

March 31, 2023

**Re: Neighborhood Meeting of December 12, 2022 regarding the proposed Third Transformer at Somerville Substation #402**

Drawing on the feedback received at the February 23, 2022 meeting, the Company began an extensive redesign of the project, which involved an intensive and complicated enclosure of the existing Substation and the proposed Substation expansion area, using new screening walls to replicate the façade of a building. Other improvements within the existing Substation yard and in the expansion area were explored, including perimeter fencing and landscaping. As noted in the narrative pertaining to the February 23, 2022 meeting, a sound consultant was engaged to ensure the design would be in compliance with city and MADEP standards. The Company also reached out to representatives of the MBTA and obtained assurances the project did not prohibit or complicate any potential future expansion of the Green Line beyond construction and schedule challenges already known for that project.

A second remote neighborhood meeting was held via Zoom on December 12, 2022. The primary goal of the meeting was to present the neighbors with the revised facade design.

After the presentation, participants to ask questions by typing in the “chat” or by voice.

Concerns raised during the question period included:

- a. The projected electric demand (load) forecast and new development within Somerville and the longer-term electric infrastructure needs of the city
- b. Viewsheds into the Substation, including a sentiment among some of those participating that the revised design for the substation enclosure resembled the shell of a building or movie set.

**DETAILED RESPONSES TO CONCERNS RAISED**

**a. The projected electric demand (load) forecast and new development within Somerville:**

The Eversource team relayed the urgency for the third transformer is a result of the fast-growing development in Somerville, and the city’s ambitious decarbonization goals. Eversource enables this transformation by leveraging the electric infrastructure it currently has and developing future partnerships to improve the siting of future infrastructure that will be needed to meet the demands of decarbonization. The existing substations in Somerville are a critical piece to the success of a clean, affordable, and reliable transmission grid.

**b. Viewsheds into the Substation, including a sentiment among some of those participating that the revised design for the substation enclosure resembled the shell of a building or movie set:**

The Eversource team relayed that the nuances of the design, including the fascia and the public art would be refined with collaborative community participation. Throughout metro Boston, Eversource has experience working with neighborhoods in designing substation facades in a way that best suits the neighborhood, as determined by its residents, community associations, elected officials, and city staff.

Meredith Boericke, Project Services Manager, noted that Eversource would continue its work with stakeholder groups like Union Square Main Streets and Union Square Neighborhood Council, as well as the Arts Council to meet aesthetic demands.

**DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT MADE AS A RESULT OF THE FEEDBACK**

**Viewsheds into the Substation, including a sentiment among some of those participating that the revised design for the substation enclosure resembled the shell of a building or movie set**

Working closely with the Planning Department staff, and based on the feedback received at the December 12, 2022 neighborhood meeting, the Company began another redesign of the Project, with greater emphasis placed on the design of the walled enclosure around the area for the proposed third transformer, as well as screening and other enhancements that could be made to the existing Substation yard. Progress prints were shared with the staff regularly, who in turn shared them with Councilor Ewen-Campen, for continued awareness and feedback on the latest iterations of the design.

The latest design replaces the solid three-sided façade around the property's perimeter with opaque fencing obscuring the Prospect Street viewshed of the existing substation, a building-like façade around the new equipment, and an improved fence on the Newton Street side of the parcel. The fascia on the building-like enclosure around the new equipment can be customized with public art

and other architectural details that suit the neighborhood, as determined through a community input process.

Further, in response to feedback from both the February 23, 2022 and December 12, 2022 meetings regarding the current appearance of the substation, the prominent lattice tower structure that supports a dish antenna will be removed in its entirety. Also, the rusting metal shields located atop the existing equipment wall enclosures will be removed. New metal shields will only replace a section of those that are to be removed from the wall enclosures, next to the MBTA right-of-way (ROW). Rust stains from the existing shields will also be removed from the wall enclosures and the existing structures that safely allow for it will be repainted.

A third neighborhood meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2023, to provide the neighbors and other interested stakeholders with an opportunity to review the latest project plans in advance of the Planning Board meeting.

#### **A LIST OF THE PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED ABOUT THE MEETING, ALONG WITH THE MANNER AND DATE OF CONTACT**

In addition to city staff, Councilor Ewen-Campen, members of Union Square Main Streets and the Union Square Neighborhood Council, and US2 executives, who were contacted via email, please see Attachment A for the list of abutters within 300 feet who were contacted via USPS. The notification (Attachment B) was approved and in conjunction with Ward 3 City Councilor, Ben Ewen-Campen. Notifications were sent in English, Spanish, and Portuguese on Friday, November 25, 2022.

#### **A ROSTER OR SIGNATURE SHEET OF ATTENDEES AT THE MEETING**

Since this was virtual meeting there was not a sign in sheet of attendees. We estimate forty community members were in attendance. The list of those who spoke or raised questions in the chat are noted below.

##### **Eversource Attendees**

- Meredith Boericke, Project Services
- Maija Benjamins, Strategic Projects

- Paul Graham, Project Management
- Jason Wright, Community Relations
- Keith Sonia, Field Outreach
- Matt Watkins, Field Outreach
- Duane Boyce, Project Management
- John Zicko, Engineering
- Chris Soderman, Engineering
- Amsa Mangga, System Planning
- Chris Newhall, Environmental Licensing and Permitting
- Will Connolly, Substation Façade Design Architect
- Anne Vigarito, Attorney

**City of Somerville Attendees**

- Ben Ewen-Campen, Somerville City Council, Ward 3
- Andrew Graminski, Somerville Planning Department

**Resident Attendees who asked questions/made comments**

- Jamie Perconti
- Betsy Larkin
- Daniel Wong
- Mike Katz
- James Arsenault
- Ann Camara
- JT Scott
- Michael Walsh
- Jennifer Hilario
- Michele Hansen
- Ed
- Meredith Porter
- Tori Antonino

**MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT AT THE MEETING**

See Attachment C

P_OWNER	Address (Mailing)	City (Mailing)	State (Mailing)	Zip Code (Mailing)	Or Current Resident
Linden Avenue LLC	264 Salem Street	Medford	MA	02155	Or Current Resident
Jacques & Elaine Thomas	18 Webster Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143-1934	Or Current Resident
Mia Realty LLC	PO Box 550	Seabrook	NH	03874	Or Current Resident
Roman Catholic Archbishop	264 Washington Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	10 Park Plaza	Boston	MA	02116	Or Current Resident
Elizabeth G Lefavour	11 Clark Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Jose R Rivera	15 Clark Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Elio Hernandez	17 Clark Street	Somerville	MA	02145	Or Current Resident
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	14-16 Linden Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	29-31 Mansfield Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
The Somerville Community Corporation Incorporated	337 Somerville Avenue Second Floor	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Evelyn Persoff	56 Newton Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Tome Correia	60 Newton Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Francisco Morales	62 Newton Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Chun Zhi Wang Pan	90 Mason Terrace	Brookline	MA	02446	Or Current Resident
John A Simas	29 Surrey Road	Winchester	MA	01890	Or Current Resident
John A Simas	29 Surrey Road	Winchester	MA	01890	Or Current Resident
Jose Veloso	10 Clark Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Shahriyar Mojahed	8 Thornberry Road	Winchester	MA	01890	Or Current Resident
Union 2 Associates LLC	39 Brighton Avenue	Boston	MA	02134	Or Current Resident
Union 2 Associates LLC	39 Brighton Avenue	Boston	MA	02134	Or Current Resident
Union 2 Associates LLC	39 Brighton Avenue	Boston	MA	02134	Or Current Resident
Union 2 Associates, LLC	39 Brighton Avenue	Allston	MA	02134	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	2143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
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Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Jefferson Thomas Scott	269 Washington Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Francis X Fahey	244 Somerville Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Casey Rillahan	17A Everett Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Kristen H Lucas	17B Everett Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Joshua B Lederman	19A Everett Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Natalie Kalogeraki	19B Everett Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Condo (2 units)					Or Current Resident
The Gritz-Katz Family Trust	3 Emerson Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Lora Lynn LLC	280 Main Street	North Reading	MA	01864	Or Current Resident

24 Webster Land LLC	1035 Cambridge Street Unit 12	Cambridge	MA	02141	Or Current Resident
Mary C White	8 Emerson Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Jon Demartins	21 Sagamore Road	Arlington	MA	02476	Or Current Resident
Larkin Family Revocable Living Trust	2 Emerson Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
32 Webster Avenue LLC & Deodato Trust	34 Forest Street	Watertown	MA	02472	Or Current Resident
25 Webster Avenue LLC	1200 Soldiers Field Road #102	Boston	MA	02134	Or Current Resident
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	10 Park Plaza Suite 5720	Boston	MA	02116	Or Current Resident
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	10 Park Plaza Suite 5720	Boston	MA	02116	Or Current Resident
Andrea L Yakovakis	53 Madison Avenue	Cambridge	MA	02140	Or Current Resident
Paul MacDonald	3 Clark Street Unit 4	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Samuel D Freilich	3 Clark Street Unit 2	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Sarah McGlinchey	1D Clark Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Jennifer Jane Doherty	1 Clark Street #1C	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Ilan M Levin	1 Clark Street #7	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Patrick M McAnneny	1 Clark Street #8	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Matthew Meservey	3 Clark Street	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	10 Park Plaza Suite 5720	Boston	MA	02116	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Somerville Redevelopment Authority	93 Highland Avenue	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident
Michael Raposa	83 Whipple Road	Tewksbury	MA	01876	Or Current Resident
Webster Newton Concord Trust	40 Cleveland Road	Chestnut Hill	MA	02467	Or Current Resident
Webster Newton Concord Trust	40 Cleveland Road	Chestnut Hill	MA	02467	Or Current Resident
Aliki Pishev	19 Davis Road	Carlisle	MA	01741	Or Current Resident
Webster Avenue Realty Trust	31 Union Square	Somerville	MA	02143	Or Current Resident

# You're Invited!



Please join Eversource and City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen for a virtual neighborhood meeting on December 12, 2022, at 6:30 PM to learn about a proposed Eversource project in Somerville, MA.

