

Burlington-Woburn Supply Initiative Stakeholder Questions & Answers

This document is subject to change

Eversource is developing a plan to upgrade the area’s electrical infrastructure. This project would include the construction of a new electric substation in Burlington on about two acres of Eversource-owned property accessed via Winn Street. Approximately 2.5 miles of new overhead transmission line and supporting structures would be installed in the existing rights-of-way from the proposed new substation in Burlington through Wilmington into Woburn. Below are responses to questions posed by stakeholders over the last several months as Eversource has engaged the community to get feedback about the project.

How is future electric demand calculated and what are the factors? *The key component is the trend of historic electrical demand at each substation. While Eversource typically has individual substation data dating back more than 20 years, the company focuses on the most recent five to ten years of substation demand when it formulates future electric load projections. Factors used to develop annual system level electric load forecasts can include economic variables such as employment, state gross product, retail sales, income, etc. Other factors applied at each substation include known commercial electric load increases, changes in electric vehicle usage, solar output growth, and improvements due to energy efficiency measures. Electric load changes due to residential electric load growth and population changes are represented by the variables mentioned.*

Is there ever a consideration to install solar panels along the right of way? *Eversource evaluates every substation project for non-wires alternative including solar panels and reviews the potential for solar to offset a substation need, such as the Burlington Substation. However, solar as a standalone solution has limitations. Solar is dependent on clear weather conditions and produces power only when the sun is shining, while highest system peaks tend to occur between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. when the sun is setting. Similarly, placement of solar panels under transmission lines in an existing transmission corridor limits the ability to access structures for maintenance and repair.*

Eversource’s forecasts show that a full electrification of Massachusetts will more than double electrical load. This represents a magnitude of electric growth that cannot be offset by solar alone and not developing the proposed substation project could jeopardize the region’s ability to participate in the electrified future. Eversource concludes that this Project is in the area’s best interest, both from a capacity and a reliability standpoint.

Is the substation being monitored remotely through data transmission? *There will be security cameras at various locations throughout the site, 24/7 supervisory control and real time data acquisition (SCADA) monitoring of equipment. Equipment operational alarms and fire alarm systems connect to Eversource’s control center, which monitors, operates, and dispatches personnel to Eversource’s substation facilities. Eversource’s Operations Team will monitor the substation, take proper steps to respond to system conditions and further evaluate any needs to install additional security measures if needed.*

Is the substation being designed so that it could be expanded? *The proposed substation will be constructed on 2-3 acres of land and accommodates the appropriate equipment to increase the area's electrical supply, for the next decade and beyond. Eversource is designing the substation for safety and to minimize impacts to the neighborhood. There are no current plans for substation expansion outside of this footprint for the foreseeable future.*

Are the new FEMA Flood Plain Maps being consulted to make sure there are no issues with flooding? *Yes. Eversource's Environmental and Substation Engineering groups reviews these maps and other resources frequently.*

How will Eversource protect the substation from wildfires or other events? *Eversource follows national best practices, codes and standards and its own internal policies and procedures to protect its infrastructure. Eversource uses these principles to respond, restore power and mitigate impacts to the transmission corridor should an event occur.*

Are the existing transmission lines from the Middlesex Turnpike substation to the new substation being replaced? *No. The existing substation on Middlesex Turnpike will continue to be served by the existing transmission lines. **Visit the project webpage** to see a map, and other materials, that show the project area.*

How will the substation be repaired and maintained? *Once the design, construction and commissioning stages of the substation are complete, Eversource has established, comprehensive maintenance programs in place that identify infrastructure in need of upgrades or routine maintenance.*

Once built, how often will the substation be inspected? *The new substation will be monitored in real time 24/7. Eversource personnel will routinely operate, monitor, and test the equipment within the substation, as part of normal operating procedures.*

Does Eversource leverage local police resources to assist with security? *Eversource has established open lines of communication to local public safety officials in Burlington, and the surrounding communities. During construction Eversource will seek ongoing feedback from these officials.*

Are the lines from Middlesex Turnpike to the new substation being upgraded to maximize the carrying capacity? *The new proposed substation will tap into existing transmission lines that traverse Burlington, adding a new source of power to the area. No new transmission lines are being proposed from the new substation to the existing substation on Middlesex Turnpike as part of this project.*

Will drones be monitoring the integrity of the lines? *Eversource uses drones to inspect overhead transmission line infrastructure across its service territory. More information about Eversource's drone program can be **found online**.*

When was the last time the current transmissions lines in Burlington were checked for structural integrity? *Eversource has a cyclical program where its infrastructure is assessed. Lines are either inspected yearly or biannually via aerial drone flights. The last aerial drone flight and inspection of the transmission lines in Burlington was performed in July 2022.*