

Abutting Context Analysis

Located between the heart of Union Square and close to the municipal boundary with Cambridge, the Substation is nestled between Prospect Street and Newton Street, in a section of the Union Square neighborhood that is rapidly evolving, and is now experiencing dense, mixed-use development that is centered around the new Union Square MBTA station. This development growth within Union Square and the areas' immediately beyond, such as Boynton Yards, Brickbottom, and the Somerville Gateway Innovation Center (Target Plaza & Pat's Towing), are in large part driving the increased electrical load growth that the Company is now witnessing and using in its forecasting.

Although relatively small, the Substation parcel is partially located in the Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) district, the Commercial Core (CC) district, and the Civic District. Sheet C4.1 of the plan set submitted with this application is a map of the neighborhood immediately surrounding the Substation and shows the existing zoning and land uses, as well as development projects currently under construction.

The location of the Substation, with a substantial grade differential between the site and neighboring Prospect Street, Webster Street, and Newton Street somewhat assists with screening the equipment, but conversely it can also allow for elevated views into the Substation yard. The design team is cognizant of this predicament and has revised the design to work with this grade change, arriving at a design that is both constructible (knowing the existing above and below ground infrastructure constraints), and which maximizes screening to the greatest extent possible from the various street level viewpoints around the station, including views from the elevator and pedestrian entrance/exit to the new Union Square MBTA station.

Recognizing that this part of Union Square will continue to transition over the next decade, the Company will continue to engage with abutting landowners on any future enhancements that might be achievable on the periphery of the Substation site. The Company previously discussed the project with MassDOT in relation to their proposed reconstruction of the Webster Avenue bridge and associated roadway enhancements on Newton Street and will reengage with MassDOT as their plans advance about any additional screening or fencing that might be possible on Webster

Avenue. The Company has been meeting with the US2 development team on a weekly basis over the last couple of years and is fully aware of US2's future development plans in the area. The Company will continue to work cooperatively with US2 on its future projects, including the D4.3 residential development and associated park space (Webster Auto Sales) planned for Webster Avenue, and the potential D4.1 multi-story office and laboratory development (current CrossFit parcel) adjacent to the Substation on Prospect Street. The multi-story building planned for the D4.1 parcel will further screen the Substation, but since it shares the only common lot line with the Substation site, it also provides an opportunity to potentially undertake further improvements along this common boundary.