**When:** Monday, December 12, 2022, at 6:30 PM

**Where:** Virtually via Zoom

## How to join us on December 12, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.



Enter this <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85616994481> to join us on your laptop, phone, or tablet



Scan the QR code above with your smart phone to be directed to the meeting



Dial-in on your telephone to listen in to the meeting +1 646 931 3860 Webinar ID: 856 1699 4481

A neighborhood meeting will be held to continue discussion on the need for new electrical equipment at the Prospect Street substation, located at 51 Prospect Street in Somerville. Eversource intends to submit for a Special Permit to the Somerville Planning Board to install equipment necessary to reliably serve the growing energy needs of the area.

As part of the proposal, public feedback remains a priority. The proposal seeks to incorporate meaningful aesthetic improvements as part of the substation's new enclosure that will replace existing chain link fence. The updated design plan and details will be presented at this meeting and your input is valued.

You may also submit questions before the meeting by emailing us at [ProjectInfoMA@eversource.com](mailto:ProjectInfoMA@eversource.com) or by calling 1-833-836-0302. To reach Councilor Ewen- Campen, email [benforward3@gmail.com](mailto:benforward3@gmail.com) or call at [617-702-2613](tel:617-702-2613).

**We hope to see you there!**

Si ou bezwen yon tradiksyon pou notifikasyon sa a, tanpri voye yon imèl bannou nan [ProjectinfoMA@eversource.com](mailto:ProjectinfoMA@eversource.com) epi tape, "Station402" nan liy sijè a

याद तपाइलाई या सूचनाका लागि अनुवाद चाहिन्छ भने, कृपया हामीलाई [ProjectinfoMA@eversource.com](mailto:ProjectinfoMA@eversource.com) मा इमेल गर्नुहोस् र विषय रेखामा "Station402" टाइप गर्नुहोस्।



# Você está convidado!



Participe com a Eversource e com o Conselheiro Municipal Ben Ewen-Campen de uma reunião virtual do bairro em 12 de dezembro de 2022, às 18h30, para saber mais sobre a proposta de um projeto da Eversource em Somerville, MA.

**Quando:** Segunda-feira, 12 de dezembro de 2022 às 18:30

**Onde:** Reunião virtual pelo Zoom

## Como se conectar em 12 de dezembro de 2022, às 18h30.



Para participar da reunião, coloque este link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85616994481> em seu laptop, telefone ou tablet



Escaneie o código QR acima com seu smartphone para entrar na reunião



Disque no seu telefone para escutar o áudio da reunião +1 646 931 3860 Webinar ID: 856 1699 4481

Será realizada uma reunião do bairro para dar continuação à discussão sobre a necessidade de novos equipamentos elétricos na subestação de Prospect Street, localizada em 51 Prospect Street em Somerville. A Eversource pretende pedir um Alvará Especial ao Conselho de Planejamento de Somerville visando instalar os equipamentos necessários para atender de maneira confiável as necessidades energéticas crescentes nesta área.

Como parte da proposta, o feedback público continua ser uma alta prioridade. A proposta busca incorporar melhorias estéticas significativas como parte do novo prédio da subestação, que substituirá a cerca de arame existente. O projeto com design atualizado e mais detalhes serão apresentados nesta reunião e sua opinião é de grande valor para a Eversource.

Você também pode enviar perguntas por e-mail antes da reunião para [ProjectInfoMA@eversource.com](mailto:ProjectInfoMA@eversource.com) ou ligar para 1-833-836-0302. Para contatar o Conselheiro Ewen- Campen, envie um e-mail para [benforward3@gmail.com](mailto:benforward3@gmail.com) ou ligue para 617-702-2613.

**Contamos com a sua presença!**



# Está usted invitado/a



Acompañe a Eversource y al concejal de la ciudad Ben Ewen-Campen en la reunión virtual del vecindario el 12 de diciembre de 2022 a las 6:30 p. m., en la que se informará sobre un proyecto propuesto de Eversource para la ciudad de Somerville, MA.

**Cuándo:** Lunes 12 de diciembre de 2022 a las 6:30 p. m.

**Dónde:** Reunión virtual por Zoom

## Cómo unirse a la reunión el 12 de diciembre de 2022 a las 6:30 p. m.



Utilice este enlace <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85616994481> para asistir desde su computadora, teléfono o *tablet*



Escanee el código QR que figura arriba con su teléfono inteligente para ingresar en la reunión



Llame para participar telefónicamente de la reunión +1 646 931 3860 Webinar ID: 856 1699 4481

Se celebrará una reunión vecinal para continuar el debate sobre la necesidad de nuevo equipamiento eléctrico en la subestación de Prospect Street, ubicada en el número 51 de Prospect Street en Somerville. Eversource tiene la intención de solicitar un permiso especial a la Junta de Planificación de Somerville para instalar el equipamiento necesario que cubra de manera fiable las crecientes necesidades energéticas de la zona.

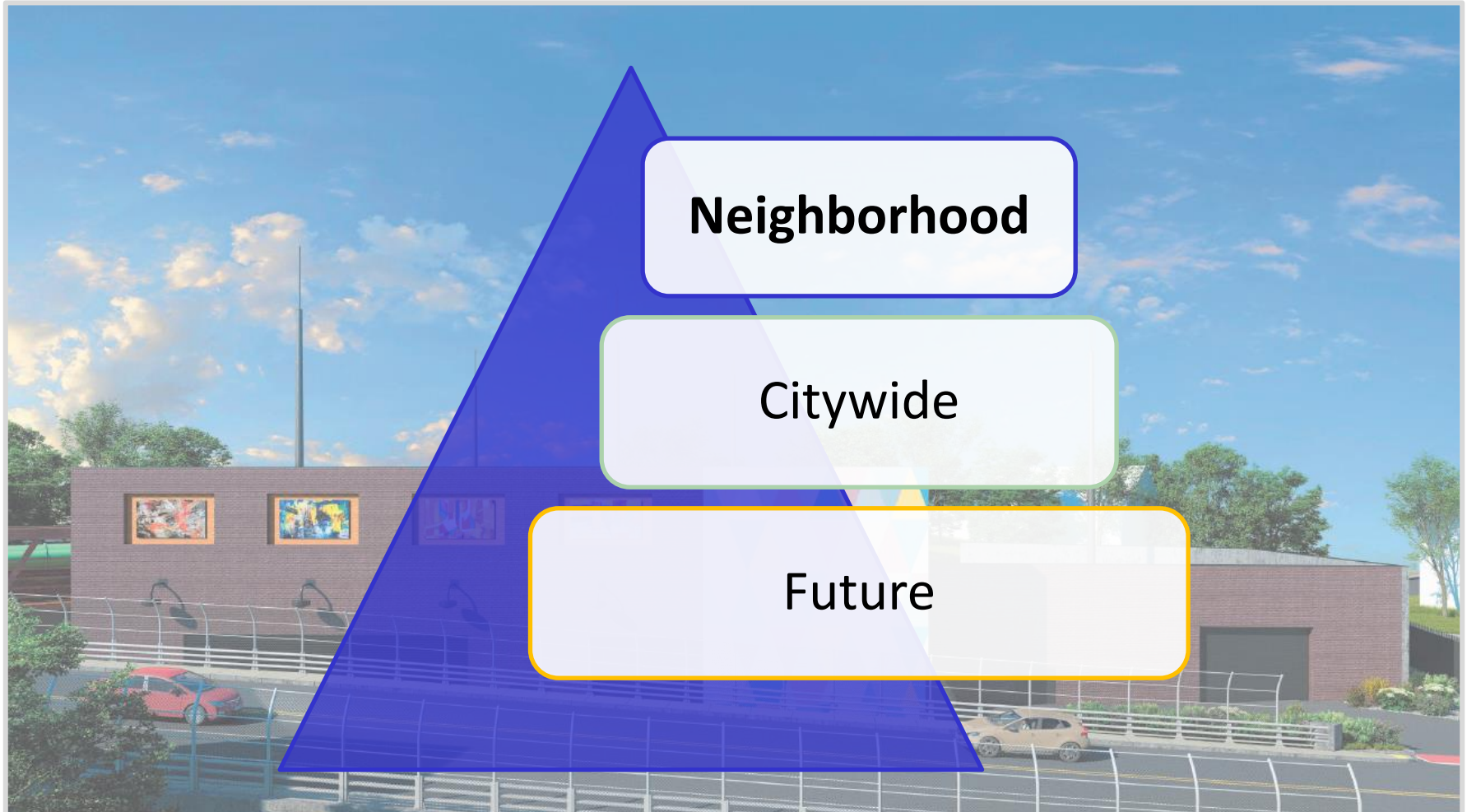
Como parte de la propuesta, los comentarios del público siguen siendo una prioridad. La propuesta pretende incorporar mejoras estéticas significativas como parte del nuevo cerramiento de la subestación que sustituirá al actual cerco de malla metálica. El plano actualizado y los detalles de diseño se presentarán en esta reunión, y esperamos contar con su valiosa opinión.

También puede enviar sus preguntas antes de la reunión por correo electrónico a [ProjectInfoMA@eversource.com](mailto:ProjectInfoMA@eversource.com) o llamando al 1-833-836-0302. Si desea contactar al concejal Ewen- Campen, puede escribirle a [benforward3@gmail.com](mailto:benforward3@gmail.com) o llamarlo al 617-702-2613.

