrial land uses, and sensitive receptors adjacent to each route, summarized in Table 6 (Exh. HE-1, at 5-37).

Table 5. Land Use within 100 feet of Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route

Land Use Type	Proposed Route [acres (percentage)]	Noticed Alternative Route [acres (percentage)]
Commercial	6.64 (8.5%)	4.01 (4.5%)
Single-family Residential	28.04 (36.1%)	36.03 (40.6%)
Multi-family Residential	7.71 (9.9%)	8.21 (9.2%)
Open Land	7.34 (9.4%)	7.04 (7.9%)
Water	0.05 (0.1%)	0.22 (0.2%)
ROW	25.37 (32.7%)	28.58 (32.2%)
Tax-Exempt	2.55 (3.3%)	4.71 (5.3%)
Total	77.70 (100.0%)	88.80 (100.0%)

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 5-37, Table 5-2.

Table 6. Numbers of Residential Units, Commercial and/or Industrial Land Uses, and Sensitive Receptors

Land Use Type	Proposed Route	Noticed Alternative Route
Residential Units	604	878
Commercial and/or Industrial Land Uses	63	22
Sensitive Receptors	18	11*

* EFSB-corrected number. HMLP's list omitted Connell Rink and Pool.

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 5-37 to 5-38.

HMLP argues that the Proposed Route is superior to the Noticed Alternative Route regarding impacts on adjacent land use (Exh. HE-1, at 5-38; HMLP Brief at 91). HMLP observed that the Proposed Route is adjacent to more commercial and industrial properties whereas the Noticed Alternative Route is adjacent to more residential properties and units (Exh. HE-1, at 5-38). The Proposed Route is also shorter than the Noticed Alternative Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-38). Therefore, HMLP anticipated the Proposed Route would have a shorter duration and smaller extent of construction near sensitive receptors and residences than the Noticed Alternative Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-38 to 5-39).

HMLP emphasized that the New Transmission Line would make no permanent changes to the surrounding land uses, and HMLP would mitigate and limit the temporary construction impacts through implementing construction best management practices ("BMPs") (Exh. HE-1, at 5-38 to 5-39). HMLP committed to ensuring residents and businesses would have continuous access to their homes and businesses throughout Project construction (Exh. EFSB-CM-4). HMLP would coordinate with the Town of Weymouth with respect to construction of HMLP's New Transmission Line and the Town of Weymouth's infrastructure improvement and development projects (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att.).¹⁰

¹⁰ The Town of Weymouth stated that several infrastructure improvement and development projects were planned next to the Project, including but not limited to the replacement of the Broad Street Bridge over the Herring Run Brook, the Jackson Square mixed-use development, and various street re-pavement projects (Weymouth Public Comment Hearing Transcript, at 19-23). The HCA between HMLP and the Town of Weymouth stipulates requirements for the coordination of construction work in proximity to the Jackson Square redevelopment (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att. at 2-4).

According to HMLP, the New Substation site is currently a forested embankment in the northeastern corner of the Transfer Station site (Exh. HE-1, at 5-18). HMLP stated that the total land disturbance associated with the New Substation would be approximately 31,000 square feet (Exh. HE-1, at 5-18). The New Substation would be adjacent to the active Transfer Station operations to the west, a capped landfill to the south, an existing paved portion of the Transfer Station site to the southwest, and the bordering Brewer Reservation, a municipal conservation area, to the east. (Exh. HE-1, at 5-18). HMLP stated that the New Substation construction would have minor and temporary impact on Transfer Station operations, as HMLP would schedule any traffic-disrupting construction activities outside of the Transfer Station's hours of operations, which are 7:00 AM and 4:00 PM on Thursday through Sunday, to the extent practicable (Exh. HE-1, at 5-21). See the discussion in the traffic section (Section VI.C.6). HMLP did not identify any land use impacts on Brewer Reservation but addressed visual impacts on the reservation; see the discussion in the visual section (Section VI.C.4). HMLP stated that the nearest residence to the New Substation is located approximately 400 feet to the west (Exh. EFSB-V-2(S1)).

The New Tap Station would be located on an Eversource-owned parcel on an existing transmission ROW containing two existing transmission lines and access roads on the western half of the site (Exh. HE-2, at 30-31). The New Tap Station site consists of various sloping topography, areas of exposed surficial ledge, and a mixed hardwood forest (Exh. HE-2, at 30-31). Eversource stated the total land disturbance associated with the New Tap Station construction would be approximately 2.5 acres (Exh. HE-2, at 31).

The Companies stated the New Tap Station site abuts Broad Street, residential uses, and industrial uses to the south, the Connell Rink and Pool and single-family residential uses to the east, single-family residential uses to the north, and undeveloped land to the west (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-10, Fig. 5-7; 5-12; HE-2, at 31). The Eversource ROW containing the transmission line the New Tap Station would connect to run through the western portion of the New Tap Station site and accordingly abuts the parcel to the north and south (Exhs. HE-1 at 5-10, Fig. 5-7; 5-12; HE-2, at 31). The Companies also noted that the Crossroads Worship Center, while not directly abutting the site, is in proximity (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-12; HE-2, at 31). HMLP stated the nearest

residence to the proposed fenceline of the New Tap Station would be located approximately 400 feet away (Exh. RR-EFSB-9).

Upon completion of the New Tap Station, Eversource would restore the area of the site beyond the New Tap Station and associated appurtenances by soil stabilization and landscaping in a manner appropriate to the surroundings and neighborhood (Exh. HE-2, at 31). Eversource would continue to use the ROW for electric transmission purposes and maintain vegetation within this ROW in compliance with Eversource's Transmission Vegetation Management Plan (Exh. HE-2, at 31).

ii. Tree Removal

HMLP identified 27 public shade trees within the public way associated with the New Transmission Line Proposed Route, and 33 with the Noticed Alternative Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-45). HMLP anticipated the construction of the New Transmission Line would not require removal of these public shade trees but may require trimming of branches or cutting of roots (Exh. HE-1, at 5-45). In coordination with local tree wardens, HMLP would implement typical mitigation measures for protecting public shade trees, including: (1) pre-construction meetings to confirm tree location and review BMPs and a monitoring and mitigation plan; (2) bark, limb, and root protection for trees close to the trench edges; (3) perimeter fencing of individual tree pits; (4) special procedures for excavation near tree roots and root pruning; and (5) any necessary tree and vegetation replacement (Exh. HE-1, at 5-45 to 5-46). HMLP considered the two proposed routes comparable regarding their limited impacts on public shade trees (Exh. HE-1, at 5-45).

HMLP stated the New Substation construction would require removal of approximately 63 trees of six-inch diameter at breast height ("dbh") or greater, none of them being public shade trees (Exh. MS-1, at 5-21). The Hingham Conservation Commission has a Tree Removal and Replacement Policy that requires tree replacement for every tree six-inch dbh or greater lost within Conservation Commission jurisdiction (Exhs. EFSB-L-1, EFSB-L-4(1)). HMLP would work with the Conservation Commission to identify options for meeting the policy (Exhs. EFSB-L-1).

The Companies stated that the New Tap Station construction would require removal of approximately 221 trees 6-inch dbh, none of them being public shade trees (Exh. HE-1, at 5-14). As part of the New Tap Station, Eversource would provide landscaping and other visual mitigation and screening adjacent to the New Tap Station to minimize visual impacts, including approximately 75 tree plantings of mixed species that are native to Massachusetts (Exhs EFSB-L-1; EFSB-V-1). To minimize urban heat island effects, the Companies would use light-color pea or crushed stone for majority of the areas within the New Tap Station and the New Substation (Exh. EFSB-L-3).

iii. Historic and Archeological Resources

Given that the underground New Transmission Line would be located within existing paved roadways for either the Proposed Route or Noticed Alternative Route, HMLP anticipated neither route would result in impacts to historic and archeological resources (Exh. HE-1, at 5-55).¹¹ Although the Proposed Route is close to more inventoried sites and intersects more inventoried historic areas than the Noticed Alternative Route does, as summarized in Table 7, HMLP maintains the impacts on either route would be comparable (Exh. HE-1, at 5-55).

Table 7. Historic and Archaeological Resources near the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route

Historic and Archaeological Resources	Proposed Route	Noticed Alternative Route
Inventory points adjacent to route	116	69
Inventory areas intersected by the route	2	1
Archaeological sites within 0.25 miles of the route	7	7
Archeological sites intersected by the route	2	3

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 5-55, Table 5-13.

¹¹ HMLP used the term “cultural resources” to describe all historic, archeological, and cultural resources (e.g., see Exh. HE-1, at 5-5, 5-15). For clarity, the Siting Board refers to these resources as “historic and archeological resources.”

HMLP found no inventoried archaeological sites or historic properties on the Federal or State Register of Historic Places or the MHC Inventory of the Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth on either the New Substation site or the New Tap Station site (Exh. HE-1, at 5-15, 5-22). However, due to the presence of archeological sites in proximity to the New Substation site and New Tap Station site, HMLP submitted a Project Notification Form to the Massachusetts Historic Commission (“MHC”) in April 2024, which covered the scope of the entire Project (Exh. EFSB-L-2).¹² Upon receiving MHC’s response and recommendations, HMLP further prepared an intensive (locational) archaeological survey for the entire Project (Exh. EFSB-L-2). HMLP submitted the intensive survey to MHC in December 2024, and in March 2025, MHC determined in a letter that no significant archaeological resources were identified and no further survey or review was necessary (Exhs. EFSB-L-2; EFSB-L-2(1)). MHC determined that the Project as proposed would have “no adverse effect” on the Central Square Historic District or the Jackson Square area (Exhs. EFSB-L-2; EFSB-L-2(1)).

iv. Rare Species and Habitats

HMLP screened the New Substation site and New Tap Station site for rare species and habitats but did not identify any (Exh. HE-1, at 4-6, 4-11 to 4-12, 4-14 (Table 4-3)). HMLP did the same to the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route and also identified no rare species or habitats (Exh. HE-1, at 4-21).

b. Positions of the Parties

i. Town of Weymouth

The Town of Weymouth, while supportive of the Proposed Route, indicates concern about potential Project impacts on a pending mixed-use redevelopment in Jackson Square, as well as various street re-pavement projects including two bridge replacements on Commercial

¹² HMLP also provided Project information to potentially interested Tribal Historic Preservation Officers as required by G.L. c. 9 §§ 26-27C as amended by St. 1988 c. 254 and §106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Exhs. EFSB-L-2(1); EFSB-G-6, Table 6-1 (Revised)).

Street (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 5-6). In particular, Weymouth argues HMLP failed to explain how it would mitigate the risk of the New Transmission Line installation damaging an existing deteriorating bridge and the Herring Run Brook, in the event that the Project is approved and the New Transmission Line is installed prior to the completion of the replacement of the Broad Street Bridge over Herring Run Brook (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 6, citing Tr. 1, at 28-29). Consequently, the Weymouth requests the Siting Board stay any decision on this proceeding until the parties enter into a written agreement that would protect Weymouth's interest (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 6-7).

ii. HMLP Response

In response to the Town of Weymouth's request to stay the decision on this Proceeding, HMLP maintains that it expects to reach an agreement with the Town of Weymouth regarding mitigation for Project construction impacts in advance of any Final Decision in this proceeding (HMLP Reply Brief at 2-3). In addition, HMLP argues the Siting Board has held that a HCA is a private agreement between two parties, and that it would be inappropriate for the Board to incorporate such an agreement into a Board decision (HMLP Reply Brief at 2). HMLP asserts that the Siting Board staying or otherwise delaying its Final Decision for the execution of an HCA would be inappropriate (HMLP Reply Brief at 2). Therefore, HMLP requests the Siting Board to reject Weymouth's request to stay its Final Decision on this proceeding (HMLP Reply Brief at 7). HMLP filed an HCA executed by HMLP and the Town of Weymouth on September 1, 2026 (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att.). In the HCA, the Town of Weymouth committed to supporting the zoning petition and the Section 69J petition request including HMLP's Proposed Route through Weymouth (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att. at 2).

In response to the Town of Weymouth's concern about the Project impacts on the Broad Street Bridge and its contention that there is a lack of supporting evidence that impacts would be appropriately mitigated, HMLP argues the record reflects otherwise: HMLP demonstrated its plans to cross the Herring Run Brook and the Broad Street Bridge in a manner that would minimize environmental impacts and protect the integrity of the bridge (HMLP Reply Brief at 5-7). Specifically, HMLP reiterates its proposed use of trenchless crossing methods (HMLP

Reply Brief at 5-6). HMLP notes, conversely, there is no evidence in the record relative to the Broad Street Bridge's age or condition, nor specific Town of Weymouth plans to replace the bridge (HMLP Reply Brief at 6). Nonetheless, HMLP notes it is aware of the Town of Weymouth's intentions to upgrade the bridge and commits to working collaboratively with the Town of Weymouth throughout the design process (HMLP Reply Brief at 6-7, citing EFSB-G-4).

c. Analysis and Findings

The record reflects that HMLP would build the New Transmission Line, New Tap Station, and New Substation on existing roadways, an Eversource-owned parcel on an existing transmission ROW, and a town-owned parcel next to an existing transfer station, respectively. As a result, the Project would have no permanent impacts on existing land uses. For the construction of the New Transmission Line, the record shows HMLP would mitigate and limit construction impacts and maintain continuous access along the route and for abutting residences and businesses. The record also shows the Proposed Route would affect 604 residential properties, 274 fewer than the Noticed Alternative Route.

For the construction of the New Tap Station and New Substation, the record shows that their construction may occasionally disrupt site access, but the Companies would coordinate to minimize such impacts. The record shows the operation of the New Transmission Line, New Tap Station, and New Substation would have no notable impacts on land use and land-based resources.

The record shows there would be tree removal and land cover impacts from Project construction. For the New Transmission Line, HMLP does not anticipate tree removal as it would be constructed under existing roadways but would work with the local tree wardens to implement typical mitigation measures for protecting public shade trees. For the New Substation, HMLP would work with the Hingham Conservation Commission to meet the latter's Tree Removal and Replacement Policy. For the New Tap Station, although its construction would require removal of approximately 221 6-inch dbh trees, Eversource would replant about 75 plantings of mixed species. The record also reflects that the Companies would use light-

colored materials, which would minimize urban heat island effect. The record shows the Project would have no temporary or permanent impacts on historic and archeological resources or on rare species and habitats.