**¡Contamos con su asistencia!**

# Prospect Street Substation Somerville, MA

December 12, 2022, 6:30 PM  
Neighborhood Meeting  
Via Zoom

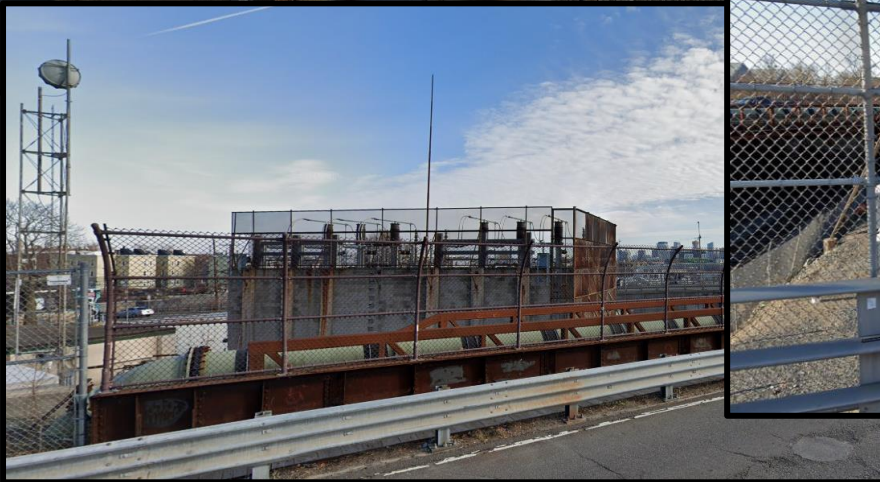
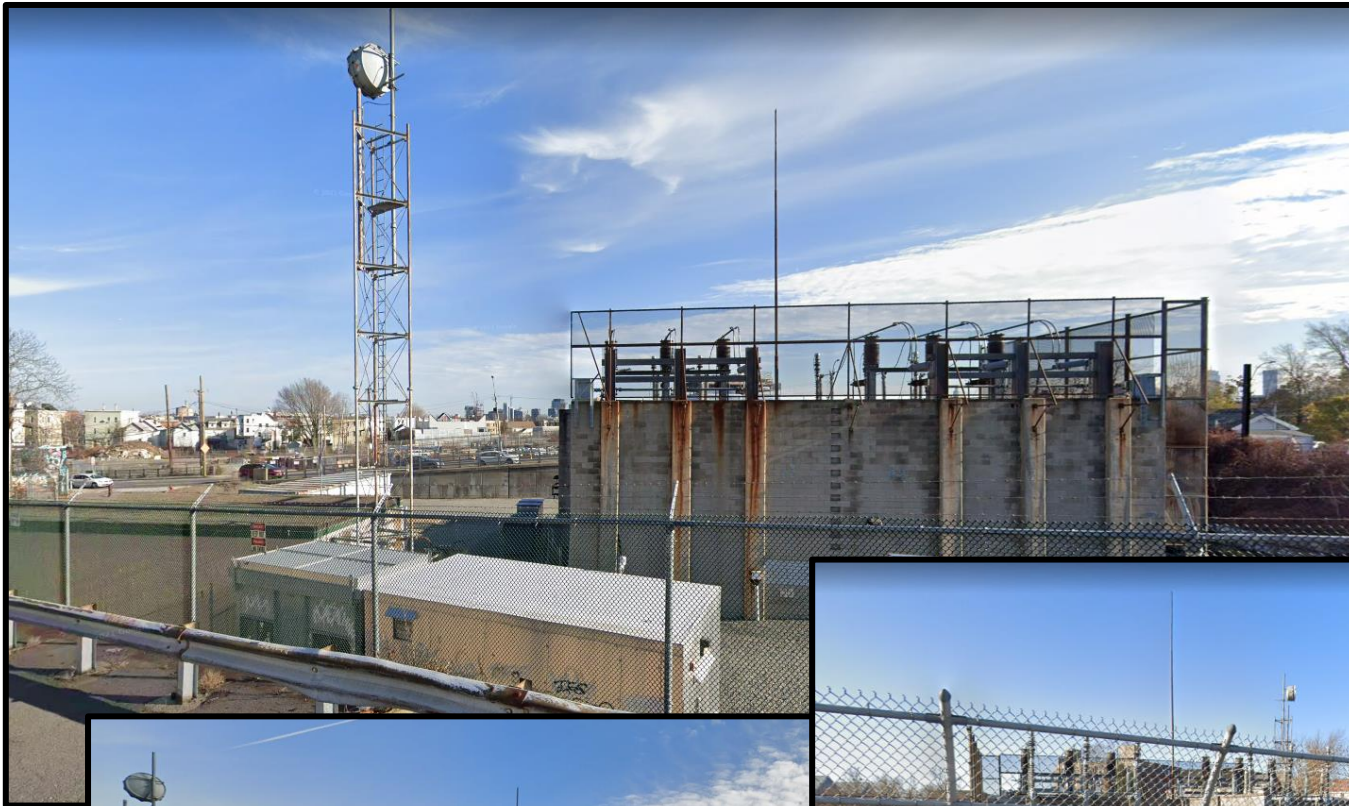


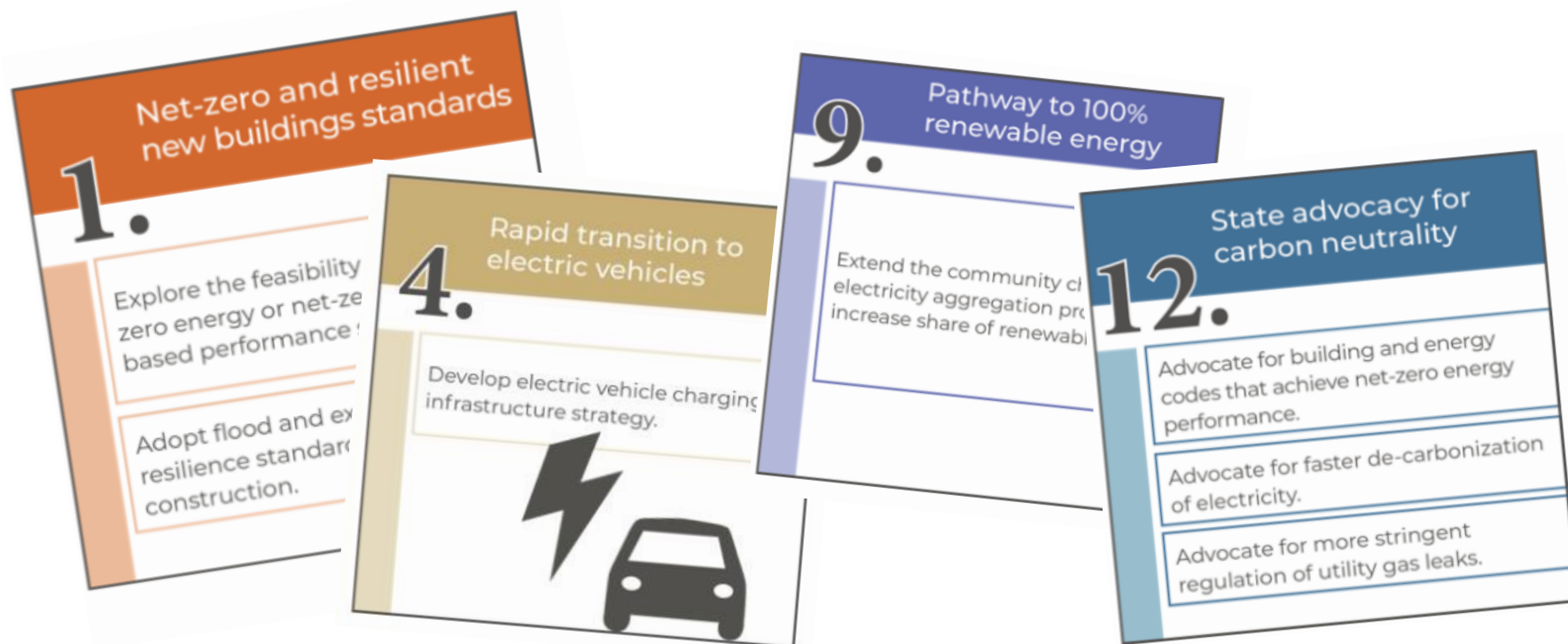


# Somerville Prospect Street Substation: Today

What we heard  
from you...

**“ugly,  
unattractive,  
neglected”**







## Keep in Mind...

- ✓ Any solution **must maintain continuous, adequate electric supply** to Somerville.
- ✓ It takes a **decade or more** to find a site, design, permit and construct a substation
- ✓ Alternatives **do not eliminate immediate need of 3rd transformer** at existing station



### Moving it underground would require...

- Find, permit interim substation site
- Construct interim substation and miles of electric lines to maintain electric service
- Find, permit underground substation site
- Design, engineer, construct vault, large above-ground infrastructure (intake and exhaust shafts, 24x7 access points, loading dock, and large equipment hatch)
- Energize station, shift all electrical load



### Moving it elsewhere would require...

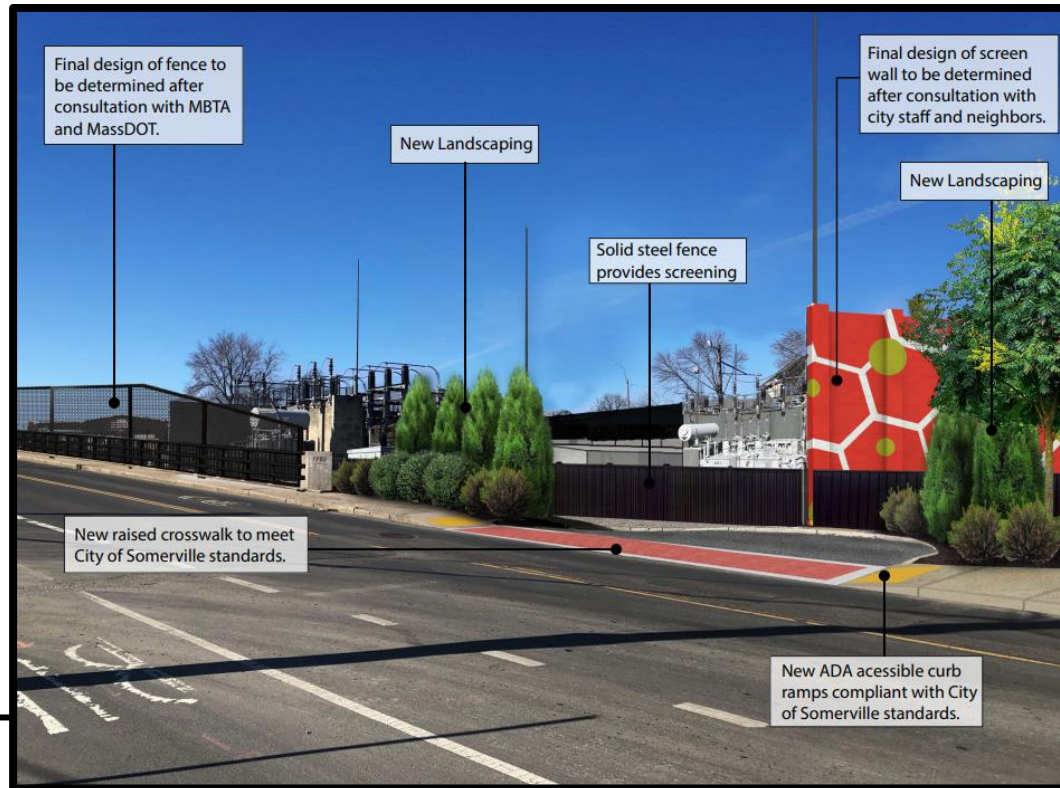
- Continued operation of existing substation
- Find, permit new substation site
- Design, engineer, construct new station
- Construct miles of additional electric lines
- Energize station, shift all electrical load
- Decommission current station
- Formal process for disposal of unused real estate



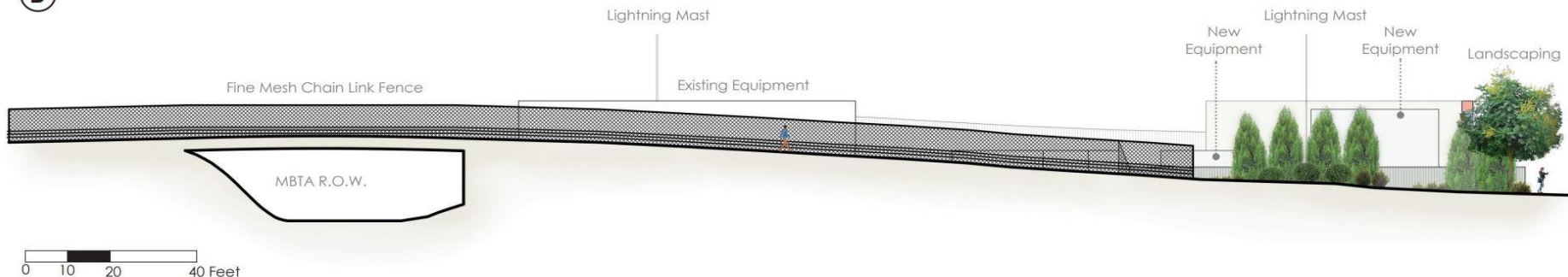
# Original design proposal: Prospect Street

## What we heard from you...

“[This proposed] new fence [is] a half-measure because ... long-term ... the station [will be] sticking out even more prominently as development continues around it”.



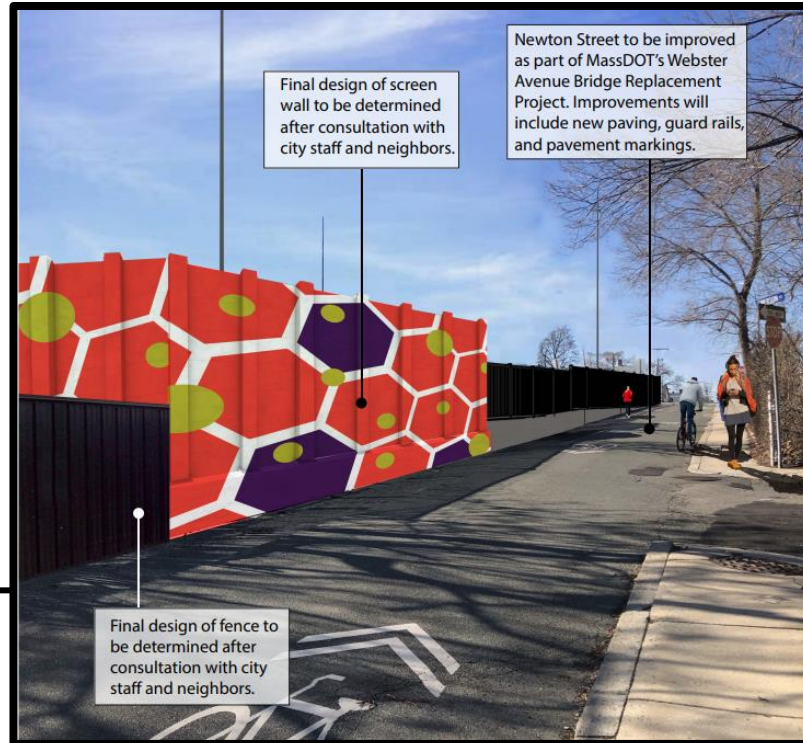
## B Prospect Street



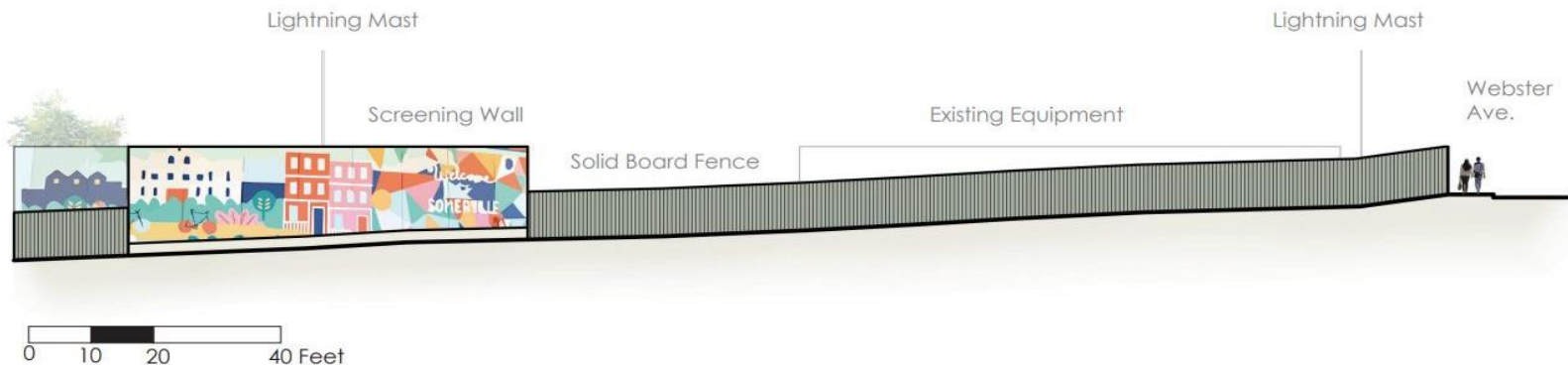
# Original design proposal: Newton Street

## What we heard from you...

“Eversource should work closer with the robust artistic community ... in a manner that ensures that the station perimeter design should be a feature for pedestrians”.



## A Newton Street



# What else did we hear from YOU?

**“Can the fencing look more attractive and colorful”?**

**“Can the substation be quieter”?**

**“Can the substation enclosure look more like a building”?**

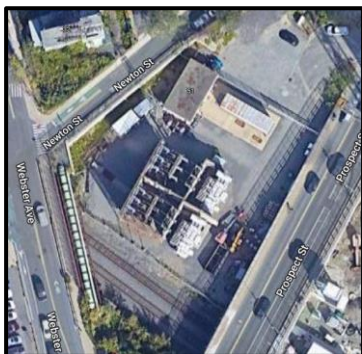
**“Can the station’s sidewalk be better maintained in the winter”?**

**“Can Eversource work with Somerville’s arts community, so the façade is pleasing for pedestrians and those exiting from the new Green Line station”?**



# In response to your concerns, the new proposed design...

... wraps 3 sides of the substation to provide the appearance of a building and reduce ambient noise.





In response to your concerns, the new proposed design...

... provides a “canvas” for the arts community and visual interest for the neighborhood.



*\*Preliminary/conceptual only*

In response to your concerns, the new proposed design...

... provides a welcoming view from new GLX elevator.

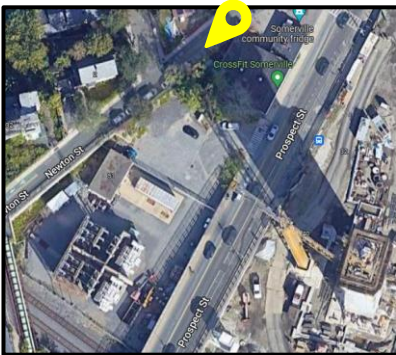


*\*Preliminary/conceptual only*



In response to your concerns, the new proposed design...

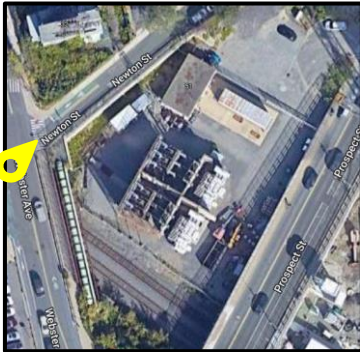
... creates multiple surfaces to showcase public art.



*\*Preliminary/conceptual only*

In response to your concerns, the new proposed design...

... ensures MBTA commuter rail tracks remain unimpeded.