Regarding the Town of Weymouth’s concern about the impacts of the New Transmission Line’s crossing at the Herring Run Brook in Jackson Square, the record shows HMLP has proposed a trenchless method that would minimize environmental impacts. The record also shows that HMLP has been in discussions with the Town of Weymouth regarding opportunities for coordination of the Project and the Town of Weymouth’s infrastructure improvement and development projects, and that this coordination has been memorialized in the HCA.

For the routing of the New Transmission Line, the Siting Board finds the Proposed Route superior to the Noticed Alternative Route for land use impacts due to the Proposed Route’s proximity to approximately 275 fewer residences. The Siting Board also notes Weymouth’s support for this route. With mitigation measures described above and in the record, the Siting Board finds the Project’s impacts on land use and land-based resources, which are largely limited to Project construction, would be minimized.

2. Water Resources and Wetlands

a. Companies’ Description

i. Resource Areas

Using MassGIS databases and conducting field reconnaissance, HMLP identified and evaluated water resources areas and wetland resource areas along the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-42 to 5-43). Table 8 summarizes the wetland resource areas crossed by the Proposed Route and the Noticed Alternative Route. HMLP stated that all Project elements located in wetland and water resource areas and buffer zones would meet applicable local, state, and federal wetlands regulatory requirements (Exh. HE-1, at 5-44).

Table 8. Wetland Resource Areas Crossed by the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route

Wetland Resource Area	Proposed Route	Noticed Alternative Route
Linear Feet (“lf”) within 100-foot Buffer Zone	~2,700 lf	~2,850 lf

Wetland Resource Area	Proposed Route	Noticed Alternative Route
Waterbody Crossing	Herring Run Brook; Three unnamed stream/culvert crossings	Herring Run Brook; Two unnamed stream/culvert crossings
Square Feet within Riverfront Area	6,400 sf	17,600 sf
Square Feet within 100-Year Floodplain/Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (“BLSF”)	800 sf	6,700 sf

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 5-43 (Table 5-5), 5-44 (Table 5-6).

HMLP stated that both the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route cross a portion of the Weymouth Back River ACEC (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1, 5-5). HMLP noted that the Noticed Alternative Route is within the vicinity of Whitman Pond, which is an Emergency Surface Water Supply for the Town of Weymouth (Exh. HE-1, at 5-44). HMLP noted that the New Transmission Line, regardless of routing, would have no permanent impacts and only minor temporary construction impacts on wetland and water resources (Exh. HE-1, at 5-44). HMLP explained that this is because, with several exceptions associated with the crossing of brook and streams, the New Transmission Line would be confined to previously disturbed areas and would not require filling or clearing within wetlands (Exh. HE-1, at 5-44).

HMLP would use trenchless crossings to avoid and minimize impacts to Herring Run Brook, streams, and their associated resource areas (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-44; EFSB-EMF-3; Tr. 1, at 135-137). HMLP noted that construction activities in buffer zones and Riverfront Area are exempt from filing a Notice of Intent with the local Conservation Commission to request an Order of Conditions under the WPA provided that all work is conducted within roadways or driveways, and that all trenches are closed at the completion of each workday (Exh. HE-1, at 5-43, Table 5-5). According to HMLP, the construction work within the Riverfront Area would avoid impacts to a 100-year floodplain/BLSF with trenchless crossing (Exh. HE-1, at 5-42 to 5-43). HMLP would file a Notice of Intent with the Weymouth Conservation Commission to request an Order of Conditions for transmission line work within wetland resource areas, but not within roadways or driveways, or to cross Herring Run Brook via HDD (Exh. EFSB-G-6(S1)). HMLP did not identify any Chapter 91 jurisdictional areas within either route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-43).

HMLP determined the New Substation to be outside of a 50-foot buffer zone to a wetland resource area located across the Transfer Station access road (Exh. HE-1, at 5-18). HMLP also determined that the New Substation site is not located within a designated flood zone (Exh. HE-1, at 5-19). However, approximately 660 square feet of minor grading and installation of erosion control measures would be within the 50-foot buffer zone to a BVW and another approximately 7,100 sf of work between the 50-foot and 100-foot buffer zone of delineated BVW resource areas (Exh. HE-1, at 5-18). HMLP stated that the New Substation would not affect the Weymouth Back River ACEC (Exh. HE-1, at 5-22). HMLP would file a Notice of Intent with the Hingham Conservation Commission to request an Order of Conditions for the proposed work (Exh. HE-1, at 5-18). HMLP maintained that with the implementation of a stormwater management system described in the stormwater section below, the New Substation's construction and operation would have no long-term impacts on wetland and water resources (Exh. HE-1, at 5-18).

The Companies reported that there are no ACECs or ORWs in proximity to the New Tap Station Site, nor is the site within a designated Flood Zone according to the National Flood Insurance Rate Map (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-12, 5-15; HE-2, at 35-36). The Weymouth Conservation Commission issued an ORAD identifying the unnamed stream located to the north and east of the New Tap Station location as intermittent, which therefore does not have associated Riverfront Area (Exh. EFSB-G-6(S1)(1)).¹³ The Companies state that work within the 100-foot buffer zone to the BVW would be limited to selective tree trimming and removal needed to provide a secure perimeter for the New Tap Station facility and the installation of stormwater management system (Exh. HE-2, Exhibit F(S1), Note 2; Eversource Brief at 16; HMLP Brief at 83). Eversource would file a Notice of Intent with the Weymouth Conservation Commission requesting an Order of Conditions for this work (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-12; HE-2, at 32).¹⁴

¹³ According to 310 CMR 10.58(2)(a)(1), “[i]ntermittent streams are not rivers as defined herein because surface water does not flow within them throughout the year.”

¹⁴ At the September 30, 2026 Siting Board meeting, Eversource noted that the Weymouth Conservation Commission considered the Eversource NOI filing for the New Tap Station

ii. Stormwater Mitigation and Sedimentation and Erosion Control

HMLP and Eversource stated that the New Tap Station would add 2,300 square feet of impervious surface and the New Substation would add 5,400 square feet of impervious surface (Exh. EFSB-L-3). The totals for these impervious surfaces (such as asphalt, concrete, and rooftops) do not include crushed stone and gravel areas (Exh. EFSB-L-3). The Companies stated they would implement a stormwater management system including BMPs at each of the New Tap Station site and New Substation site to address peak runoff and treat both the quality and quantity of stormwater discharge (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-12, 5-18 to 5-19; HE-2, at 23-24, 33). Consequently, the Companies maintained that construction and operation of the New Tap Station and New Substation would have no long-term impacts on wetland and water resources, nor exacerbate local flooding despite increases in impervious surface (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-12, 5-18; HE-2, at 28, 36).

To address the potential for erosion and sedimentation within wetland resource areas, HMLP would develop and maintain a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (“SWPPP”) for the Project, which will identify controls to manage construction-related stormwater discharges from the Project (Exh. HE-1, at 5-30). HMLP would submit the SWPPP to the Hingham Community Planning Department at least three weeks prior to the start of any work (Exh. HE-1, at 5-30). HMLP would require its contractors to adhere to the SWPPP in accordance with the general conditions prescribed in the Project’s United States Environmental Protection Agency (“USEPA”) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (“NPDES”) Construction General Permit (Exh. HE-1, at 5-30). Furthermore, HMLP would require its contractor to monitor compliance with stormwater permits, provide appropriate training, hold regular awareness meetings, make copies of permits available upon request, and inspect and maintain erosion and sediment control measures (Exh. HE-1, at 5-30 to 5-31).

and approved an Order of Conditions on September 29, 2026. The Siting Board directed the Companies to provide a copy of that Order as a compliance filing in this docket.

iii. Dewatering

HMLP stated the Project construction may encounter groundwater and require dewatering (Exh. HE-1, at 5-32). If site-specific conditions permit, HMLP would recharge the groundwater back into adjacent subsurface via an already opened excavation/trench, a filter bag, or dewatering corral (Exh. HE-1, at 5-32). For any locations where construction encounters large amounts of groundwater in exceedance of 50,000 gallons, HMLP may discharge into the municipal stormwater and/or sewerage system after coordinating with and receiving written consent from the municipality and the USEPA, as well as the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (“MWRA”) (Exh. HE-1, at 5-32). HMLP suggested, if necessary, it would seek coverage under a USEPA NPDES Dewatering and Remediation General Permit (“DRGP”) (Exh. HE-1, at 5-32).

b. Positions of the Parties

As described above, the Town of Weymouth expressed concern about the New Transmission Line’s crossing of Herring Run Brook, primarily regarding the risk of damaging the Broad Street Bridge or potential subsequent damage to the Herring Run Brook (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 6). The Town of Weymouth did not address any other issues regarding water resources and wetlands.

c. Analysis and Findings

The record shows HMLP would design all activities proposed in wetland and water resource areas and buffer zones to conform to applicable local, state and federal wetlands regulatory programs. The record also demonstrates that the Project would involve construction work within wetland resource areas, as well as the Weymouth Back River ACEC, which would have temporary and minor impacts on these resource areas. The construction of the New Transmission Line would be confined to previously disturbed areas and HMLP would use trenchless crossing methods to avoid and minimize impacts to the Herring Run Brook and other streams. The record also shows the Proposed Route would avoid the Whitman Pond, as well as a lengthier stretch of the Riverfront Area compared to the Noticed Alternative Route.

For the New Substation, construction would have no long-term impacts on wetland resources nor affect the Weymouth Back River ACEC. For the construction of the New Tap Station, Eversource would implement selective tree trimming and removal and the installation of a stormwater management system in the 100-foot buffer zone to the BVW. The Weymouth Conservation Commission confirmed that the stream in the vicinity of the New Tap Station is intermittent and therefore does not have associated Riverfront Area. The New Substation and New Tap Station are not within a designated Flood Zone, and HMLP would avoid impacts within 100-year floodplain/BLSF regarding the New Transmission Line segment by using HDD. The Companies filed Notices of Intent with the Weymouth Conservation Commission and the Hingham Conservation Commission for Project construction activities. The Siting Board directs the Companies to provide a copy of the Weymouth Conservation Commission's Order of Conditions related to the Project that was voted on at the Conservation Commission meeting held September 29, 2026, as a compliance filing in this docket.

The record shows both HMLP and Eversource would implement stormwater management systems including BMPs for the New Substation and New Tap Station. The Siting Board directs the Companies to submit to the Siting Board their SWPPPs and a narrative explaining compliance with the MassDEP Stormwater Standard at least 60 days prior to the start of Project construction. Regarding the routing of the New Transmission Line, the Siting Board finds the Proposed Route is superior to the Noticed Alternative Route for the water resources and wetlands impacts due to the Proposed Route's avoidance of the Whitman Pond and shorter stretch of Riverfront Area. With the above mitigation, the Siting Board finds the Project's impacts on water resources and wetlands would be minimized.

3. Noise

a. Companies' Description

HMLP and Eversource stated that there would be no noise arising from the operation of the New Transmission Line, the New Substation, or the New Tap Station (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13, 5-20, 5-52; HE-2, at 25, 33). HMLP noted that although the current plan for the New Substation does not include any transformers, should a need arise for transformers to be added in the future,

HMLP would comply with the local noise control bylaw and the MassDEP Noise Policy (Exh. EFSB-NO-1). HMLP and Eversource stated that noise impacts from Project construction activities would be temporary in nature (Exh. HE-1, at 5-13, 5-20, 5-52; HE-2, at 25, 33). Both HMLP and Eversource committed to fully complying with MassDEP regulations related to noise (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13, 5-20, 5-53 to 5-54; HE-2, at 25, 33).

HMLP noted that the Hingham Noise Control Bylaw limits construction activities from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekends (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-53; EFSB-NO-2). HMLP would limit construction work to the hours allowed by the Hingham Noise Control Bylaw and work with the Town of Hingham to obtain the required approval and notify abutters for any construction activities extending beyond these hours (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-53; EFSB-NO-2; Tr. 2, at 181-183). For the work within Weymouth, HMLP and Eversource noted that the Town of Weymouth does not have a specific noise ordinance or limitations on construction hours, but both Companies committed to consulting Town of Weymouth officials to develop construction work hours (Exh. HE-1, at 5-29, 5-54). HMLP and Eversource explained that certain construction activities, such as cable splicing and concrete pouring, may require work to extend beyond typical hours, for which each Company would work with the local municipality in advance to obtain the required approval and notify abutters (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-53; EFSB-NO-2; Tr. 2, at 181-183).

HMLP stated that the New Transmission Line construction would take place over a two-year period, with noise impacts varying depending on location, the construction activity and equipment being used, and the hours of operation (Exh. HE-1, at 5-52 to 5-53). HMLP provided the maximum expected sound levels from typical construction equipment at a distance of 50 feet, as shown in Table 9 (Exh. EFSB-NO-2). HMLP explained that it would mitigate noise impacts by using muffled or low-noise generators and reducing or eliminating the use of motorized equipment when evening or overnight work is required (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-54; EFSB-NO-3). HMLP stated it would also limit construction hours near schools (Exh. HE-1, at 5-38 to 5-39).

Table 9. Reference Sound Levels of Construction Equipment at 50 Feet

Activity	Type of Equipment	Typical Sound Levels dBA ¹⁵ at 50 feet
Trench Excavation, Pile Install and Pavement Patching	Pavement Saw	90
	Pneumatic Hammer	85
	Mounted Impact Hammer (Hoe Ram)	89
	Excavator	81
	Dump Truck	76
	Pipe Crane	81
	Welding Machine/Generator	81
	Concrete Batch Truck	79
Manhole Installation	Pavement Saw	90
	Excavator	81
	Manhole Crane	81
	Dump Truck	76
	Asphalt Paver	77
Cable Pulling, Splicing and Testing	Generator	81
	Splicing Van	75
Final Pavement Restoration	Asphalt Paver	77

Source: Exh. EFSB-NO-2.

HMLP explained that the construction methods and associated noise generated by the New Transmission Line work would be the same regardless of route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-54). HMLP noted that overall, the Proposed Route has a higher number of nearby sensitive receptors, including medical facilities, park and recreation facilities, a school, and places of worship, but a lower density of residences compared to the Noticed Alternative Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-54). Given the Proposed Route's higher proportion of commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses, HMLP deemed the Proposed Route superior to the Noticed Alternative Route in terms of construction noise impacts (Exh. HE-1, at 5-54).

HMLP stated the New Substation construction would occur over 12 to 18 months and Eversource estimated the New Tap Station construction would take approximately 18 months (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-3, 5-20; HE-2, at 25, 29). The Companies reported that the nearest residences

¹⁵ dBA stands for A-weighted decibels.

to both the New Substation and New Tap Station are approximately 400 feet away, with the loudest expected sound level from construction at this distance estimated to be 72 dBA, and the average sound level expected to be 64 dBA (RR-EFSB-9; Exh. HE-1, at 5-20). Eversource stated that rock removal for the New Tap Station would be accomplished through mechanical means and that blasting is not anticipated (Exh. EFSB-NO-4).

HMLP and Eversource stated they would mitigate construction noise at the New Substation site and New Tap Station Site by: (1) requiring well-maintained equipment with functioning mufflers; (2) requiring strict compliance with MassDEP's anti-idling regulations; (3) operating stationary noise generating equipment away from nearby residences; (4) complying with municipal restrictions on construction hours when feasible; and (5) working with the Town of Weymouth and Town of Hingham to schedule construction outside typical hours where necessary (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13, 5-20; HE-2, at 25, 33).

b. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth did not address noise impacts on brief.

c. Analysis and Findings

The record demonstrates the Project would not generate audible noise during operation, and that noise impacts during construction would be temporary. HMLP and Eversource would comply with municipal and MassDEP noise regulations, use equipment with functioning mufflers, and position stationary noise generating equipment away from residences. Each Company would work with the local municipality to get approval for scheduling construction outside of standard hours. Accordingly, the Siting Board finds the Project's noise impacts would be minimized. The record shows no difference in noise impacts between the two routes. Thus, the Siting Board finds the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route comparable for noise impacts.

HMLP and Eversource would limit Project construction hours in accordance with the Hingham Noise Control Bylaw, consult with Town of Weymouth about applying work hour limits in Weymouth, and work with the Town of Hingham and Town of Weymouth,

respectively, to obtain required approval and notify abutters for any construction activities extending beyond these hours. The Siting Board directs the Companies to limit construction to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, exempting work requiring longer continuous duration than normal construction hours allow, such as concrete pours and transmission line stringing. The Siting Board further directs the Companies to consult with the Town of Weymouth to determine if additional work hour limitations may be desirable and mutually acceptable, and to report any change in the stated construction hours to the Siting Board. Should the Companies anticipate the need to extend construction work beyond the above-noted hours and days, the Siting Board directs the Companies to seek written permission from the relevant municipal authority before the commencement of such work. If the Companies and municipal officials cannot agree on whether such extended construction hours should occur, the Companies may request prior authorization from the Siting Board and shall provide the associated municipality (or municipalities) with a copy of any such request and authorization, if granted.

4. Visual

a. Companies' Description

According to HMLP, for the underground New Transmission Line, the only potential permanent visual impacts would be any vegetation clearing required for construction, which HMLP indicated would be minimal (Exh. HE-1, at 5-48). HMLP determined the visual impacts of the routes were comparable for tree removal, and HMLP would mitigate impacts of tree removal through coordination with local tree wardens (Exh. HE-1, at 5-48). See further discussion in the tree removal section (Section VI.C.1.a.ii).

According to HMLP, the nearest residence to the New Substation is located approximately 400 feet to the west, with the Transfer Station, Sam Ryder Road (Transfer Station access road), and Hobart Substation in between (Exh. EFSB-V-2(S1)). HMLP did not anticipate the New Substation would be visible from that residence (Exh. EFSB-V-2(S1)). HMLP stated the New Substation would be mostly screened from Hobart Street by the Brewer Reservation conservation area; however, the GIS building, which would be 25 feet tall, would be visible from

within the Transfer Station and from the Brewer Reservation (Exh. EFSB-V-2(S1)). According to HMLP, the GIS building would consist of steel construction, with an exterior cladding designed in collaboration with the Town of Hingham and would be surrounded by an 8-foot-tall chain link fence (Exh. HE-1, at 5-20; Tr. 2, at 177-180). Consequently, HMLP maintains that the New Substation would be visually consistent with existing infrastructure at the Transfer Station (HMLP Brief at 75, citing Exh. EFSB-V-2(S1)). Thus, HMLP contends that the Project would not significantly change the views from the Brewer Reservation toward the Transfer Station (HMLP Brief at 75, citing Exh. EFSB-V-2(S1)).

The New Tap Station would be located along the central-eastern portion of the Eversource property and be visible from the adjacent Connell Rink and Pool and its access road, which is partially located within the existing Eversource transmission ROW (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 32). As the New Tap Station would be set back approximately 550 feet from Broad Street, the Companies anticipated visual impacts along Broad Street would be limited (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 32). The Companies stated that the New Tap Station would be approximately 400 feet from the nearest residence (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 32). With intervening vegetation, the Companies expected visual impacts to this nearest residence, as well as other nearby residences, to be minimal (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 32).

According to the Companies, the New Tap Station would include a structure to house electrical control, relay panels, and AIS, as well as four 85-foot lighting masts, all surrounded by a ten-foot-tall chain link fence (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 32). The Companies stated that Eversource would solicit input from Weymouth officials, abutters, and community members regarding landscaping and provide landscaping and other visual mitigation and screening adjacent to the New Tap Station to minimize visual impacts (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 32).

b. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth did not address visual impacts on brief.

c. Analysis and Findings

The record shows visual impacts from the underground New Transmission Line would be minimal and limited to removal of trees along the transmission line route, which HMLP would coordinate with the local tree wardens. The New Substation would be visible mainly from within the Transfer Station and Brewer Reservation, and the New Substation would be visually consistent with the surroundings and the Transfer Station.

The record shows the New Tap Station would be visible from the Connell Rink and Pool and its access road but would have a minimal visual impact along Broad Street and to the nearest residence. To mitigate the visual impacts to the Connell Rink and Pool, Eversource incorporated landscaping and other visual mitigation and screening in the New Tap Station design and site plan. The Siting Board directs the Companies to implement Dark Skies compliant lighting at the New Substation and New Tap Station. The record shows no difference in visual impacts between the routes. Thus, the Siting Board finds the two routes comparable for visual impacts and that the Project's visual impacts would be minimized.

5. Air

a. Companies' Description

HMLP and Eversource stated that the operation of the New Transmission Line, New Substation, and New Tap Station would not adversely affect air quality (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-21, 6-5; HE-2, at 26, 33). HMLP stated that during the construction phase, there would be minimal short-term localized air quality effects—*i.e.*, fugitive dust and construction equipment emissions (Exh. HE-1, at 6-5). HMLP and Eversource committed to: (1) mitigating the potential for fugitive dust through appropriate methods, such as the installation of anti-tracking pads, use of street sweeping and water trucks with misters, and by covering temporary soil stockpiles; (2) complying with the state anti-idling law; (3) using ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel for HMLP and contractors' diesel-powered construction equipment; and (4) directing contractors to retrofit certain diesel-powered non-road construction equipment with USEPA-verified emission control devices (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-31 to 5-32; HE-2, at 20-21, 30).

HMLP and Eversource confirmed that both the New Tap Station and the New Substation would use breakers that contain sulfur hexafluoride ("SF₆"), which they explained is the industry

standard (Exh. EFSB-A-1).¹⁶ According to the Companies, there would be between 713 and 813 pounds of SF₆ between the stations (Exh. EFSB-A-1). Both HMLP and Eversource committed to following all applicable requirements governing the use of SF₆, including selecting equipment with a maximum annual leak rate below one percent, in accordance with the requirements in 310 CMR 7.72 (Exh. EFSB-A-1).

b. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth did not address air impacts on brief.

c. Analysis and Findings

The record shows the Project would have two main types of impacts to air quality: construction-related emissions from Project construction, and SF₆ used in the Project's electrical equipment. Concerning the former, the record shows the Companies and their contractors would adhere to construction BMPs, including all applicable regulations for dust control and emissions, use of emission control devices on certain equipment, and various dust and sediment controls.

Concerning SF₆, a potent greenhouse gas, the record shows its use in this Project would be consistent with the industry standards and both Companies would follow all applicable requirements governing the use of SF₆, including a maximum annual leak rate. The record shows SF₆-free alternatives for the New Substation and New Tap Station are not readily available. However, the Siting Board encourages the Companies to continue their efforts to find alternatives to SF₆ use, wherever possible. NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 19-06A/D.P.U. 19-142A/19-143A/23-22, at 57 (2025) ("Mid-Cape Project Change"); Trimount ESS LLC, EFSB 25-05/D.P.U. 24-152, at 55 (2026) ("Trimount ESS Everett"); GCEP at 140.

¹⁶ HMLP stated that it explored non-SF₆ alternatives during conceptual planning and would consider them if they are available in the procurement process (Exh. EFSB-A-1). Eversource is exploring alternatives to SF₆ and other hydrofluorocarbons for gas-filled equipment across its service territory, including piloting a Hitachi EconiQ™ breaker in Connecticut since 2023 (Exh. EFSB-A-1).

Concerning the routing of the New Transmission Line, the record shows no difference in air quality impacts between the routes. Thus, the Siting Board finds the two routes comparable for air quality impacts and that the Project's impacts on air quality would be minimized.

6. Traffic

a. Companies' Description

HMLP stated that traffic impacts for the New Transmission Line would be temporary during underground construction in public roads (Exh. HE-1, at 5-39). HMLP would employ traffic management strategies that would maintain one lane in each direction of travel except for situations where one lane is required to accommodate construction activities (Exh. EFSB-T-4). HMLP estimated that motorists traveling along the work zone may experience delays of three to five minutes during rush hours (Exh. EFSB-T-4). HMLP maintained that the overall impact of delays would be similar regardless of the route chosen (Exh. EFSB-T-4).

To assess and compare potential traffic impacts of the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route, HMLP reviewed existing traffic and parking conditions, roadway widths, travel lanes, and the presence of public bus service along each route, as well as the options for traffic mitigation along each route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-39). The Proposed Route is approximately 3.2 miles, the majority of which is located within public roads (Exh. HE-1, at 539). HMLP stated that, with all roads being two-way roads, construction would require a combination of lane shifts and road closures/detours (Exh. HE-1, at 5-39). HMLP noted that MBTA Bus Route 222 follows the Proposed Route along Broad Street and High Street, and includes eighteen bus stops along the Proposed Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-39). Table 10 provides a summary of the characteristics of the road segments of the Proposed Route.

Table 10. Proposed Route Road Segments

Segment	Approximate Average Road Width (feet)	Existing Traffic and Parking	Public Transportation Route	Daily Traffic Volume
Broad Street	40	Sidewalks on both sides On street parking on both sides	Yes	9,031

Segment	Approximate Average Road Width (feet)	Existing Traffic and Parking	Public Transportation Route	Daily Traffic Volume
High Street	25	Sidewalk on one side No on street parking	Yes	7,946
French Street	25	Sidewalk on one side No on street parking	No	5,000
Hobart Street	25	Sidewalk on one side No on street parking	No	5,000

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 5-40, Table 5-3.

The Noticed Alternative Route is approximately 3.7 miles, all of which is located within public roads (Exh. HE-1, at 5-40). HMLP stated that, with all roads being two-way roads, as with the Proposed Route, the construction would require a combination of lane shifts and road closures/detours (Exh. HE-1, at 5-40). HMLP noted that MBTA Bus Route 222 includes eleven bus stops along the Noticed Alternative Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-40). Table 11 provides a summary of the characteristics of the road segments of the Noticed Alternative Route.

Table 11. Noticed Alternative Route Road Segments

Segment	Approximate Average Road Width (feet)	Existing Traffic and Parking	Public Transportation Route	Daily Traffic Volume
Broad Street	40	Sidewalks on both sides On street parking on both sides	Yes	9,031
Spring Street	25	Sidewalks on both sides No on street parking	No	4,601
Essex Street	30	Sidewalks on one side No on street parking	No	4,601
Lake Street	30	Sidewalk on one side No on street parking	No	4,601
Shawmut Street	20	Sidewalks on both sides One side with on street parking	No	4,601
Pleasant Street	35	Sidewalks on both sides No on street parking	No	13,458
Water Street	30	Sidewalks on both sides	No	4,830

Segment	Approximate Average Road Width (feet)	Existing Traffic and Parking	Public Transportation Route	Daily Traffic Volume
		No on street parking		
High Street	25	Sidewalk on one side No on street parking	Yes	7,946
French Street	25	Sidewalk on one side No on street parking	No	5,000
Hobart Street	25	Sidewalk on one side No on street parking	No	5,000

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 5-41, Table 5-4.

HMLP noted that while the Noticed Alternative Route scored more favorably in the transportation impact criteria than the Proposed Route for the route selection analysis (see Section V.B.5), the Broad Street route would provide greater flexibility for transportation management options than the Lake Street route due to the greater width of Broad Street (Exh. HE-1, at 5-41). In addition, the Noticed Alternative Route has about double the number of school bus stops than the Proposed Route (RR-Preble-1).

HMLP stated that access to the New Substation would go through the Transfer Station access road (Exh. HE-1, at 5-21). HMLP anticipated that the traffic impacts associated with the New Substation construction would be minor and temporary (Exh. HE-1, at 5-21). HMLP would coordinate construction activities with the Hingham DPW, including limiting work that would disrupt the Transfer Station traffic flow (Exh. HE-1, at 5-21). Moreover, HMLP committed to parking all construction vehicles on-site and prohibiting construction vehicles from entering the Transfer Station premises before 7:00 a.m. on any given construction day (Exh. HE-1, at 5-21). HMLP would coordinate with the Transfer Station for any large delivery to avoid interruption to the Transfer Station's traffic flow (Tr. 2, at 189-190).

HMLP and Eversource expected minor and temporary traffic impacts associated with the New Tap Station construction, given that the New Tap Station site is located off public roads and would be accessed through the existing access road off of Broad Street and a new access road off of the Connell Rink and Pool driveway (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 35; EFSB-T-2; Tr. 2,

at 190).¹⁷ Nevertheless, Eversource would coordinate construction activities with the Connell Rink and Pool to minimize any traffic impact on its operations (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13; HE-2, at 35; Tr. 2, at 190). Eversource would coordinate with the Town of Weymouth and the Connell Rink and Pool for large deliveries to minimize traffic impacts (Tr. 2, at 190-191).

According to HMLP and Eversource, during operation, both the New Substation and New Tap Station would be unmanned and only require occasional staff visits. HMLP estimated one trip per week for the New Substation and Eversource estimated visits only on an as-needed basis for the New Tap Station, resulting in Project operation generating insignificant additional traffic (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-13, 5-21; HE-2, at 26, 35).