*\*Preliminary/conceptual only*



# Nighttime aerial of Prospect Street Substation



# Nighttime view on Prospect Street looking south



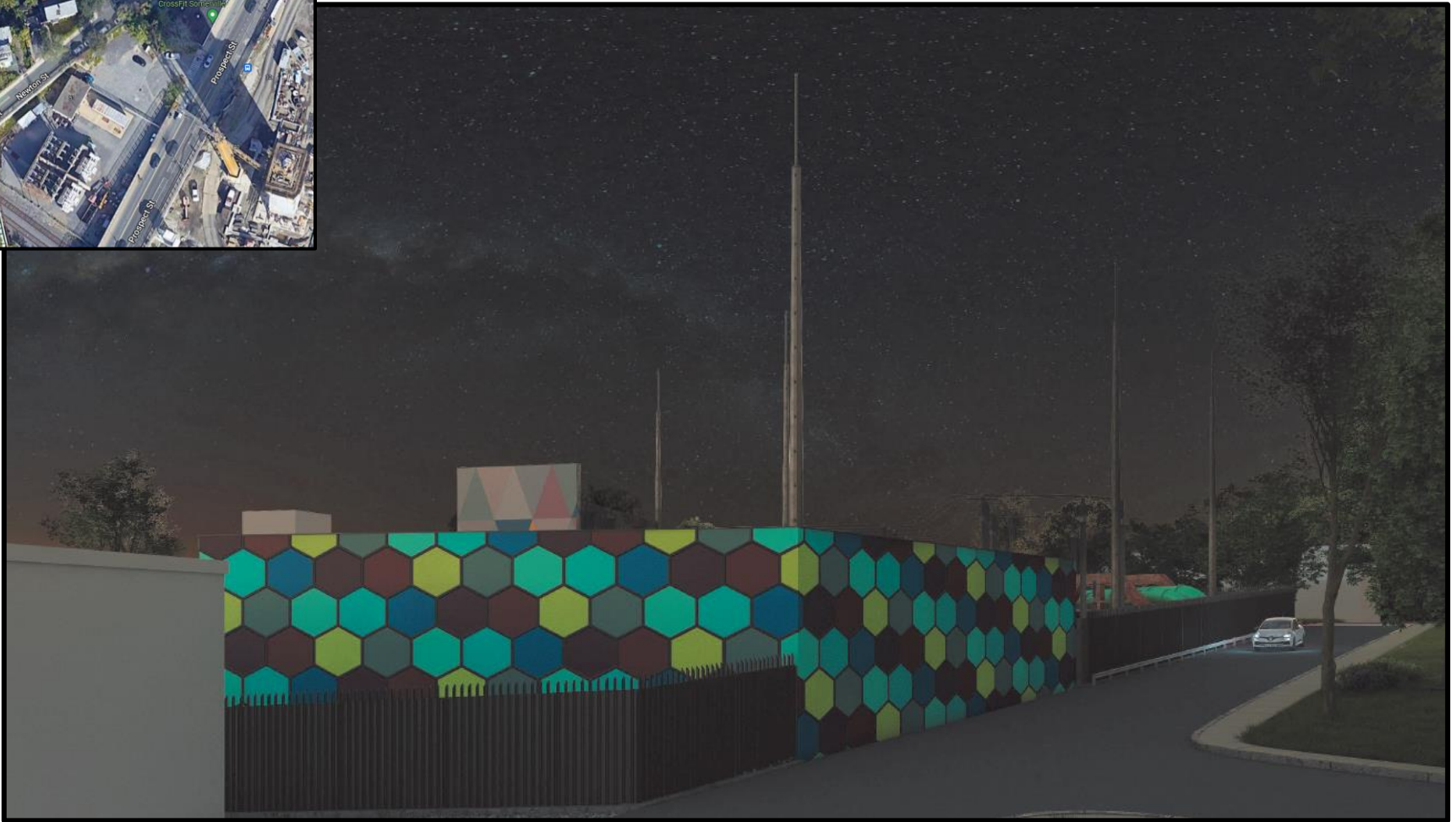


# Nighttime view on Prospect Street looking west



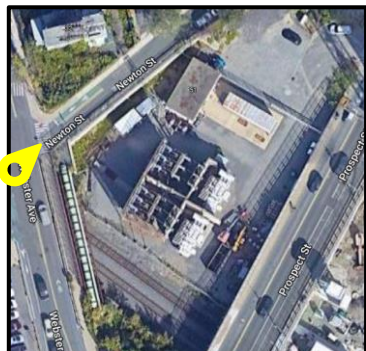
*\*Preliminary/conceptual only*

# Nighttime view on Newton Street looking south



*\*Preliminary/conceptual only*

# Nighttime view on Webster Ave. looking northeast

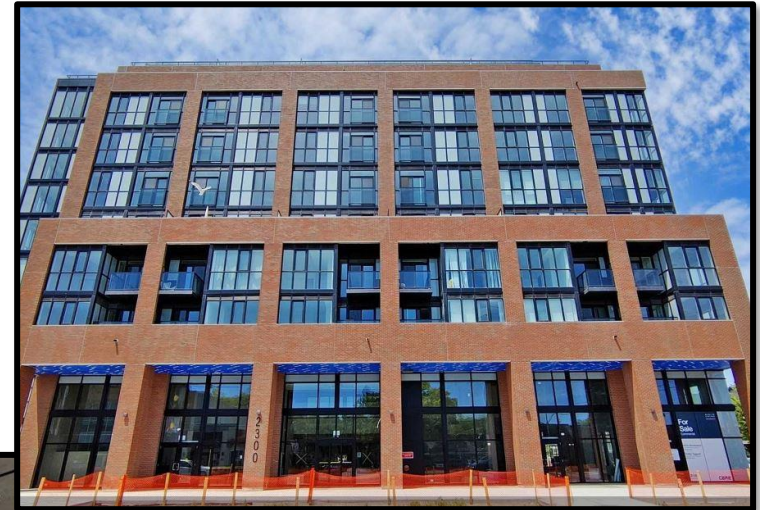


*\*Note: Webster Ave. is MassDOT jurisdiction; this fencing is illustrative of existing condition.*



# Conceptual Materials: Precast Concrete

- Very low maintenance
- Extremely durable
- Wide array of designs that can be achieved with precast, ranging from blank flat panels, brick veneers, to abstract patterns



Design can accommodate either removable panels for artists to use or large precast concrete wall space for art murals, or both.





# Conceptual Materials: Faux Wood Inserts

- Very low maintenance
- Extremely durable
- Softens the look of the exterior and draws attention to public art installed in front of it.
- Provides space to run wiring required for lighting.



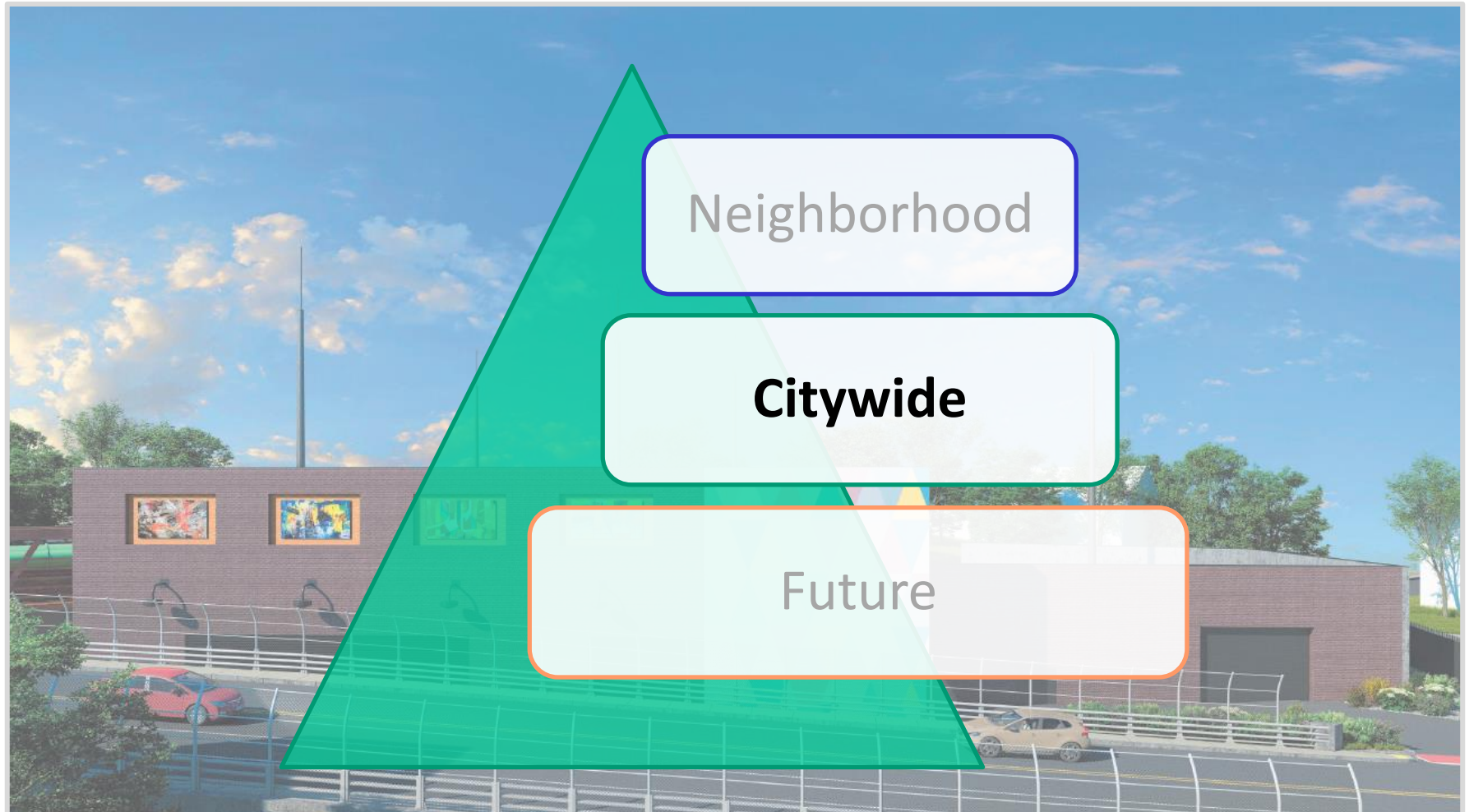


# Next steps for decorative façade

The community design process is collaborative. It considers a range of viewpoints to ensure consensus on a final design that best suits the neighborhood.

- Create a community-designated focus group to iterate on the design ideas
- Share design options with the broader community to solicit feedback
- Create a final design that reflects the work of the focus group and incorporates input from the community
- Architects transform ideas into buildable plans, which are constructed as the capstone to the Project





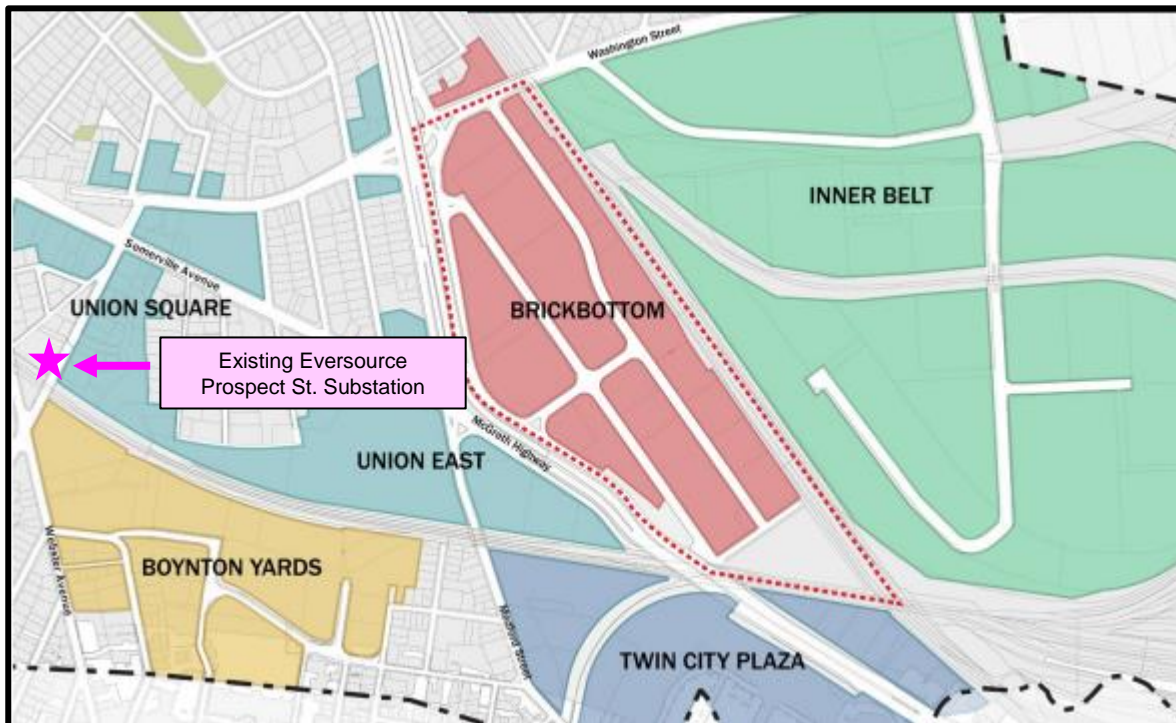


# Proposed system upgrades are all within Eversource property line



# Why add a transformer to the Prospect Street Substation?

As the need for electricity increases, upgrading existing substations at or near the electrical demand ensures enough power is available where and when it's needed.



Adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> transformer to the Prospect Street Substation best balances

- ✓ **Environmental considerations**
- ✓ **Cost**
- ✓ **Reliability**

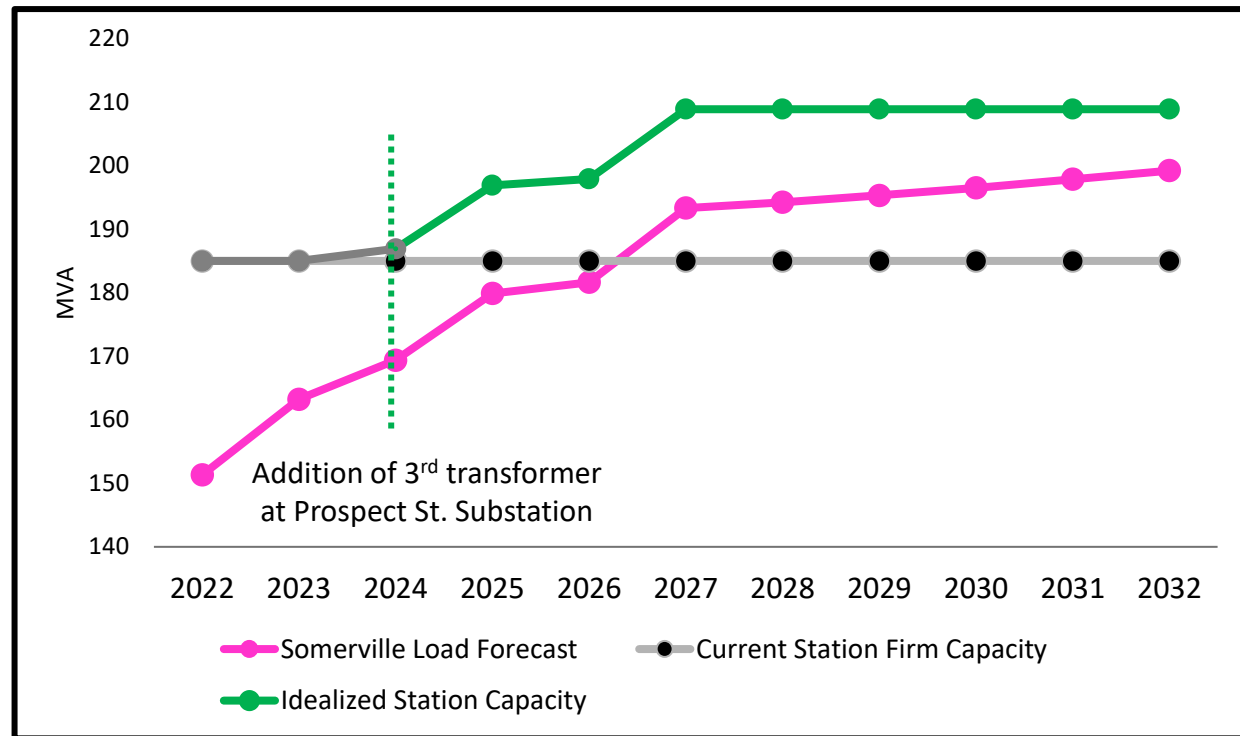
Transformational areas and proximity to Prospect Street Substation

# Continuing to provide safe, reliable power requires electrical system upgrades

City of Somerville's demand for electricity is outgrowing its current substation's capacity due to both redevelopment and the city's electrification goals

Upgrades to the Prospect Street Substation will

- ✓ Enhance the reliability of the entire electric system in the city of Somerville
- ✓ Protect critical system components
- ✓ Accommodate future electrical load growth, including future electrification

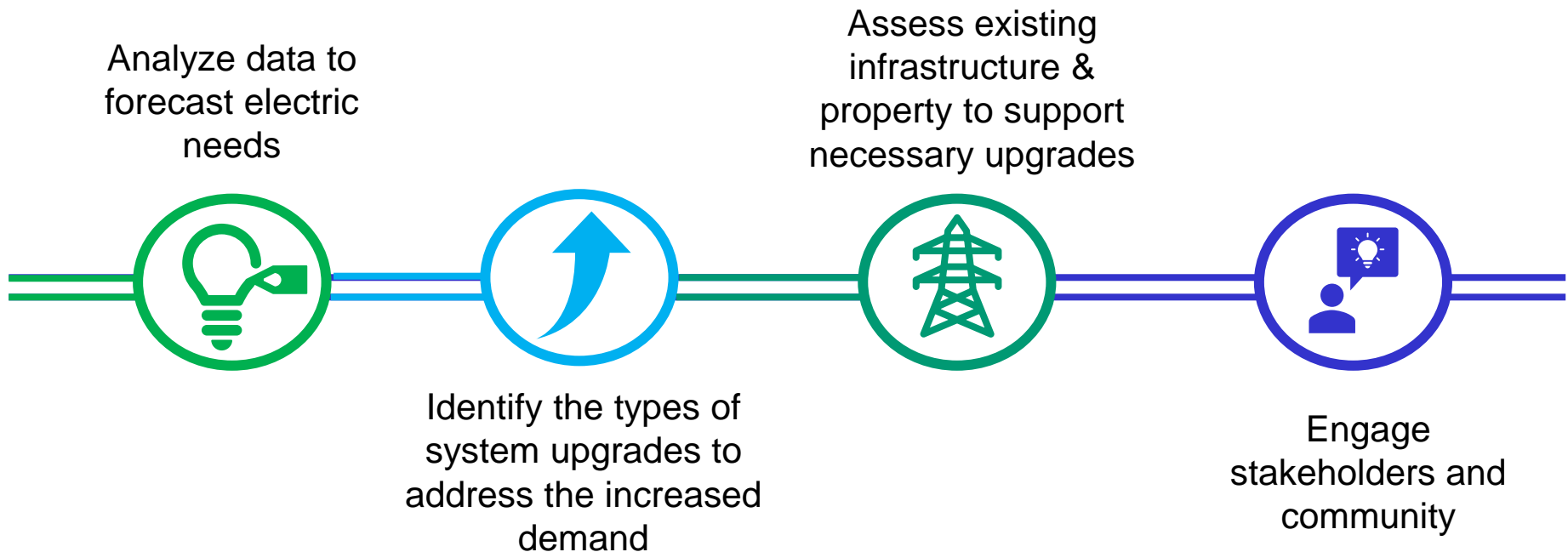






# Proactive, long-term planning: deliberate and thoughtful

**By constantly evaluating growth, we work to maintain adequate electric supply by developing solutions to support projected electrical load**



# Sustained development within the City drives electrical demand

Expects 1.3 M sq. ft. of lab/office space, 450 apartments, & creative arts center.<sup>1</sup>

Boynton Yards



The Brickbottom plan encourages a well-rounded business ecosystem.<sup>2</sup>



Brickbottom

Planned 1.5M sq. ft of lab space, 1,000 residences, 140K sq. ft. of retail.<sup>3</sup>



US2 Property - rendering





Upgrades at the Prospect Street Substation are necessary to meet Somerville's economic and climate goals, improve resiliency, and ensure continued reliability



To meet the city's current needs and future goals, upgrading the current site balances environmental considerations, costs and reliability.