To balance construction progress and traffic impacts to the community, HMLP would develop Traffic Management Plans (“TMPs”) for the entire Project in coordination with the municipalities, MBTA, and local school district staff, which would address work zone design, maintenance of access to abutters, impacts on street parking, impacts on emergency vehicle access, as well as stakeholder notification and coordination (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-23, 5-39, 5-42; EFSB-T-1; Preb-T-1). HMLP would develop TMPs consistent with the Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”) Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways and the MassDOT publication, “Work Zone Safety” (Exh. HE-1, at 5-42). There would be staging areas for the New Transmission Line construction, but their locations would be identified after HMLP selects a contractor (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-52; EFSB-T-3).

b. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth expressed concern that the Project would cause considerable impacts to traffic, school buses, and emergency vehicles during construction of the New Transmission Line but otherwise did not contest any evidence or conclusions presented by the Companies regarding traffic impacts (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 5).

¹⁷ In response to a Siting Board information request, Eversource provided a conceptual plan for temporary direct access to the New Tap Station site from Broad Street but concluded that such a plan would be costly and unable to eliminate the need for using the Connell Rink and Pool driveway and associated traffic impact (Exh. EFSB-T-2).

c. Analysis and Findings

The record shows that the Project would have no operational traffic impacts because it would be unmanned. The record shows the Project's construction traffic impacts would include disruption to the traffic pattern and bus services along the route of the New Transmission Line in both Hingham and Weymouth, traffic delays along the route during rush hours, and the interruption of traffic flow at the Transfer Station in Hingham and the Connell Rink and Pool in Weymouth. Although temporary, these impacts are of concern to the Town of Weymouth. However, the record also shows the Companies would mitigate these traffic impacts through coordination with the Town of Hingham, Town of Weymouth, and other stakeholders, and the development and implementation of TMPs. The TMPs would address key factors of traffic impacts, from work zone size and location to emergency vehicle access and corresponding mitigation measures, as well as engineering of the work zones. TMPs would keep the temporary traffic impacts to a minimum. The Siting Board directs the Companies to submit the TMPs to the Siting Board at least 60 days prior to the start of Project construction, including documentation of approval of these documents by the Town of Hingham and Town of Weymouth officials responsible for traffic planning.

The record shows traffic impacts would be comparable between the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route. With the above condition, the Siting Board finds the Project's traffic impacts would be minimized.

7. Hazardous Waste and Safety

a. Companies' Description

HMLP stated that waste materials generated during the New Transmission Line construction would be removed and re-used or disposed of at a suitable facility (Exh. HE-1, at 5-32). HMLP identified two Tier Classified Oil or Hazardous Material sites within 500 feet of the portions of the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route that are along the same path, two additional Tier Classified sites unique to the Proposed Route, and two other Activity and Use Limitation sites unique to the Noticed Alternative Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-47). HMLP explained that once the New Transmission Line route is confirmed, it would conduct

geotechnical borings and environmental sampling of soil and groundwater and use this data, along with information from the MassDEP Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup database, to develop a Soil and Groundwater Management Plan (Exh. EFSB-S-1). In the event that construction encounters unexpected subsurface contamination, HMLP would manage any contaminated soils encountered pursuant to the Soil and Groundwater Management Plan and the Utility Release Abatement Measure provisions of the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-48; EFSB-S-1). Additionally, HMLP stated that any contaminated groundwater would be treated in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (“NPDES”) Remediation and Dewatering General Permit requirements prior to discharge (Exh. EFSB-S-1). HMLP stated that both routes are comparable for the risk of encountering subsurface contamination during construction (Exh. HE-1, at 5-47). HMLP noted there could be a risk of inadvertent release of HDD drill fluid during the drilling and would require its contractor to develop and implement a Monitoring and Operations Plan and Inadvertent Release Contingency Plan (Exh. EFSB-W-1).

HMLP and Eversource noted that the MassDEP Waste Site and Reportable Releases tool showed no releases at either the New Substation or New Tap Station Sites (Exh. HE-1, at 5-14, 5-21). HMLP noted that the proposed New Substation is located on a portion of the Transfer Station site that is adjacent to, but does not overlap, a capped landfill (Exh. HE-1, at 5-21). The Companies explained that minor amounts of potentially hazardous materials are anticipated to be used in some of the electrical equipment during the operation of both the New Substation and New Tap Station Sites, stating that containment measures for such equipment would be consistent with or exceed industry guidelines and standards (Exh. EFSB-S-2).

During construction, HMLP and Eversource stated that they would require their respective contractors to have spill kits available at all times in the event of a release of hazardous materials (Exh. EFSB-S-2). In the event of a spill, the Companies would work with their contractors to contain, clean up, and properly dispose of the contaminated material and notify the relevant authorities as required (Exh. EFSB-S-2). HMLP stated that it would incorporate the New Substation into its existing Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (“SPCC”) Plan for the Hobart Substation (Exh. EFSB-S-2). Additionally, the Companies stated that their respective contractors would be required to inspect vehicles and equipment daily and

refuel outside of wetlands and buffer zones to minimize the risk of environmental impacts associated with potential spills (Exh. EFSB-S-2).

Both HMLP and Eversource would require their contractors to follow their respective internal safety manuals, and the Companies stated they would coordinate with the fire departments of the municipalities to develop an Emergency Response Plan for the full Project (Exh. EFSB-S-4). HMLP stated that the New Substation would be enclosed in a secured building, surrounded by a chain link fence that meets the current National Electric Safety Code standard, and located within the gated Transfer Station (Exh. EFSB-S-5). Additionally, HMLP stated that the New Substation would be equipped with a camera system that includes motion detection and 24/7 monitoring from a remote location (Exh. EFSB-S-5). Eversource specified that the New Tap Station would have a perimeter chain link fence at least ten feet tall with a lockable gate and security signage and would be under continuous camera surveillance both inside and outside of the fenceline (Exh. EFSB-S-5).

b. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth did not address hazardous waste or safety issues on brief.

c. Analysis and Findings

The record demonstrates that during the construction phase, the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route have comparable risks of encountering subsurface contamination, and HMLP would manage any unexpected subsurface contamination encountered according to the relevant regulations. There were no reportable releases documented at either the New Substation or New Tap Station Sites. The record shows that both HMLP and Eversource would require their contractors to always have spill kits available and adhere to best practices to reduce the risk of a potential spill within environmentally sensitive areas. The Siting Board directs HMLP to submit its Monitoring and Operations Plan and Inadvertent Release Contingency Plan for Horizontal Directional Drilling to the Siting Board at least 60 days before the start of Project construction. Furthermore, to mitigate the consequences of any potential inadvertent release, the Siting Board directs HMLP to consider HDD at Herring Run Brook during a time when river herring are not migrating.

Additionally, the Companies committed to working with the Town of Hingham and Town of Weymouth fire departments to establish an Emergency Response Plan for the Project. The record shows that the New Substation and New Tap station would have security fencing, restricted access gates, and video surveillance typical of other energy infrastructure facilities. With these measures implemented, the Siting Board finds that the impacts of hazardous waste and safety have been minimized.

8. Magnetic Fields

a. Companies' Description

HMLP retained Gradient Corporation to perform an assessment of the expected MF levels that would be generated by the New Transmission Line, New Substation, and New Tap Station (Exh. HE-1, at 5-14, 5-22, 5-49). Gradient's report modeled the MF levels of the New Transmission Line at one meter above ground for the four representative cross sections (Exh. HE-1, at 5-49). HMLP presented the calculated MF values for each of the cable configurations under average annual loading conditions and system peak loading conditions, shown in Table 12 (Exh. HE-1, at 5-49 to 5-50). The conduit configurations and corresponding MF levels would be the same regardless of route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-51). HMLP maintains that all modeled MF values for the New Transmission Line are orders of magnitude below the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection ("ICNIRP") guideline of 2,000 milligauss ("mG") (HMLP Brief at 102-103, citing Exh. HE-1, at 5-50 to 5-51, Appendix 5-3, at 13-18). Additionally, HMLP contends that in all cases the MF values decreased to negligible levels at 25 feet from the circuit centerlines (HMLP Brief at 103, citing Exh. HE-1, at 5-50 to 5-51, Appendix 5-3, at 13-18).

Table 12. Modeled MF for the New Transmission Line

Cross Section	Maximum Directly Above Circuit Centerline (mG)		±25 feet from Circuit Centerline (mG)*	
	Annual Average Load Levels	System Peak Load Levels	Annual Average Load Levels	System Peak Load Levels
Triangular Conductor Configuration for the	14.3	35.5	1.1	2.8

Cross Section	Maximum Directly Above Circuit Centerline (mG)		±25 feet from Circuit Centerline (mG)*	
	Annual Average Load Levels	System Peak Load Levels	Annual Average Load Levels	System Peak Load Levels
Typical Underground Duct Bank Trenches				
Horizontal Conductor Configuration for Flat Trenches	23.6	58.5	1.6	4.0
Vertical Conductor Configuration for Manhole Approaches	31.9	78.9	3.7	9.1
HDD Bore Conductor Configuration	13.2	32.6	1.3	3.3

* For reference, HMLP stated the road widths along the Proposed Route range from 25 feet (French and Hobart Street) to 40 feet (Broad Street) (Exh. HE-1, at 5-1).

Source: Exh. HE-1, at 5-50.

HMLP noted that the local community raised concerns regarding the potential impacts of MF on river herring from the underground transmission cable running beneath Herring Run Brook in Weymouth (Exh. HE-1, at 5-49). HMLP cited several academic reports to explain that there is no evidence that river herring are a magnetosensitive species or rely on earth's geomagnetic field to navigate during their annual migration to spawning grounds (Exh. HE-1, at 5-49). HMLP argues that the HDD crossing cable configuration under the brook had the lowest of the projected MF values and concludes that Project MF would not impact river herring (HMLP Brief at 103, citing Exh. HE-1, at 5-49 to 5-50, Appendix 5-3, at 14).

HMLP and Eversource explained that it is well-established by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers ("IEEE") that MF levels decrease rapidly to low levels within the fenceline for the types of electrical equipment located at both the New Substation and the New Tap Station, such as aboveground buswork and switchgear (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-14, 5-22; HE-2, at 27, 34; EFSB-EMF-1). The Companies stated that the strongest MF levels near the fence line would come from the electrical conductors entering and exiting the stations (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-14, 5-22; HE-2, at 26-27, 34-35). The Companies noted that, although the GIS at the New

Substation would experience more rapid MF level drop-off than the AIS at the New Tap Station due to the closer spacing of the conductors, in both instances the MF from the switchgear would diminish to minimal levels at the site perimeter (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-14, 5-22; HE-2, at 26-27, 34).

b. Positions of the Parties

The Town of Weymouth did not address MF impacts on brief.

c. Analysis and Findings

The record shows that regardless of the route chosen, the MF levels generated by each of the four cable arrangements would range from 13.2 mG to 78.9 mG directly above the conduit, well below the ICNIRP guideline for allowable health exposure and in line with the MF modeled for prior Siting Board cases. GCEP at 173; Southcoast Wind Energy LLC, EFSB 22-04/ D.P.U. 22-67/ 22-68, at 137 (2024) (“Southcoast Wind”). Furthermore, the MF report shows that for all cable configurations, the MF values would drop off to negligible levels at a distance of 25 feet from the circuit centerline. The record establishes that the MF generated by the New Transmission Line is not expected to affect river herring where the line intersects Herring Run Brook.

The record demonstrates that any MF generated by the New Substation or New Tap Station equipment would rapidly decrease with distance from the equipment and become negligible outside of the fenced area. Accordingly, the Siting Board finds that that the MF impacts of the Proposed Route and the Noticed Alternative Route are comparable and MF impacts of the Project would be minimized.

D. Cost

HMLP estimated the total Project cost would be \$107.6 million with a confidence interval of -25/+50 percent, with the cost breakdown as follows: \$21.4 million for the New Substation, \$44.5 million for the New Tap Station, and \$41.7 million for the New Transmission Line (Exh. EFSB-C-1(S1)). HMLP stated that this cost estimate also includes a 33 percent cost escalation contingency (Exh. EFSB-C-1(S1)). HMLP stated that all costs would be borne by its ratepayers in Hingham (Exh. EFSB-C-3; Tr. 1, at 149-151, 153-155). HMLP noted that

originally, the average customer was not expected to see an increase in their monthly utility bill attributable to this Project due to a previously adopted rate increase; however, since these rate increases were limited by G.L. c. 164, §58, HMLP explained that a portion of Project-related costs would be recovered by future rate increases (Exh. EFSB-C-5(S1); Tr. 1, at 150-151). HMLP also noted that as a municipal light department, it possesses ratemaking authority and its rates are not subject to approval by the Department (Exhs. EFSB-C-5(S1); HE-1, at 1-2).

HMLP explained that the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route have the same substation and tap station costs, and the only difference between the transmission line costs arises from the length of the cables and duct bank (Exh. HE-1, at 5-57). At the time of the original cost evaluation, HMLP estimated that the transmission line cost for the Noticed Alternative Route would cost \$1.5 million more than that of the Proposed Route (Exh. HE-1, at 5-57).

The record shows that all costs of the Project, including the cost of the New Tap Station, which would be built and owned by Eversource, would be borne by HMLP ratepayers. The record demonstrates that the Proposed Route would cost less than the Noticed Variation Route due to the shorter length of the transmission line. The Siting Board finds that the Project cost would be minimized with the selection of the Proposed Route.

E. Reliability

As noted above, HMLP explained that Hingham is susceptible to townwide outages resulting from N-1 and N-1-1 contingency events, and therefore reliability concerns are the primary driver for this Project (Exh. HE-1, at 2-5). In comparing the two routes analyzed, HMLP stated that there is no significant difference in reliability between the Proposed Route and the Noticed Alternative Route due to them having similar designs and lengths (Exh. HE-1, at 5-57).

HMLP evaluated climate resiliency of the Project design against the ResilientMass Action Team (“RMAT”) Climate resiliency planning criteria for extreme precipitation and temperature events (RR-EFSB-8, at 1). HMLP determined that the extreme temperatures identified by RMAT would be within “normal” or “usual” service conditions for major

equipment for the Project (RR-EFSB-8, at 1-2). HMLP indicated that certain equipment could be replaced or upgraded in the future to accommodate any expected changes in ambient temperature (RR-EFSB-8, at 2). For extreme precipitation events, HMLP noted that it designed the proposed stormwater detention systems to mitigate a 100-year storm event, which exceeds the current Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook Regulations (RR-EFSB-8, at 2-3). Overall, the Project would provide an alternate supply to the existing transmission lines and, in turn, a more resilient electric supply in alignment with the state and local hazard mitigation planning documents (Exhs. EFSB-N-5; EFSB-G-7).