Working with you and the city, we are committed to making sure design improvements at the Prospect Street Substation contribute to a vibrant and changing neighborhood



In planning for the future, we welcome your input and early inclusion in the siting of future transmission line and substation projects

## **Project Hotline**

- 1-833-836-0302
- [projectinfoma@eversource.com](mailto:projectinfoma@eversource.com)



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Questions?



# MEETING MINUTES/ NOTES

Eversource

## Second Station 402 Neighborhood Meeting in Conjunction with City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen

### MEETING DATE:

12/12/2022

### EVERSOURCE & SUPPORT ATTENDANCE:

Meredith Boericke  
Maija Benjamins  
Paul Graham  
Jason Wright  
Keith Sonia  
Matt Watkins  
Duane Boyce  
John Zicko,  
Chris Soderman  
Amsa Mangga  
Chris Newhall  
Will Connolly  
--

Ben Ewen-Campen, Somerville City Council  
Andrew Graminski, Somerville Planning Department

### LOCATION:

Zoom

### MEETING PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

This meeting was the second held in conjunction with Somerville City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen as it relates to the proposed installation of a third transformer at Eversource Station 402 in Somerville and the aesthetic upgrades proposed for the station perimeter. Following a February 2022 neighborhood meeting in which members of the community voiced concerns that proposed aesthetic upgrades did not match the needs of the burgeoning Union Square neighborhood, members of the project team spent a considerable amount of time investigating what upgrades were feasible for the site. The purpose of this second neighborhood meeting, which was otherwise not a requirement to hold, was to present significant updates to the community regarding the aesthetic design of the station and to re-engage community members on questions they previously had, including the prospect of re-locating the station, potential impacts to MBTA expansion, and the potential to underground the station.



## DISCUSSION

-**Meredith Boericke (MB)** and **Councilor Ewen Campen (BEC)** open the meeting and following brief introductions and the notice of the availability of language interpretation, the meeting began.

-**MB** spent ~10-15 minutes presenting the PowerPoint that chronicled the aesthetic upgrades proposed. The PowerPoint also addressed key questions asked in the first neighborhood meeting, including the difficulty of re-locating the station.

-Following **MB's** presentation, the question-and-answer portion of the meeting began.

-**Jamie Perconte**: What is the expected of the lifetime of the existing transformers and the substation overall?

-**John Zicko** noted that the typical life expectancy of a transformer is 40 years, but they can often go longer than that and its ultimate lifespan is dependent on factors including loading and cooling. He noted that Eversource recently decommissioned a station that was in service for 100 years.

-**Jamie Perconte**: On the graph of anticipated load and capacity, did I see more than one load increase? What was the other one besides this proposed transformer? **Note: this is in reference to a slide presented by MB earlier in the meeting.**

-**Amsa Mangga** noted that every year, load forecasts include examinations of new developments coming into any given city. This accounts for the rise in demand in the graph. New buildings will be periodically coming online, connecting to the grid, and driving up demand.

-**BEC** attempted to clarify **Perconte's** question and expressed that it looked like there is a second jump in the line other than that covered by this project.

-**Amsa Mangga** clarified that the pink line is purely the load inspired by new growth and demand. The green line showed the idealized station capacity with the new transformer. The capacity offered by the new transformer provided more than the demand over time.

-**Maija Benjamins** asked **Mangga** if in 2027 Eversource would need to add more infrastructure to meet demand or if there are new projects coming online to add additional capacity.

-**Mangga** noted that the proposed new Cambridge substation will relieve load demand from Somerville infrastructure. Following the new Cambridge station coming online, Somerville would then have room for additional growth.

-**John Zicko** assisted **Mangga** in clarifying that the proposed third transformer will help meet load demands initially. Then new infrastructure will relieve this load and the capacity of the transformer will grow.

-**Betsy Larkin**: Her question was specifically about aesthetic views as she is an immediate abutter to the station. She was hoping to know how the new design might look from her home

on the corner of Emerson St. and from additional perspectives, including the corner of Webster Ave. and Newton St.

-**MB** shared her screen and multiple rendering views supplied by the architect but did acknowledge that the precise view Betsy was looking for was not available.

-**Will Connolly** noted that Betsy's view would be similar to Webster/Newton corner side. It'll look like being on the second floor of a building as the result of grade change.

-**Betsy** thought that her view would be like looking into a building shell. **MB** noted that the topography/grade change would influence Betsy's perspective view.

-**Betsy** asked about "pointy things." (Lightning masts). **MB** noted that the lightning masts are there today. **Betsy** was confused by this, as she doesn't recall seeing that many masts. She expressed her opinion as a longtime resident that the station is ugly and had been for some time. She said that she would like to see more renderings and that, ideally, her view would be as good as those that would be coming out of the new MBTA station on Prospect Street.

-**Daniel Wong**: How much does building a new transformer cost?

-**John Zicko** explained that costs are often site specific and have lately been influenced by global supply chains. He noted that a transformer alone generally costs \$1 – 1.5 million with a lot of variability, while a switch gear is another million dollars-plus. Further, he explained that new duct banks and distribution circuits will also cost a good deal of money, but these costs are site specific. **Duane Boyce** added that preparation of the site and integrating the new equipment into the grid would cost a substantial amount; ultimately, this could be upwards of ten million dollars.

-**Jennifer Hilario**: She expressed concern that stakeholders in Cambridge will successfully protest the installation of a new Cambridge substation, leading to Somerville being stuck with the new transformer. She asked why Eversource cannot first build its new station in Cambridge and then come back to Somerville should additional infrastructure be needed.

-**Maija Benjamins** explained that the Cambridge project includes a full, new substation with three transformers and room for a fourth. She noted that the project in Cambridge is currently being reviewed by state regulators and also included substation additional infrastructure, including new transmission lines. The proposed third transformer in Somerville, she explained, was being reviewed locally, as opposed to review by state regulators. She noted that as a result, the timelines for both projects are not parallel and that it would not be until 2028 at the earliest that the new Cambridge station would come online. The drive up in demand as a result of development in the area, she noted, makes it necessary to install new infrastructure in Somerville.

-**Michele Hansen**: Does this transformer need to be built for the new Cambridge station to be constructed?

-**Maija Benjamins** explained that the new transformer is not a requirement for the construction of the new Cambridge station. Instead, she explained, the transformer is needed in the short term to address load growth in Somerville and Cambridge before the new station comes online.

-**Jennifer Hilario**: Have you studied possible noise emissions from new transformer?

-**John Zicko** noted that a local contractor was hired to characterize existing sound and to predict new sound emissions from the proposed third transformer. The contractor found that with new barriers being installed as part of the project, noise emissions would meet state regulations.

**-Daniel Wong:** Mr. Wong expressed disappointment in the plan. He thought that the current iteration of the aesthetic design plan was dismissive of some neighbors, as it does not extend to the full perimeter of the station. He also expressed disappointment that the plan does not consider re-locating the station and recommended that the team investigate the use of land on Linwood as a prospective site for a new station.

**-Maija Benjamins** explained that there are severe constraints as it relates to existing land and that there are a number of challenges, including the abutting MBTA line, MassDOT road ownership, and the topography of the area. She noted that stations generally need to be in the vicinity of where electric load demand is most acute. In this instance, she explained, Station 402 is in the heart of a high demand area: the new Green Line extension and a slew of developments by entities like US2 and others mean demand will remain high in Union Square. This reality, she noted, does not leave a lot of room for the potential re-location of the station. She noted that Eversource goals include working with communities like Somerville on clean energy initiatives; as part of meeting those goals, the first task includes reinforcing existing facilities while, in the long-term, looking at the potential development of new facilities and/or infrastructure. Re-locating a station when the existing station serves a need includes costs that would have to be shouldered by ratepayers, she explained. As an example, she noted that the proposed new station in Cambridge will cost roughly \$1.4 billion. She noted that this degree of work falls under the jurisdiction of state regulators and that the timeline from conception to finished construction is generally 10 years or more. The demand in the area renders that timeline infeasible to meet the short-term needs of the community.

**-Jamie Perconte:** In a comment, Jamie noted that they appreciated the constraints outlined by the team and that meeting demand is a difficult problem to solve. They acknowledged that there are a number of large developments in the area and that meeting demand is vital. They articulated that ultimately the community would like this space to be used for “human needs,” like green space or cultural use. They encouraged a long-term discussion between the community and Eversource to see how they might eventually get to that point over the next ~50 years.

**-MB** noted that representatives from Eversource meet with Somerville city staff biweekly to attempt to plan for the sort of long-term goals Jamie mentioned. She also noted that this proposed project would help facilitate human needs as a result of the pursuit of increased decarbonization through the ability for the installation of new electrical infrastructure, such as electric vehicle charging stations. She expressed her hope that members of the community will continue to engage with Eversource on the long-term needs of the community.

**-Ann Camara:** For safety purposes, can a roof be put on the station for safety purposes? Also, can we ensure our design lines up with MBTA needs for an extension to Porter Square?

**-John Zicko** explained that adding a roof would functionally turn the façade into a building which would then require additional infrastructure to manage heat. Such infrastructure, he explained, would increase the visual mass of the facility. He noted that there would also be a need to compartmentalize equipment in separate rooms, none of which would be large enough to safely cool the equipment, thus posing a safety risk.

**-MB** explained that the team has received assurances from the MBTA that the proposed third transformer would not impede future expansion of the Green Line. Taking into account the potential expansion of the line, she explained, is also why there is not a wall being constructed on the Webster Ave. side of the station that immediately abuts MBTA train tracks.

**-Maija Benjamins** reemphasized that Eversource is committed to working with stakeholders like MBTA and MassDOT to meet the needs of the community. As projects arise, there are often conversations held between stakeholders to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

**-Jennifer Hilario:** In a comment, Ms. Hilario noted that Eversource might be aware that new affordable/mixed-income housing projects are proposed for the area on Webster Ave. She expressed that it seemed to her that affordable housing residents would thus bear the burden of the project, as there would not be a wall built on that side of the station.