The Siting Board finds that the Project would improve the reliability of HMLP's system, and that the difference in reliability between the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route is negligible.

F. Conclusion on Analysis of Environmental Impacts

The Siting Board is charged with ensuring jurisdictional facilities approved for construction in the Commonwealth achieve an appropriate balance between environmental impacts, reliability, and cost. G.L. c. 164, §§ 69H, 69J. See A1B2 at 59; Acushnet at 114; GCEP at 206. Based on review of the record, the Siting Board finds that the Companies provided sufficient information to allow the Siting Board to determine whether the Project has achieved a proper balance among cost, reliability, and environmental impacts.

As discussed above, the Siting Board finds that the Proposed Route and Noticed Alternative Route are comparable with respect to reliability. The Siting Board further finds that the Proposed Route is superior to the Noticed Alternative Route in terms of cost due to its shorter length. With respect to environmental impacts, the Proposed Route abuts fewer residences and water resource areas while the two routes are comparable in all other respects. The Siting Board finds that the Proposed Route is superior to the Noticed Alternative Route with respect to providing a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth with a minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost.

The Siting Board finds that with the implementation of the specified conditions and mitigation presented above, and compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal

requirements, the environmental impacts of the Project would be minimized. Therefore, the Siting Board finds that the Project, as proposed, would achieve an appropriate balance among environmental impacts, reliability, and cost.

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH POLICIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

A. Standard of Review

G.L. c. 164, § 69J requires the Siting Board to determine whether plans for construction of the applicant's new facilities are consistent with current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies as adopted by the Commonwealth. See A1B2 at 59; Acushnet at 116; GCEP at 206.

B. Position of HMLP

HMLP asserts that the proposed Project is fully consistent with important state energy policies as articulated in the Electric Utility Restructuring Act of 1997 (St. 1997, c. 164, the "Restructuring Act"); the Green Communities Act (c. 169 of the Acts of 2008); the Global Warming Solutions Act (c. 298 of the Acts of 2008) ("GWSA"); the Energy Diversity Act (c. 188 of the Acts of 2016); the Clean Energy Act (c. 227 of the Acts of 2018); and An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (c. 8 of the Acts of 2021) ("Roadmap Act") satisfying the requirements of Section 69J (Exh. HE-1, at 6-1; HMLP Brief at 112; Eversource Brief at 14).

1. Health Policies

HMLP argues that the Project is critical to ensuring an adequate and reliable supply of electricity to the citizens and businesses of Hingham and of utmost importance to public safety, health and welfare (Exh. HE-1, at 6-1 to 6-2; HMLP Brief at 115-116). In addition, HMLP notes the Siting Board has determined that projects such as the proposed Project that increase reliability in electric service to the community also can play a role in contributing to the health of the Commonwealth's citizens citing Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 89-90; NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 17-02/D.P.U. 17-82/17-83, at 188 (2019) ("Sudbury-Hudson") (HMLP Brief at 111-112).

Table 13. HMLP's Asserted Project Consistency with Key Health Policies

Commonwealth Policy	Policy Description	Project Consistency Per HMLP
Restructuring Act	Provides that reliable electric service is of “utmost importance to the safety, health and welfare of the Commonwealth’s citizens and economy” (Exh. HE-1, at 6-1).	Project is critical to ensuring an adequate and reliable supply of electricity to the citizens and businesses of Hingham and of utmost importance to public safety, health and welfare (Exh. HE-1, at 6-1 to 6-2; HMLP Brief at 111-112).
Various Federal, State, Local Laws and Regulations; Industry Standards	Applicable federal, state, and local regulations, and industry standards and guidelines established for protection of the public (Exh. HE-1, at 6-2).	HMLP and Eversource assert they would design, construct, and maintain the facilities comprising this Project in a manner to ensure that the health and safety of the public are protected and would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations, and industry standards and guidelines established for protection of the public (Exh. HE-1, at 6-2; HMLP Brief at 111-112; Eversource Brief at 14).

2. Environmental Protection Policies

HMLP asserts the Project is consistent with the environmental protection policies developed by the Commonwealth (HMLP Brief at 111). HMLP maintains that the Project does not trigger any MEPA thresholds, and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ (“EEA”) Environmental Justice Policy (“EJ Policy”) does not require the Siting Board to conduct enhanced public participation, or enhanced review of the Project (Exh. HE-1, at 5-33, n.6, 5-36, 6-6; HE-2, Exhibit I).

Table 14. HMLP's Asserted Project Consistency with Key Environmental Protection Policies

Commonwealth Policy	Policy Description	Project Consistency Per HMLP
Various Federal, State, Local Laws and Regulations	Applicable federal, state, and municipal statutes, regulations,	HMLP and Eversource assert that the joint petitioners will obtain all environmental approvals and

Commonwealth Policy	Policy Description	Project Consistency Per HMLP
	and environmental policies (Exh. HE-1, at 6-2).	permits required by federal, state, and local agencies and will construct and operate the Project in full compliance with applicable federal, state, and municipal statutes, regulations, and environmental policies (Exh. HE-1, at 6-2; HMLP Brief at 113; Eversource Brief at 14).
Restructuring Act	Requires Projects to demonstrate that environmental impacts have been minimized consistent with the minimization of costs associated with the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of environmental impacts (Exh. HE-1, at 6-3).	HMLP argues that the Project will contribute to a reliable, low cost, diverse energy supply for the Commonwealth while avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable (HMLP Brief at 111-112).
Green Communities Act	Encourages energy and building efficiency, promotes renewable energy, creates green communities, implements elements of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (“RGGI”), and provides market incentives and funding for various types of energy generation (Exh. HE-1, at 6-4).	HMLP asserts the Project would enable HMLP to continue to integrate clean energy generated by renewable sources, support electrification projects in Hingham, and accommodate increased use of electric vehicles and the associated installation of electric charging stations (HMLP Brief at 113).
GWSA, 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap, Roadmap Act	Collectively established and codified greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions reduction and net-zero targets for 2050 (Exh. HE-1, at 6-5).	HMLP argues the New Transmission Line would enhance HMLP’s ability to accommodate increased electrification in support of the Town of Hingham’s and the Commonwealth’s climate goals (Exh. HE-1, at 6-6; RR-EFSB-12). HMLP also argues the Project would enable HMLP to continue to integrate clean energy generated by renewables sources (Exh. HE-1, at 6-5; HMLP Brief at 112-114).
Energy Diversity Act, Clean Energy Act	Collectively facilitate the procurement and integration of renewable energy resources and	The Project would improve the reliability of HMLP’s system and would further enable the integration

Commonwealth Policy	Policy Description	Project Consistency Per HMLP
	encourage energy storage efforts (Exh. HE-1, at 6-6).	of clean energy resources (Exh. HE-1, at 6-6; HMLP Brief at 114).
Roadmap Act	The Roadmap Act requires an environmental impact report for any project that is “likely to cause damage to the environment” and is located within a distance of one mile of an Environmental Justice Population; this distance extended to five miles for a project that impacts air quality. Roadmap Act, Sections 58, 59, amending G.L. c. 30, § 62B. The Proposed and Noticed Alternative Routes cross areas within Weymouth mapped as environmental justice populations as defined by minority status and income status (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-36; HE-2, Exhibit I). There are no census tracts within one mile of the project where at least 5 percent of the population speak a specific language other than English and report they do not speak English “very well” (Exh. HE-1, at 6-6).	The Project does not meet or exceed any Environmental Notification Form or Environmental Impact Report thresholds and the potential impacts associated with the Project will not separately exceed Environmental Notification Form or Environmental Impact Report thresholds (Exhs. HE-1, at 5-33, n. 6, 5-36; HE-2, Exhibit I; HMLP Brief at 115-116). Although the Project does not trigger MEPA thresholds mandating enhanced participation provisions of the EEA EJ Policy, HMLP and Eversource engaged in enhanced public outreach with intent to engage environmental justice populations and evaluate environmental burdens (Exh. HE-1, at 6-5 to 6-6; HMLP Brief at 115-116).

3. Resource Use and Development Policies of the Commonwealth

HMLP asserts that the Project would be constructed and operated in compliance with Massachusetts’s policies regarding resource use and development (Exh. HE-1, at 6-8; HMLP Brief at 116).

Table 15. HMLP's Asserted Project Consistency with Key Resource Use and Development Policies

Commonwealth Policy	Policy Description	Project Consistency Per HMLP
EEA Smart Growth/Smart Energy Policy	Established Sustainable Development Principles, including: • Supporting the revitalization of city centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that is compact, conserves land, protects historic resources, and integrates uses; • Encouraging remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure; • Protecting environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, critical habitats, wetlands and water resources, and cultural and historic landscapes (Exh. HE-1, at 6-8)	HMLP asserts the Project would support these principles because it would be located within previously disturbed parcels of land and public ways (Exh. HE-1, at 6-8). HMLP used a site and route selection process which disfavored siting in Open Space and Article 97 land (Exh. HE-1, at 6-8; HMLP Brief at 116).

C. Position of the Town of Weymouth

The Town of Weymouth did not address Project's consistency with current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies of the Commonwealth on brief.

D. Analysis and Findings

The Restructuring Act noted the fundamental importance of reliable electric service to public health in declaring that "electricity service is essential to the health and well-being of all residents of the Commonwealth" and that "reliable electric service is of utmost importance to the safety, health, and welfare of the Commonwealth's citizens and economy." St. 1997, c. 164. Following this reasoning, a project that increases reliability in electric service should also be deemed to contribute to the health of the Commonwealth's residents. A1B2 at 60-61; Mid-Cape

Reliability Project at 89; Beverly-Salem at 109. In Section VI.E above, the Siting Board found the Project would “ensure a reliable electric supply” for the Commonwealth. Therefore, the Siting Board concludes that the Project’s reliability benefits would result in health benefits to Commonwealth residents. Accordingly, subject to the specified mitigation and conditions set forth in this Decision, the Siting Board finds that the Companies’ plans for construction of the Project are consistent with current health policies of the Commonwealth.

Although the Project did not exceed a MEPA environmental impact review threshold that would trigger either enhanced public participation or enhanced environmental impact reviews under the EEA EJ Policy, MEPA, or the Siting Board’s own environmental justice requirements, HMLP and Eversource conducted in-person and Zoom meetings to provide opportunities to environmental justice populations and others potentially impacted by the Project to learn more about the Project and provide their comments and input (Exh. HE-1, at 6-7). Open houses were held at different times of the day in accessible locations and a Zoom Open House was also held to reach people who were unable to attend in person (Exh. HE-1, at 6-7). The Companies distributed outreach materials in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese (Exh. HE-1, at 6-6 to 6-7).

HMLP’s maintains that the proposed Project is consistent with the policies established by the GWSA and Roadmap Act. The record demonstrates that the proposed Project will enable HMLP to continue to integrate clean energy generated by renewable resources, supports electrification projects in the town, and accommodates increased use of electric vehicles and the associated installation of electric charging stations. The Project, as designed, is consistent with both the Commonwealth’s requirements for siting of electric facilities as well as future state and local planning initiatives (HMLP Brief at 114). In addition, the Companies will reduce GHG and other emissions associated with the Project during the construction phase with specialized equipment and construction techniques, ensuring short-term localized air quality effects will be minimal (HMLP Brief at 111; Eversource Brief at 13-23). As described above, the Companies have identified measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential environmental impacts throughout the entire Project, and the Board has imposed several additional mitigation conditions. As of September 1, 2026, HMLP has entered into an HCA with the Town of

Weymouth, which provides direct mitigation of Project impacts and other benefits to the Town of Weymouth and its infrastructure needs.

As found above, permanent Project impacts in the Weymouth and Hingham communities have been minimized and construction-related impacts would be of limited duration and largely mitigated; the Project would also provide important energy benefits for HMLP relating to improved reliability and the capability to meet future electrification demand associated with a transition towards clean energy and net zero targets of the Commonwealth and the Town of Hingham. In addition, the Town of Weymouth would receive additional mitigation through an HCA with HMLP, which includes financial and other benefits to the Town and its infrastructure needs. Accordingly, the Siting Board finds that Project would satisfy the Roadmap Act's requirement that the Siting Board (among other state agencies) consider EJ principles in its project reviews, such as the EJ principle regarding an equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens. In view of the above, the Siting Board finds that the Project is consistent with the Commonwealth's environmental protection policies and EJ principles, including an equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens.

The Commonwealth's Smart Growth and Sustainable Development Principles include: (1) supporting the revitalization of city centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that is compact, conserves land, protects historic resources and integrates uses; (2) encouraging remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures and infrastructure rather than new construction in undeveloped areas; and (3) protecting environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, critical habitats, wetlands and water resources, and cultural and historic landscapes. The Project would use previously disturbed land at the new Substation site, which would be consistent with the policy of reusing existing sites. The Siting Board finds that construction of the Project would be consistent with the resource use and development policies of the Commonwealth.

HMLP would implement measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential environmental impacts throughout the entire Project. As found above, permanent impacts to abutters and communities have been minimized and construction related impacts would be mitigated. In view of the above, the Siting Board finds that the Project is consistent with the

Commonwealth's current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies.

VIII. ZONING EXEMPTIONS

By joint petition, HMLP and Eversource seek: (1) individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the operation of the Hingham Zoning Bylaw in connection with the construction by HMLP of the New Substation at an area within the existing Transfer Station at 0 Old Hobart Street; and (2) individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions from the operation of the Weymouth Zoning Ordinance in connection with the construction by Eversource of the New Tap Station within an Eversource-owned transmission corridor at the New Tap Station site (Exh. HE-2, at 1-2).

A. Standard of Review

On November 20, 2024, Governor Maura Healey signed legislation to accelerate progress towards the state's goals of net zero GHG emissions by 2050. "An Act Promoting a Clean Energy Grid, Advancing Equity and Protecting Ratepayers," St. 2024, c. 239 ("2024 Climate Act"). The 2024 Climate Act became effective February 18, 2025, and changes local zoning exemption authority in two respects: (1) it codifies the definition of "public service corporation," pursuant to St. 2024, c. 239, § 36; and (2) it moves the authority to grant zoning exemptions to the Siting Board pursuant to St. 2024, c. 239, §§ 37, 91.

G.L. c. 40A, § 3 states in relevant part:

Land or structures used, or to be used by a public service corporation may be exempted in particular respects from the operation of a zoning ordinance or bylaw if, upon petition of the corporation, the [Siting Board] shall, after notice given pursuant to section eleven and public hearing in the town or city, determine the exemptions required and find that the present or proposed use of the land or structure is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public ...

Thus, a petitioner seeking exemption from a local zoning ordinance under G.L. c. 40A, § 3 must meet three criteria. First, the petitioner must qualify as a public service corporation. See NSTAR Electric d/b/a Eversource Energy, EFSB 25-03/D.P.U. 24-93/24-94, at 11 (2026) ("Crystal Spring"); Park City Wind, LLC, EFSB 20-01/D.P.U. 20-56/20-57, at 169 (2023) ("Park

City Wind”); Vineyard Wind, LLC, D.P.U. 21-08, at 5 (2021) (“Vineyard Wind”); Save the Bay, Inc. v. Department of Public Utilities, 366 Mass. 667 (1975) (“Save the Bay”). Second, the petitioner must demonstrate that its present or proposed use of the land or structure is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare. Hillman ESS at 16; Park City Wind at 169; Vineyard Wind at 6. Finally, the petitioner must establish that it requires exemption from the zoning ordinance or bylaw. Hillman ESS at 168; Vineyard Wind at 6; Mid-Cape Project Change at 77.

The Siting Board favors the resolution of local issues on a local level whenever possible to reduce concern regarding any intrusion on Home Rule. The Siting Board has determined that the most effective approach is for a petitioner to consult with local officials regarding its project before seeking zoning exemptions pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3. Hillman ESS at 169; Crystal Spring at 12; Mid-Cape Project Change at 77. Thus, the Siting Board encourages petitioners to consult with local officials and, in some circumstances, to apply for local zoning permits, before seeking zoning exemptions from the Siting Board under G.L. c. 40A, § 3. See Crystal Spring at 12; Park City Wind at 170; Mid-Cape Project Change at 77.

B. Public Service Corporation Status

1. Standard of Review

Previously, the Siting Board based its standard of review for public service corporation status on analysis provided by the Supreme Judicial Court. Save the Bay, 366 Mass. at 680; Sudbury-Hudson at 194; Berkshire Power Development, Inc. D.P.U. 96-104, at 26-36 (1997) (“Berkshire Power”). The 2024 Climate Act codified the definition of “public service corporation” to include:

a corporation or other entity duly qualified to conduct business in the commonwealth that owns or operates or proposes to own or operate assets or facilities to provide electricity, gas, telecommunications, cable, water or other similar services of public need or convenience to the public directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, an entity that owns or operates or proposes to own or operate electricity generation, storage, transmission or distribution facilities, or natural gas facilities including pipelines, and manufacturing and storage facilities...

St. 2024, c. 239, § 36.

2. Analysis and Finding

An entity requesting a zoning exemption must establish that it is a public service corporation. The term “public service corporation” is defined by statute under the 2024 Climate Act. St. 2024, c. 239, § 36.

HMLP is a municipal light plant with a place of business at 31 Bare Cove Park Drive, Hingham. In 1995, the Supreme Judicial Court upheld the Department’s decision that a municipal light plant is a public service corporation for the purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3. See Braintree Electric Light Department, D.P.U. 90-263 (1991), aff’d. Planning Board of Braintree, v. Department of Public Utilities, 420 Mass. 22, 26 (1995). In that case, the Supreme Judicial Court found that “[b]ecause they have the same duty to serve as private utilities, municipal utilities need to have the same tools available to perform their duty, including the G.L. c. 40A, § 3 exemption.” Planning Board of Braintree, supra at 28.

Eversource has its principal place of business at 800 Boylston Street, 17th Floor, Boston. Eversource is an electric company as defined in G.L. c. 164, § 1 and, therefore, is a public service corporation for purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3. See Sudbury-Hudson at 194; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 99-100.

Consistent with the definition contained in Section 36 of the 2024 Climate Act, HMLP qualifies as a public service corporation pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 1A, eligible to request a zoning exemption from the Siting Board. Eversource also qualifies as a public service corporation eligible to request zoning exemptions from the Siting Board pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 1A.

C. Public Convenience or Welfare

1. Standard of Review

A petitioner seeking exemption from a local zoning ordinance under G.L. c. 40A, § 3 must demonstrate that its present or proposed use of the land or structure is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare. Crystal Spring at 14; Park City Wind at 175; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 101. In determining whether the present or proposed use is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare, the Siting Board must balance the interests of the general public against the local interest. Park City Wind at 174; Save the Bay, 366 Mass. at

680; Town of Truro v. Department of Public Utilities, 365 Mass. 407, 409 (1974) (“Town of Truro”). Specifically, the Siting Board is empowered and required to undertake “a broad and balanced consideration of all aspects of the general public interest and welfare and not merely [make an] examination of the local and individual interests which might be affected.” New York Central Railroad v. Department of Public Utilities, 347 Mass. 586, 592 (1964) (“NY Central Railroad”); K Street Substation at 7; Hopkinton LNG, at 10. When reviewing a petition for a zoning exemption under G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the Siting Board is empowered and required to consider the public effects of the requested exemption in Massachusetts as a whole and upon the territory served by the applicant. Save the Bay, 366 Mass at 685; NY Central Railroad, 347 Mass at 592.

When making a determination as to whether a petitioner’s present or proposed use is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare, the Siting Board examines: (1) the need for, or public benefits of, the present or proposed use; (2) the present or proposed use and any alternatives or alternative sites identified; and (3) the environmental impacts or any other impacts of the present or proposed use. The Siting Board also considers safety aspects of the Project. See Trimount ESS at 57-79. The Siting Board then balances the interests of the general public against the local interest and determines whether the present or proposed use of the land or structures is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public. Park City Wind at 175; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 100-101; Sudbury-Hudson at 195.

With respect to the site chosen by a petitioner, G.L. c. 40A, § 3 does not require the petitioner to demonstrate that its preferred site is the best possible alternative, nor does the statute require the Siting Board to consider and reject every possible alternative site presented. Rather, the availability of alternative sites, the efforts necessary to secure them, and the relative advantages and disadvantages of those sites are matters of fact bearing solely upon the main issue of whether the preferred site is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public. Martorano v. Department of Public Utilities, 401 Mass. 257, 265 (1987) (“Martorano”); NY Central Railroad, 347 Mass. at 591; K Street Substation at 7.

2. Positions of the Parties on Public Convenience or Welfare

With regard to the need for the proposed Project, HMLP asserts that the record demonstrates that its system does not meet relevant reliability criteria under certain contingencies, and that the Siting Board should find that additional energy resources are needed to ensure a reliable supply of electricity to the Town of Hingham (HMLP Brief at 29). Eversource agrees that the Project is needed to ensure system reliability under current load conditions in Hingham (Eversource Brief at 13).

HMLP defends its analysis of alternative sites for the Project, asserting that the analysis selected locations that are adjacent to existing infrastructure and away from residences to minimize the environmental burden to residents (HMLP Brief at 118). HMLP and Eversource assert that the environmental impacts of the Project including construction and operation of the proposed facilities to be located in Weymouth have been minimized and mitigated (HMLP Brief at 116-1118; Eversource Brief at 13-24).

The Town of Weymouth does not challenge HMLP's position that its current system may not meet acceptable reliability standards to provide electricity to approximately 24,000 residents of in the Town of Hingham (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 2). Instead, the Town focuses on the Board's requirements for project proponents to present alternatives to the proposed facility, including: (a) other methods of transmitting or storing energy; (b) other sources of electrical power or natural gas; or (c) a reduction of requirements through load management (*Id.*). However, the Town of Weymouth raises concerns on whether alternatives to meet the reliability needs have been adequately explored by HMLP (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 3-7).¹⁸ In particular, the Town of Weymouth points to the expected impacts of the construction of the Project on the Town of Weymouth and whether there are other reasonable alternatives methods of transmitting and storing energy from other sources of electrical power to meet the acceptable reliability standards with or without underground transmission lines for the residents of Hingham without causing a substantial impact upon the Town of Weymouth, and environmentally sensitive areas with the construction of underground transmission lines under

¹⁸ The Decision addresses the concerns regarding project alternatives in Section IV.

major roadways and through environmentally sensitive areas (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 6). The Town of Weymouth concludes that a HCA is necessary to protect the Town of Weymouth, its residents, infrastructure and environmental areas along either of the underground transmission routes proposed by HMLP (Town of Weymouth Reply Brief at 6).

HMLP asserts it provided a robust analysis of transmission alternatives and non-transmission alternatives in this proceeding including seven transmission alternatives which were assessed to have greater cost and environmental impacts and non-transmission alternatives such as wind, solar, energy efficiency, battery storage, emergency generators and alternative interconnection arrangements (HMLP Reply Brief at 3-4). HMLP concluded that the proposed Project best meets the goals of reliability while minimizing cost and environmental impacts (Id.).

3. Analysis and Findings

A petitioner seeking exemption from a local zoning ordinance under G.L. c. 40A, § 3 also must demonstrate that its present or proposed use of the land or structure is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare. See Park City Wind at 175; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 100-101; Sudbury-Hudson at 195. The Siting Board has assessed the need for, or public benefits of, the present or proposed use and found that the proposed Project is needed. See Section III of this Decision. The Siting Board also has considered the present or proposed use and any alternatives or alternative sites identified in Section IV of this Decision and determined that HMLP sufficiently examined the potential for alternative approaches to meet the identified need and that the Project is superior to other alternatives with respect to providing a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth with minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost in Sections IV through V of this Decision. Finally, the Siting Board has reviewed the environmental impacts or any other impacts of the proposed Project in Section VI and finds that with the implementation of the specified conditions and mitigation, and compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements, the environmental impacts of the Project would be minimized. Therefore, the Siting Board finds that the Project, as proposed, would achieve an appropriate balance among environmental impacts, reliability, and cost.

In this Decision, the Siting Board has reviewed the Project consistent with HMLP's petition to construct pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J to determine whether the Project as proposed is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare. See Sections II through VI *infra*. Therefore, the Siting Board finds that the Companies have demonstrated that present or proposed use of the Project is reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3.

D. Zoning Exemptions Required

1. Standard of Review

In determining whether exemption from a particular provision of a zoning ordinance is “required” for purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3, the Siting Board makes a determination whether the exemption is necessary to allow construction or operation of the petitioner's project. Hillman ESS at 168; Moraga ESS at 124; Trimount ESS at 80. It is a petitioner's burden to identify the zoning provisions applicable to the project and then to establish on the record that exemption from those provisions is required. Beverly-Salem at 116; Sudbury-Hudson at 196; Vineyard Wind at 139. It is a petitioner's burden to identify the zoning provisions applicable to the project and then to establish on the record that exemption from those provisions is required:

The Company is both in a better position to identify its needs, and has the responsibility to fully plead its own case . . . The [Siting Board] fully expects that, henceforth, all public service corporations seeking exemptions under [G.L.] c. 40A, § 3 will identify fully and in a timely manner all exemptions that are necessary for the corporation to proceed with its proposed activities, so that the [Siting Board] is provided ample opportunity to investigate the need for the required exemptions.

Park City Wind at 178; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 102-103; Vineyard Wind at 139.

Regarding comprehensive zoning exemptions, the Siting Board grants such requests “on a case-by-case basis where the applicant demonstrates that issuance of a comprehensive exemption could avoid substantial public harm by serving to prevent a delay in the construction and operation of the proposed use.” Hillman ESS at 184; Moraga ESS at 125; Trimount ESS at 80-81. In order to make a determination regarding substantial public harm, the Siting Board have articulated relevant factors, including, but not limited to, whether: (1) the proposed project contributes to a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth; (2) the project is time-sensitive;

(3) the project involves multiple municipalities that could have conflicting zoning provisions that might hinder the uniform development of a large project spanning these communities; (4) the proponent of the project has actively engaged the communities and responsible officials to discuss the applicability of local zoning provisions to the project and any local concerns; and (5) the affected communities do not oppose the issuance of the comprehensive exemption. Park City Wind at 208; Vineyard Wind at 153; Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 109-110.

2. Companies' Description

a. Requested Exemptions from the Hingham Zoning Bylaw

HMLP presented its plans for the New Substation in an informal process before the Hingham Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals (Exh. HE-2, at 37-38). HMLP filed a submission package on April 12, 2024 to these boards (Ex. HE-2, at 37-38). On June 4, 2024, the two Hingham Boards reviewed the Project, accepted public comment, indicated no opposition to the proposal and voted to recommend that the Select Board consider a series of conditions with respect to the transfer of custody and control of the New Substation site (Exh. HE-2, at 37-38). HMLP stated that it intends to construct the proposed substation consistent with the Hingham Boards' recommended conditions as set forth in Exh. HE-2, Exhibit G (Exh. HE-2, at 37-38; Exhibit G).

HMLP has requested zoning exemptions from the Siting Board to avoid the potential disadvantages related to three forms of zoning relief that would otherwise be required from the Planning Board regarding the Project's planned design and construction (HMLP Brief at 123-132). HMLP asserts that the forms of relief offered under the zoning ordinance could result in delays in the Project construction despite the immediate need for the Project (HMLP Brief at 123-132). The list of exemptions requested by HMLP is shown below in Table 16.

Table 16. Zoning Exemptions Requested from the Hingham Zoning Bylaw

Zoning Section and Criteria	Proposed Use and Available Zoning Relief	HMLP Rationale for Exemption
Section III-A Schedule of Use	Public Utility Use requires Special	Standards for granting a special permit are subjective, the grant of a

Zoning Section and Criteria	Proposed Use and Available Zoning Relief	HMLP Rationale for Exemption
Public utility uses are only permitted pursuant to criteria for Special Permit A1.	Permit A1 (Exh. HE-2, at 38, 44). Special permit required.	special permit is discretionary, and a special permit could contain burdensome or restrictive conditions that could impede HMLP from constructing the New Substation in accordance with applicable state and industry standards (Ex. HE-2, at 38-44). Moreover, the process of obtaining Special Permits, as well as any appeals could further delay the construction and operation of the New Substation (Exh. HE-2, at 41; HMLP Brief at 127).
Section I-I Site Plan Review Major Site Plan Review required for land disturbance greater than 20,000 sf.	Approximately 31,000 sf of disturbance required. Site Plan Review required	Site Plan Review can cause delay and conflict with industry regulations for substations (Exh. HE-2, at 41). According to the Companies, Site Plan Review is a lengthy, iterative process and because substations are required to comply with numerous regulations such as the National Electric Safety Code (“NESC”), it would be difficult, if not impossible, to meet Site Plan Review requirements where those standards conflict with NESC requirements (Exh. HE-2, at 42-43; HMLP Brief at 28).
Section IV-A Schedule of Dimensional Requirements Minimum front yard setback of 40 feet required	Site plan includes only 6 feet setback Variance required.	A variance could introduce potential delay and uncertainty (Exh. HE-2, at 39). HMLP asserts that variances are a legally disfavored form of relief (Exh. HE-2 at 39). Variances are susceptible to legal challenge and the courts undertake review of variances on a de novo basis, and would need to make independent findings of fact (HMLP Brief at 126-127).