**-MB** explained that Eversource was only recently made aware of the plans for affordable housing in the area. Nonetheless, she explained, the team is committed to working with the community and with stakeholders like MassDOT to help improve the view from Webster Ave.

**-Mike Katz:** In a comment, Mike noted that he appreciated the amount of work the Eversource team has done to improve the presentation since the first neighborhood meeting. He nonetheless explained that he was still concerned with the viewshed as it is not the same from all angles. As a 38 year resident of his home that immediately abuts the station, he expressed belief that conversations like these – which include discussions on proposed aesthetic upgrades – are not frequent and so believes now is the time to go further in the proposal. He expressed that he understands the energy needs, but that a 2 ¼ wall is not sufficient for the community.

**-MB** expressed again that these renderings represent a first pass at the final aesthetic design and that the Eversource team would continue working with neighbors and stakeholders like the Somerville Arts Council to decide on a final design. She explained that the team did not want to come in with a blank slate, but that there was acknowledgement within the team that there was always going to be a need for further discussion

**-JT Scott (JTS):** He began by noting that the presentation was very helpful. Why can a wall not be built on Newton Street?

**-MB** shared an aerial view of the proposal. She noted that one area of the Newton Street façade would have a higher wall (potentially a mural) and that the balance of the street include a retaining wall with a fence topper.

**-JTS** asked why the taller wall did not extend all the way to the intersection of Newton and Webster?

**-MB** noted the retaining wall is load bearing and it could have a wind issue, making height a concern.

**-Will Connolly** also noted that there is underground infrastructure below ground on the Newton St side of the station (in addition to the Webster Ave side) and that the infrastructure wraps around the station to get to the transformer. This ultimately makes constructing a taller wall more difficult due to a lack of structural integrity. He also noted that the higher wall on the south side of Newton St is the result of fire code regulations.

**-JTS** asked what is the height of the higher wall?

**-Will Connolly:** 25 feet.

**-JTS** asked what is the height of the Prospect side from ground level?

**-Will Connolly:** 40 feet.

**-JTS** asked about the timeline for the new Cambridge substation and asked the team to confirm that it would come online in 2028.

**-MB** confirmed that 2028 was the estimated online date.

**-JTS** asked the team to re-confirm that the local permitting process for this project is a faster route than going through state regulators.

**-MB** confirmed this as correct.

**-JTS** asked about new transmission lines as part of the Greater Cambridge Energy Program. He asked if proposed line S15 was the route most aggressively pursued at the moment by the team.

**-Maija Benjamins** explained that the team is investigating all three Somerville routes submitted to the EFSB for feasibility.



-**JTS** expressed that he was glad to hear all the proposed routes are still on the table. He then asked the team to confirm that it is the case that Station 402 serves Cambridge electrical demand and that the Somerville load is supplied by an Eversource station in Everett.

-**Maija Benjamins** noted that the energy that comes into Somerville largely comes from Everett, but that this station also does serve Somerville and parts of Cambridge.

-**JTS** attempted to clarify his previous question and asked whether it's the case that high voltage electricity comes from Everett and is then jumped down at Station 402 for distribution to the local area.

-**Maija Benjamins** confirmed this as accurate.

-**JTS** asked to see the slide from the PowerPoint that demonstrated the impracticality of placing the station underground. He noted that he understands the challenge of constructing an interim station and that the development of projects appears to create a litany of interim conditions required to maintain power for the area. He asked the team to clarify that in the event a new station was proposed, either an interim station would need to be constructed or Station 402 would need to be kept online until a new one was completed.

-**MB** notes that the paramount goal of Eversource is to keep Somerville lit up. The team would, she explained, need to locate a new site to house a new station in the scenario JT Scott was describing.

-**JTS** acknowledged that Meredith's explanation made sense. He then pivoted back to the wall on Newton Street and asked if the issue with constructing a higher wall was the depth of footing.

-**Will Connolly** noted that the underground area on the northern side of Newton St. is inundated with underground infrastructure. He expressed that he did not think the team could dig a 2x2 hole without hitting something.

-**JTS** asked if it was not feasible to build higher on retaining wall.

-**Will Connolly** noted that the height potential is still being investigated.

-**JTS** expressed that if it is the case that increased output from Everett cannot meet Somerville's load demands, so be it. He thought Jamie Perconte's comments resonated and that there needs to be long-term focused discussions held and if they weren't, then the neighborhood would find itself in the same place a decade or more from now. He expressed that he thought the team needed to find a way to do better on the Webster Ave side and that affordable housing residents having to look into a substation from their view was unfair. He also noted that he thought there exists creative ways to erect vertical structures.

-**MB** noted that one of the chief takeaways from the first neighborhood meeting was the desire of the community to have the station present a more welcoming view to those coming up from the new MBTA station. She again reiterated that the team is looking forward to working with the neighborhood and the architect on final designs.

-**JTS** expressed that he thought perspective needed to be taken into consideration.

-**MB** agreed with Mr. Scott. She explained that the design is ultimately not a conversation about what Eversource wants but rather the neighborhoods.

-**JTS** moved the conversation back to the Greater Cambridge Energy Program's proposed transmission line S15. He ultimately wants to see Station 402 re-located and believes the conversations are related, he explained, and that the Linwood-based line could assist with this.

-**Maija Benjamins** noted that route to Linwood is \$30m more than the preferred option.

-**JTS** expressed that he thought these costs were still being investigated as it relates to the underground boring project on GLX/Prospect.

-**Maija Benjamins** explained that there is a preferred route that goes under Green Line extension. There also is a hybrid route that traverses the Grand Junction Corridor that is being considered. The Linwood line, she explained, would be much longer and more costly. She further stated that she understands the long-term concerns expressed by the community and that this is why the team is committed to furthering discussions with the community. As things stand, though, she explained that requests on decarbonization and the current costs of land would make relocating the station too great an undertaking.

-**JTS** noted that Eversource already owns Linwood land. He noted the Greater Cambridge Energy Program station timeline, and that Jan. 2019 was the first meeting on the Fulkerson site for GCEP; by June meetings with MIT where undergrounding was first proposed; then a month later meetings with Alexandria and then ultimately the Cambridge City Council. He thought this was not a very long timeline and that progress could be made quickly in other scenarios, too.

-**Maija Benjamins** explained that what Mr. Scott described was a very different circumstance. What made that process move quickly, she explained, was that the cost of undergrounding a new station in Cambridge was largely being shouldered by developers following discussions with both developers and the City of Cambridge. Maija noted that there would eventually be a need for a new station in Somerville and that this is where Eversource would be happy to continue to facilitate long term discussions.

-**JTS** expressed that he would be more convinced if he knew that those conversations with the city were happening.

-**MB** noted that those meetings are happening. She explained that she would be happy to look into including the City Council if needed.

-**Ed's Computer:** What community benefits has Eversource negotiated with community groups? What do we get in return? Jobs, playground, breaks on bills?

-**MB** noted that the team looks forward to continuing its work with stakeholder groups like Union Square Main Streets and Union Square Neighborhood Council, as well as the Arts Council, to meet aesthetic demands. She did explain that peripheral demands like a playground were not in Eversource's remit to provide as meeting its regulatory obligations means that mitigation must have a nexus to the project itself.

-**Michael Walsh:** Some of MA's load forecast suggests that the load/demand will double by 2050. This upgrade will be insufficient if that's the case. Can the site host more infrastructure? Also, can the station capture waste heat?

-**John Zicko** noted that we've functionally run out of room at the station and that a fourth transformer in the future would not be feasible. As it relates to waste heat, if Eversource becomes a winter peaking company again, he explained, it is possible that heating exchanges could be refit and that heat could be dumped into water for use in space, process, or water heating. For now, though, he noted, Eversource is a summer peaking company, a time of the year in which space heating is not generally needed.

-**Meredith Porter:** In a comment noted that she appreciates that there is great electrical demand in the area but that she remains concerned about the siting of this station on environmental justice grounds. The area has long been home to scrapyards and auto dealers, she explained, and the community is now hoping for a brighter future. She then asked which ratepayers would have to pay for substantial infrastructure upgrades – just Somerville? She also asked if the project needed to go before the Urban Design Commission for approval. She also wondered when long-term discussions on phasing the station out of the neighborhood could begin if this is a short-term solution.

-**Andrew Graminski** noted that the project needs two special permits, and that site plan approval hasn't been ruled out yet. He explained that the Inspectional Services Dept. will need to weigh in on that. He explained that as this plan is a façade, it may not constitute a building. If it is determined to be a building, it may then require Urban Design Commission, among other meetings. He noted that this second meeting is not required for scheduling Eversource's appearance before the Planning Board but was one Eversource wanted to hold to provide updates.

-**Meredith Porter** thought this helped clear up her questions.

**-BEC** said that he thinks this has been a revealing meeting. He explained that he came out of the first meeting thinking this could be an opportunity to move the site. Now, he explained, he understands that it doesn't make sense for the project to be denied only because we cannot move it. He explains that he has heard the technical explanations for why a wall cannot be built on Webster Ave, but his job is to serve the community and that there is no way he can currently support the project. He expressed hope that Eversource would come back with updates and that the community would stay engaged.

**-Michele Hansen:** She noted that she took part in a meeting with Eversource the week prior to this meeting with members of the project team. She explained that from her perspective Somerville had long been a place where this sort of infrastructure has been imposed on the neighborhood. She expressed the understanding that there is an immediate need and that we can't re-locate the station as part of this discussion. But, she thought a long-term solution needed to include a plan to move it out of the neighborhood. She expressed belief that Somerville is owed that.

**-Tori Antonino:** Ms. Antonino thanked Ewen-Campen for his leadership. Similarly, she believes that if this current plan is a short-term solution to meet demand, that a 50 year conversation must include phasing out this station from the neighborhood.

**-MB** noted that Eversource is looking forward to working with neighbors and the city on the long term path.

**-BEC** noted the friendliness and professionalism of the Eversource project team. He noted that he will be following up with the Planning Dept and wants to know more from them about next steps.