Zoning Section and Criteria	Proposed Use and Available Zoning Relief	HMLP Rationale for Exemption
Section IV-B Special Requirements to Schedule of Dimensional Requirements for the Official and Open Space District Along the entire street frontage of each lot, a green or landscaped strip not less than 15 feet wide shall be maintained in its natural state or landscaped with grass, trees and shrubs, not paved except for driveways, not parked upon and not built upon except for signs.	The project abuts Old Hobart Road. The building and retaining wall extend to within 6 feet of the Old Hobart Road. Variance required.	Variance would be required with potential delay and uncertainty (Exh. HE-2, at 39-41; HMLP Brief at 126-127).
Section IV-B Special Requirements to Schedule of Dimensional Requirements for the Official and Open Space District A green yard space not less than 20 feet wide shall be maintained	No green space is planned. Variance required.	Variance would be required which could introduce potential delay and uncertainty (Exh. HE-2, at 39-41).
Section V-A Off-Street Parking Requirements Parking requirements shall be determined by Special Permit A3.	No parking spaces are proposed. Special Permit required	Special permit process is discretionary, and a special permit could contain burdensome or restrictive conditions and could further delay the construction and operation (Exh. HE-2, at 41; HMLP Brief at 126-127).

Source: Exh. HE-2, at 38-44.

b. Requested Exemptions from the Weymouth Zoning Ordinance

Eversource and HMLP met with the Weymouth Planning Director on August 31, 2022, to discuss Eversource's plan to seek individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions for the construction and operation of the New Tap Station (Exh. HE-2, at 9). After consultation with the

Weymouth Inspector of Buildings, the Weymouth Planning Director supported Eversource's plan to seek exemptions in lieu of seeking local zoning relief (Exh. HE-2, at 46). Because use variances are not available in Weymouth, both the Weymouth Planner and Building Inspector agreed that HMLP and Eversource need to seek zoning relief pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3 (RR-EFSB-11.1, at 5). HMLP argues that these zoning exemptions are necessary in order to avoid the uncertainty, expense and delays associated with a possible appeal of a grant of a building permit, zoning and/or site plan approval, or any future zoning bylaw changes (RR-EFSB-11, at 5). Eversource is seeking exemptions to allow for the timely, efficient, and consistent construction of the Project in Weymouth (Eversource Brief at 26-33; Exh. HE-2, at 46).

Eversource and HMLP are seeking the following exemptions as listed in Table 17 below:

Table 17. Zoning Exemptions Requested from Weymouth Zoning Ordinance

Zoning Section and Criteria	Proposed Use and Available Zoning Relief	Companies' Rationale for Exemption
§120-11 Permitted Uses Permitted uses in the Resident District R1 include only: (1) detached one-family dwellings; and (2) municipal uses.	Substation use prohibited (Exh. HE-2, at 46-47). Use variances explicitly prohibited per § 120-119A.(3).	Substation use prohibited (Exh. HE-2, at 46-47). Since only one family houses and municipal uses are allowed (HMLP Brief at 129-130; Eversource Brief at 26-33).
Article XV and Table 1: Schedule of District Regulations Maximum Height: 35 feet, 2.5 stories	Four shielding masts proposed at 85 feet (Exh. HE-2, at 47-48). Variance required	Variances are needed for four shielding masts proposed at 85 feet (Exh. HE-2, at 47-48). This height exceeds the maximum height allowed (HMLP Brief at 129-130; Eversource Brief at 26-33).
§120-64.1 Signs The types of signs that must be affixed to the New Tap Station fence are not explicitly allowed in the Resident District R1.	Eversource will affix the following three types of signs on the perimeter fence: • No Trespassing Signs (approximate size: 12 inch by 9 inch)	Variances are needed for signs placed on perimeter fence which are not otherwise permitted in a residential district (Exh. HE-2, at 48-49) (Eversource Brief at 26-33).

Zoning Section and Criteria	Proposed Use and Available Zoning Relief	Companies' Rationale for Exemption
	• Contact Information Signs (approximate size: 14 inch by 10 inch) • Danger Signs (approximate size: 14 inch by 10 inch) (Exh. HE-2, at 48-49). Variance required.	
§120-74 Required Minimum Parking Spaces R: unlisted requirements. Reasonable off-street parking requirements for buildings and uses not listed in this section determined in each case by the Inspector of Buildings.	Variance is needed from possible requirement to have dedicated parking spots/more than six parking spots on site. cars (Exh. HE-2, at 48). At the Building Inspector's discretion.	Plan does not show any parking spots, but station can accommodate parking for approximately six cars (Exh. HE-2, at 48). Eversource seeks to clarify the ability to park at the site if necessary (Eversource Brief at 26-33).
§ 120-80 Earth Removal The removal of soil, loam, sand, gravel, quarry stone or other earth material from any parcel of land by any person, firm or corporation shall be allowed only under permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals and subject to restrictive covenants of the Board. The Inspector of Buildings may issue permits for earth removal and may require a suitable bond, related to a permit issued or in accordance with an approved plan, provided that there is reasonable assurance that the construction will be completed.	Earth material will be removed from site during construction (Exh. HE-2, at 49). Variance would be needed	The Building Inspector may impose the obligation to file a permit or impose bond obligations for removal of earth materials even if incidental to construction (Exh. HE-2, at 49). Eversource seeks to avoid the need to file for a permit or posting of a bond (Eversource Brief at 26-33).

Zoning Section and Criteria	Proposed Use and Available Zoning Relief	Companies' Rationale for Exemption
Article XXVA Site Plan Review Site plan review criteria include: (1) protection of adjoining premises and the general neighborhood from any substantially adverse impacts created by the proposed development; (2) convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and in relation to adjacent streets, properties or improvements; (3) adequacy of the methods of providing for municipal facilities and essential services in connection with the development; and (4) provisions for off-street loading and unloading of vehicles incidental to the servicing of the development	The New Tap Station is a prohibited use in the Resident District R1 (Exh. HE-2, at 49-51).	Nothing in the Weymouth Zoning Ordinance prohibits the imposition of site plan review for the New Tap Station. Accordingly, because the New Tap Station must be designed, constructed and operated according to utility industry standards, Eversource seeks an exemption for Site Plan Review in Article XXVA (Exh. HE-2, at 49-51).

Source: Exh. HE-2, at 52, Table 3.

c. Consultation with Municipal Officials

HMLP and Eversource have engaged the two communities and officials in Hingham and Weymouth to discuss the applicability of local zoning provisions, the need for both the individual and comprehensive zoning exemptions, and HMLP's and Eversource's plans to seek exemptions (Exh. HE-2, at 56-57). HMLP, both on its own and in conjunction with Eversource, has held multiple meetings with officials, residents and businesses in both Hingham and Weymouth (Exh. HE-1, at 4-3). Table 4-1 of Exhibit HE-1 identifies all the meetings held with stakeholders prior to the initial filing with the Siting Board (Exhs. HE-1, at 4-3 to 4-5; HE-2, at 7-9). Table 4-1 lists meetings beginning with an initial meeting with Hingham Department Heads on December 14, 2020, with an initial meeting with the Weymouth Mayor and staff on April 6, 2021 and with numerous additional meetings with local officials, community members

and specific public interest groups through June 6, 2024 (Exhs. HE-1, at 4-3 to 4-5, Table 1; HE-2, at 56-57).

Since the November 13, 2025 initial filings, the petitioners have held additional meetings with Representative James Murphy, Senator Patrick O'Connor, Representative Joan Meschino, Hingham Mayor Robert Hedlund, Weymouth Department Heads, the Weymouth Town Planner, Recreation Department staff, and Weymouth Town Council President Michael Mollisse (Exh. EFSB-G-5). In addition, HMLP extended invitations to House Speaker Ron Mariano and Hingham Select Board members (Exh. EFSB-G-5). The Companies also noted that its team would continue to provide pre-construction and construction update notifications, regular progress updates, and engage with municipal leaders, project abutters, and interested stakeholders (Exh. EFSB-G-5).

There has been no opposition raised by Hingham officials or the Town of Weymouth to the joint petitioners' request for individual or comprehensive zoning exemptions (HMLP Brief at 132; Eversource Brief at 25-26).

d. Comprehensive Exemption

The grant of a comprehensive zoning exemption is based on the specific facts of each case. Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 109; NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, DPU 18-155, at 68 (2020) ("Eversource Oak Bluffs"); NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, DPU 18-21, at 55 (2019) ("Eversource Westfield"). The Department and the Siting Board will consider a request for comprehensive zoning relief when issuance of a comprehensive exemption is imminently needed to avoid substantial harm. Mid-Cape Reliability Project at 109; Eversource Oak Bluffs at 69; Eversource Westfield at 54-56.

3. Positions of the Parties

HMLP asserts that the Siting Board should grant the Project a comprehensive exemption from the operation of the Hingham and Weymouth Zoning Ordinance to ensure the timely construction of the Project (HMLP Brief at 130-131). In addition, HMLP argues that the grant of

comprehensive exemptions would remove any reasonable doubt as to the ability of the Project to move forward without violating any terms of the Hingham Zoning Bylaw (HMLP Brief at 131).

Eversource agrees that the Project is necessary to ensure system reliability under current conditions for the community of Hingham, and thus, need for the Project is immediate given that HMLP's current system does not currently meet established transmission reliability standards (Eversource Brief at 34-35). Eversource also notes that the Project involves the construction of two stations in two municipalities—Hingham and Weymouth—and implicates potentially conflicting zoning provisions so that a comprehensive exemption will eliminate potential confusion relating to the application of zoning requirements for the Project (Eversource Brief at 35). Finally, Eversource asserts that the lack of clearly defined and specific regulation of electric infrastructure in the zoning enactments, and the vague and subjective terms and provisions of zoning ordinances and bylaws result in an imprecise, at best, application of the zoning provisions to energy infrastructure projects, an outcome that can be prevented with the issuance of a comprehensive zoning exemption (Eversource Brief at 35-36).

4. Analysis and Findings

In this Decision at Section III, the Siting Board has found the Project is necessary to ensure system reliability under current conditions for the community of Hingham, and thus, need for the Project is immediate given that HMLP's existing system does not currently meet established transmission reliability standards.

G.L. c. 40A, § 3 authorizes the Siting Board to grant exemptions from local zoning requirements for certain types of uses. The statute reflects the Legislature's intent that certain uses should be protected from local restrictions as a matter of public policy. Included in these protected uses is the use of land or structures by a public service corporation, and G.L. c. 40A, § 3 allows a public service corporation to petition the Siting Board for an exemption from local zoning ordinances. G.L. c. 40A, § 3. The purpose of this exemption is to ensure that local restrictions do not prohibit needed services. See Hillman ESS at 167-169; Moraga ESS at 135-136; Trimount ESS at 91-92; see also Save the Bay, 366 Mass. at 685-686. Without the ability of the Siting Board to balance the state's need for electricity with local interests, local restrictions

could effectively veto facilities serving the state, and the wider public convenience and welfare. In this Decision, the Siting Board has assessed each Project impact and mitigation associated with those impacts. See Sections IV.

HMLP and Eversource identified the zoning provisions applicable to the Project and asserted zoning exemptions from the provisions are required. HMLP and Eversource assert that to avoid the legal uncertainty, potential for adverse interpretations, delay, burden and undue expense associated with obtaining a special permit, site plan review or variance, the Siting Board should grant exemptions from the Hingham Zoning Bylaw and the Weymouth Zoning Ordinance. See HMLP Brief at 125-130; Eversource Brief at 26-33. The Siting Board finds the joint petitioners have established a need for the Project and a need for the individual exemptions requested for the construction of the Project in Hingham and Weymouth.

In making our finding, we condition our approval of the requested exemptions in Hingham on HMLP's compliance with the requirements listed in the Town of Hingham Select Board's Recommendations (Exh. HE-2, Exhibit G). The Siting Board directs HMLP to comply with the following requirements:

- Pre-Construction Meeting. A preconstruction review meeting with inspection of the erosion control installation and marked limits of clearing shall be required before issuance of a building permit.
- Limits of Work. During clearing and construction activities, the marked limit of work shall be maintained until all construction work is completed and the site is cleaned up. All vegetation beyond the limit of work shall be retained in an undisturbed state and no stockpiling of topsoil or storage of fill, materials, or equipment may occur within the protected area.
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Since the overall project will disturb more than one acre, the Applicant shall submit a SWPPP to the Community Planning Department a minimum of three weeks prior to the start of any work. The Hingham Select Board may require, at the applicant's expense, the establishment of a consultant fee account to fund the cost of the SWPPP review.
- Construction Schedule. At least three weeks prior to the start of any work, the Companies shall provide a construction schedule and TMP to the Community Planning Department and Department of Public Works. Said construction schedule and traffic management plan shall incorporate assurance that major deliveries and site work will minimize disruption to the Transfer Station operations.

- Construction Vehicles. All construction vehicles shall be parked onsite. No construction vehicles shall enter the premises before 7 a.m. on any given construction day.
- Inspections. Inspections shall be required during construction, and prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, of all elements of the Project related to or affecting erosion control, limits of work, and the approved drainage and stormwater system installed for the Project. The Hingham Select Board may require, at the applicant's expense, the establishment of a consultant fee account to fund the cost of such inspections.
- As-Built Plan Requirement. Upon project completion, an as-built plan must be submitted to the Hingham Building Commissioner prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. In addition to such other requirements as are imposed by the Hingham Building Commissioner, the as-built plan must demonstrate substantial conformance with the stormwater system design and performance standards of the approved project plans.

Regarding the request for a comprehensive zoning exemption, the Siting Board has previously held that the grant of a comprehensive exemption has been based on the specifics of each case. Compared to the grant of individual zoning exemptions, the grant of a comprehensive exemption serves to nullify a municipality's zoning code in its entirety with respect to the project under review. Thus, the Siting Board has previously held that, compared to the grant of individual zoning exemptions, a comprehensive zoning exemption constitutes a broader incursion upon municipal home rule authority. Southcoast Wind at 207; Park City Wind at 169-170. In the absence of a showing that substantial public harm may be avoided by granting a comprehensive exemption, the granting of such extraordinary relief is not justified. Southcoast Wind at 243-244; Park City Wind at 208; Beverly-Salem at 126-127. The Siting Board considers time sensitivity for projects to determine whether the granting of a comprehensive zoning exemption would avoid substantial public harm. See Southcoast Wind at 246; Park City Wind at 210; New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid, EFSB 12-1/D.P.U. 12-46/12-47, at 88 (2014).

The Siting Board finds that without the grant of a comprehensive zoning exemption, the Project may not be constructed in a timely manner, resulting in substantial public harm. In this Decision at Section III, we have found the Project to be needed for reliability purposes on an immediate basis. The record also shows Eversource and HMLP engaged in significant outreach activity with the local communities to provide education about the Project and solicit feedback.

The Siting Board notes that the Town of Weymouth requested to become a party in these proceedings and has entered into an HCA with HMLP (Exh. EFSB-G-4(S1) Att.). In addition to the specific meetings related to project construction issues and the zoning exemptions requested for Project locations in Hingham and Weymouth, the joint petitioners have engaged in comprehensive outreach efforts to members of the Hingham and Weymouth municipalities and communities regarding the proposed Project. The Siting Board finds that the evidence shows that the joint petitioners engaged in good faith discussions with officials from the Town of Hingham and officials from the Town of Weymouth.

The record shows (1) the proposed Project contributes to a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth, see Section II; (2) the Project is time sensitive, see Section II; (3) the joint petitioners have actively engaged with local officials to discuss the applicability of local zoning provisions to the Project and any local concerns; and (4) the Town of Hingham and the Town of Weymouth support the issuance of the comprehensive exemption. Therefore, the Siting Board finds that HMLP and Eversource have demonstrated the need for comprehensive zoning exemption for the New Substation and the New Tap Station and grants those comprehensive zoning exemptions.

5. Conclusion on Requests for Zoning Exemptions

The Siting Board finds that (1) the Companies are public service corporations; (2) the proposed use is reasonably necessary for the public convenience and welfare; and (3) zoning exemptions are required for purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3. In addition, the Siting Board finds that the Companies have engaged in good faith discussions with the Town of Hingham and the Town of Weymouth. The Siting Board finds that the Companies have identified and provided reasons that they cannot comply with the Hingham Zoning Bylaw and Weymouth Zoning Ordinance and therefore zoning exemptions are required. Therefore, the Siting Board grants the Joint Petitioners' request for comprehensive zoning exemptions from the operation of the Hingham Zoning Bylaw and the Weymouth Zoning Ordinance for the construction and operation of the Project.

IX. SECTION 61 FINDINGS

MEPA provides that “[a]ny determination made by an agency of the Commonwealth shall include a finding describing the environmental impact, if any, of the Project and a finding that all feasible measures have been taken to avoid or minimize said impact” and shall consider reasonably foreseeable climate change impacts, including additional GHG emissions, and effects, such as predicted sea level rise (“§ 61 Findings”). G.L. c. 30, § 61. Pursuant to 301 CMR 11.01(4)(c), § 61 Findings are necessary when an environmental impact report is submitted to the Secretary of EEA; and § 61 Findings should be based on such environmental impact report. Where an environmental impact report has not been required and the Secretary has not required additional review, § 61 Findings are not necessary. 301 CMR 11.01(4).

The Siting Board generally is not required to make G.L. c. 30, § 61, findings in a G.L. c. 164, § 69J, proceeding, as actions by the Siting Board are exempt by statute from MEPA. G.L. c. 164, § 69I. Nevertheless, the record shows that the proposed Project as proposed did not exceed a regulatory review threshold as listed in 310 CMR 11.03 (1) through (11) and as such did not require MEPA review (Exh. HE-2, Exh. I). By affidavit, HMLP testified that the Project as proposed would not be subject to MEPA review (Exh. HE-2, Exh. I). Therefore, the Siting Board need not make § 61 findings in this proceeding.

X. DECISION

The Siting Board’s enabling statute directs the Siting Board to implement the energy policies contained in G.L. c. 164, §§ 69H to 69Q, to provide a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth with a minimum impact on the environment at the lowest possible cost. G.L. c. 164, § 69H. An applicant must obtain Siting Board approval under G.L. c. 164, § 69J, prior to construction of a proposed energy facility.

In Section III, above, the Siting Board finds that the Project is needed to maintain a reliable supply of electricity.

In Section IV, above, the Siting Board finds that the Project is appropriate, and the record shows no alternative means is capable of solving the need or would be superior to the proposed Project.

In Section V, above, the Siting Board finds that HMLP has demonstrated that it examined a reasonable range of practical siting alternatives and that its proposed facilities are sited in locations that minimize cost and environmental impacts while ensuring a reliable electric supply.

In Section VI, above, the Siting Board finds that the Project, as designed, will provide a reliable energy supply for the Commonwealth, with a minimum impact on the environment, at the lowest possible cost.

In Section VII, above, the Siting Board finds that HMLP's plans for construction of the Project are consistent with the current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies as adopted by the Commonwealth.

In addition, the Siting Board finds, pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3, in Section VIII.B, the Siting Board finds that HMLP and Eversource qualify as public service corporations for purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3. In Section VIII.C, the Siting Board finds that the Project serves a public need, and the public would benefit from its operation. In Section IV, the Siting Board finds that the Applicant has adequately evaluated the alternatives considered for the Project. Based on HMLP's proposed Project design, mitigation measures, and Board-imposed conditions, the Board finds that Project impacts have been minimized and are consistent with the public convenience and welfare.

Accordingly, the Siting Board approves the petition of HMLP pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 69J for approval to construct a new underground 115 kV electric transmission line in Weymouth and Hingham, a New Substation in Hingham, and a New Tap Station in Weymouth, Massachusetts.

In Section VIII, the Siting Board finds that: (1) the Companies are public service corporations; (2) the proposed use is reasonably necessary for the public convenience and welfare; and (3) zoning exemptions are required for purposes of G.L. c. 40A, § 3. In addition, the Siting Board finds that the Companies have engaged in good faith discussions with the Town of Hingham and the Town of Weymouth. The Siting Board finds that the Companies have identified and provided reasons that they cannot comply with the Hingham Zoning Bylaw and Weymouth Zoning Ordinance and therefore zoning exemptions are required. Accordingly, the Siting Board APPROVES the joint petition of HMLP and Eversource pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, §

3 for individual and comprehensive exemptions from the Zoning By-law of the Town of Hingham and the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Weymouth. These approvals are subject to the following Conditions 1 through 12.

1. The Siting Board directs the Companies to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances from which the Companies have not received an exemption. The Companies shall be responsible for ensuring such compliance by their respective contractors, subcontractors, or other agents.
2. The Siting Board directs the Companies, within 90 days of Project completion, to submit a report to the Siting Board documenting compliance with all conditions contained in this Decision, noting any outstanding conditions yet to be satisfied and the expected date and status of compliance.
3. The Siting Board directs the Companies to submit their Community Outreach Plans to the Siting Board at least 60 days before the start of Project construction.
4. The Siting Board directs HMLP to evaluate the feasibility and cost of incorporating advanced transmission technologies and grid-enhancing technologies into the proposed Project and to submit a report on this evaluation to the Siting Board 60 days prior to the start of Project construction.
5. The Siting Board directs the Companies to submit to the Siting Board their SWPPPs and a narrative explaining compliance with the MassDEP Stormwater Standard at least 60 days prior to the start of Project construction.
6. The Siting Board directs the Companies to limit construction to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, exempting work requiring longer continuous duration than normal construction hours allow, such as concrete pours and transmission line stringing. The Siting Board further directs the Companies to consult with the Town of Weymouth to determine if additional work hour limitations may be desirable and mutually acceptable, and to report any change in the stated construction hours to the Siting Board. Should the Companies anticipate the need to extend construction work beyond the above-noted hours and days, the Siting Board directs the Companies to seek written permission from the relevant municipal authority before the commencement of such work. If the Companies and municipal officials cannot agree on whether such extended construction hours should occur, the Companies may request prior authorization from the Siting Board and shall provide the associated municipality (or municipalities) with a copy of any such request and authorization, if granted.
7. The Siting Board directs the Companies to submit the TMPs and traffic control plans to the Siting Board at least 60 days prior to the start of Project construction, including a

documentation of approval of these documents by the Town of Hingham and Town of Weymouth officials responsible for traffic planning.

8. The Siting Board directs HMLP to submit its Monitoring and Operations Plan and Inadvertent Release Contingency Plan for Horizontal Directional Drilling to the Siting Board at least 60 days before the start of Project construction. Furthermore, to mitigate the consequences of any potential inadvertent release, the Siting Board directs HMLP to consider HDD at Herring Run Brook during a time when river herring are not migrating.
9. The Siting Board directs HMLP to submit to the Board an updated and certified cost estimate for the Project prior to the commencement of construction. Additionally, the Siting Board directs HMLP to file semi-annual compliance reports with the Siting Board starting within 180 days of the commencement of construction, that include projected and actual construction costs and explanations for any discrepancies between projected and actual costs and completion dates, and an explanation of the HMLP internal capital authorization approval process.
10. The Siting Board directs that HMLP comply with the requirements of the Hingham Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals as part of their review of the Project and presented in the Town of Hingham Select Board's Recommendations (Exh. HE-2, Exhibit G) as follows:
 - Pre-Construction Meeting. A preconstruction review meeting with inspection of the erosion control installation and marked limits of clearing shall be required before issuance of a building permit.
 - Limits of Work. During clearing and/or construction activities, the marked limit of work shall be maintained until all construction work is completed and the site is cleaned up. All vegetation beyond the limit of work shall be retained in an undisturbed state and no stockpiling of topsoil or storage of fill, materials, or equipment may occur within the protected area.
 - SWPPP. Since the overall project will disturb more than one acre, HMLP shall submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to the Community Planning Department a minimum of three weeks prior to the start of any work. The Select Board may require, at HMLP's expense, the establishment of a consultant fee account to fund the cost of the SWPPP review.
 - Construction Schedule. At least three weeks prior to the start of any work, HMLP shall provide a construction schedule and traffic management plan to the Community Planning Department and Department of Public Works. Said construction schedule and traffic management plan shall incorporate assurance that major deliveries and site work will minimize disruption to the Transfer Station operations.
 - Construction Vehicles. All construction vehicles shall be parked onsite. No construction vehicles shall enter the premises before 7 AM on any given construction day.

- Inspections. Inspections shall be required during construction, and prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, of all elements of the project related to or affecting erosion control, limits of work, and the approved drainage and stormwater system installed for the project. The Select Board may require, at HMLP's expense, the establishment of a consultant fee account to fund the cost of such inspections.
- As-Built Plan Requirement. Upon project completion an as-built plan must be submitted to the Building Commissioner prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. In addition to such other requirements as are imposed by the Building Commissioner, the as-built plan must demonstrate substantial conformance with the stormwater system design and performance standards of the approved project plans.

11. The Siting Board directs the Companies to implement Dark Skies compliant lighting at the New Substation and New Tap Station.

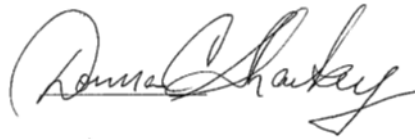
12. The Siting Board directs the Companies to provide a copy of the Weymouth Conservation Commission's Order of Conditions related to the Project and voted on at the Conservation Commission meeting held September 29, 2026, as a compliance filing in this docket.

Because issues addressed in this Decision relative to this facility are subject to change over time, construction of the proposed Project must be commenced within three years of the date of the Decision.

In addition, the Siting Board notes that the findings in this Decision are based upon the record in this case. A project proponent has an absolute obligation to construct and operate its facility in conformance with all aspects of its proposal as presented to the Siting Board.

Therefore, the Siting Board requires the Companies, and their successors in interest, to notify the Siting Board of any changes other than minor variations to the proposal so that the Siting Board may decide whether to inquire further into a particular issue. The Companies or their successors in interest are obligated to provide the Siting Board with sufficient information on changes to the proposed Project to enable the Siting Board to make these determinations.

The Secretary of the Department shall transmit a copy of this Decision herein to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and HMLP shall serve a copy of this Decision on the Mayor of Weymouth, the Select Board of the Town of Hingham, and the planning boards and zoning boards of appeals in these municipalities. HMLP shall certify to the Secretary of the Department within ten business days of issuance that such service has been completed.



Donna Sharkey
Presiding Officer

Dated this 5th day of October, 2026

APPROVED by a unanimous vote of the Energy Facilities Siting Board at its meeting on September 30, 2026, by the members present and voting. Voting for the Tentative Decision as amended: Michael Judge, Undersecretary of Energy and designee for Rebecca L. Tepper, Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; Jeremy McDiarmid, Chair, Department of Public Utilities; Elizabeth Mahony, Commissioner, Department of Energy Resources; Bonnie Heiple, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection; Thomas O'Shea, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game; Douglas Gutro, Director of the Permit Regulatory Office, and designee for Eric Paley, Secretary, Executive Office of Economic Development; Meg Blanchet, Toxicology Program Director, and designee for Dr. Robert Goldstein, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Michael P. Cahill, Mayor of the City of Beverly, Public Member; and Mark Ells, Town Manager, Town of Barnstable, Public Member.



Michael Judge, Undersecretary of Energy
and Designee for Rebecca L. Tepper,
Secretary of Energy and Environmental
Affairs, and Chair of the Energy Facilities
Siting Board

Dated this 5th day of October, 2026

Appeal as to matters of law from any final decision, order or ruling of the Siting Board may be taken to the Supreme Judicial Court by an aggrieved party in interest by the filing of a written petition praying that the order of the Siting Board be modified or set aside in whole or in part. Such petition for appeal shall be filed with the Siting Board within twenty days after the date of service of the decision, order or ruling of the Siting Board, or within such further time as the Siting Board may allow upon request filed prior to the expiration of the twenty days after the date of service of said decision, order or ruling. Within ten days after such petition has been filed, the appealing party shall enter the appeal in the Supreme Judicial Court sitting in Suffolk County by filing a copy thereof with the clerk of said court. Massachusetts G.L., Chapter 25, Sec. 5; G.L. Chapter 164, Sec. 69P.