

# Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Replacement Project

## Scenic Roads Application

JANUARY 2022

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**NSTAR Gas d/b/a Eversource Energy**

PREPARED BY

**SWCA Environmental Consultants**



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ASHLAND, MA  
2022 FEB -2 PM 3: 55

January 27, 2022

Patricia M. Kendall, Chair  
Ashland Planning Board  
101 Main Street  
Ashland, Massachusetts 01721

**Subject: Eversource Energy - Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Replacement Project  
Scenic Roads Permit Application**

Dear Ms. Kendall,

SWCA Environmental Consultants has prepared the enclosed Scenic Roads Permit Application on behalf of NSTAR Gas d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource) for the Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Replacement Project (the Project). A previous application for the Project was approved and a permit was issued on October 24, 2019; however, the Project has not yet been constructed and the original permit has expired. The Project will replace approximately 3.71 miles of existing 6-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipe with 12-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipe in the Towns of Hopkinton and Ashland, Massachusetts. Approximately 2.6 miles of the Project are located in the Town of Ashland. The replacement pipeline will cross beneath two scenic roads, Chestnut Street and Cedar Street, within Eversource's existing pipeline easement. The Project will temporarily disturb existing stone walls along Chestnut Street and Cedar Street within the existing easement during the installation of the replacement pipeline. Eversource is seeking approval for these two pipeline crossings in accordance with the Town of Ashland Scenic Roads Bylaw (§249 Article III).

Eversource is committed to providing safe and reliable natural gas service with competitive rates to its customers. The primary driver of the Project is to make the transfer line more reliable by creating a second independent gas feed to supply the Pond Street Take Station, which services the Towns of Framingham and Ashland. This will be accomplished by improving the utilization of natural gas from the Hopkinton liquefied natural gas facility under high demand periods, as well as provide additional transmission sources to Framingham and Ashland.

The existing 6-inch-diameter portion of the transfer line is undersized, thus creating a large pressure drop that limits the supply of gas to Framingham and Ashland. Under existing high demand conditions, the transfer line cannot adequately maintain the required pressure and flow rate at the Pond Street Take Station in Ashland and requires a constant supply of natural gas from additional transmission sources. In the event of an interruption of service to one of the

supplies, having two independent supplies will provide operational reliability for Eversource's approximately 20,000 customers in Framingham and Ashland.

The enclosed application includes the following information:

- Application Permit Form;
- Application Narrative;
- Three (3) copies of the Project Construction Permit Drawings;
- One (1) electronic copy of the submitted materials on a CD; and
- One (1) check made payable to the Town of Ashland for \$250.00 as payment of the filing fee.

A check sufficient for any additional cost of advertising and/or notification will be provided once the Planning Board confirms the total amount. If you have any questions regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me at (413) 658-2027 or at [Rebecca.Weissman@swca.com](mailto:Rebecca.Weissman@swca.com).

Sincerely,



Rebecca Weissman  
Senior Office Lead/ Central-East Oil & Gas Lead  
SWCA Environmental Consultants

Enclosures

cc: Matthew Waldrip, Eversource  
Sean Berthiaume, Eversource



**HOPKINTON TO ASHLAND  
TRANSFER LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT  
SCENIC ROADS APPLICATION**

Prepared for

**NSTAR Gas d/b/a Eversource Energy**  
247 Station Drive, SE 2122  
Westwood, Massachusetts 02090

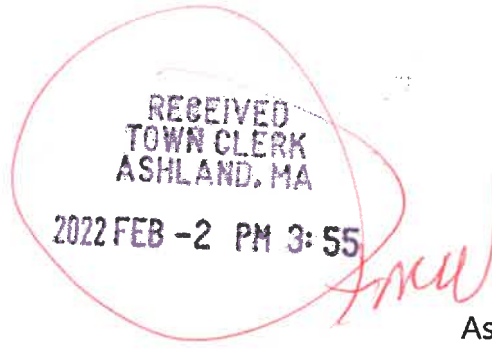
Prepared by

**SWCA Environmental Consultants**  
1900 West Park Drive, Suite 280  
Westborough, Massachusetts 01581  
[www.swca.com](http://www.swca.com)

SWCA Project No. 57545

January 2022





**Town of Ashland**  
**Planning Department**  
 101 Main St.  
 Ashland, MA 01721  
 508.881.0101  
 Ashlandmass.com/193/Planning

## Application for Planning Board Approval/Permit

Note: Application must be complete, with a certified plot plan and all application fees to be accepted.

**Property Information:**

Street Address: Eversource's existing Transfer Line easement, Chestnut Street and Cedar Street  
 Zoning District: N/A - Chestnut Street and Cedar Street Overlay District: N/A Chestnut Street and Cedar Street  
 Assessor's Map: N/A Lot: N/A Deed Book: N/A Page: N/A  
 Current Property Owner: N/A

**Permit/Approval Sought:**

Special Permit       Site Plan Review       Site Plan Modification  
 Design Plan Review       Earth Removal Permit       Scenic Road Permit  
 Subdivision (Include Subdivision Application Form)       Special Permit Amendment/Modification  
 Use Type: Residential:  Commercial:  Industrial:  Mixed Use:

**Applicant Information:**

Owner:  Tenant:  Prospective Purchaser/Tenant:   
 Name: Matthew Waldrip  
 Address: 247 Station Drive, SE 2122, Westwood, MA 02090  
 Phone: 781-441-8247 Email: Matthew.Waldrip@eversource.com  
 Agent's Name: Rebecca Weissman  
 Agent's Address: 1900 West Park Drive, Suite 280, Westborough, MA 01581  
 Agent's Phone: 413-658-2027 Agent's Email: Rebecca.Weissman@swca.com

**Additional Information:**

Are all real estate taxes and other assessments to the Town current?: Yes  
 Is the parcel on a scenic road?: Yes Is the parcel in a flood plain?: No  
 Is the parcel within 100 feet of a wetland or 200 feet of a river: No  
 Is this an amendment to a previously issued Special Permit? (attach approved permit): No  
 Date structure(s) built?: N/A



**Description of the Relief Sought:** (attach additional pages if needed)

SWCA Environmental Consultants ("SWCA") has prepared this Scenic Roads Application for the Ashland Planning Board on behalf of NSTAR Gas d/b/a Eversource Energy ("Eversource"), for the Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Replacement Project ("Project"). The Project involves replacing approximately 3.71 miles of buried 6-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipe with 12-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipe in the Towns of Hopkinton and Ashland. Approximately 2.6 miles of the replacement pipeline are located in the Town of Ashland. The Project will cross two designated scenic roads in the Town of Ashland, Chestnut Street and Cedar Street. During construction, Eversource will temporarily disturb existing stone walls along the two roads as the replacement pipeline is installed within the easement. The enclosed application for consent has been prepared and filed with the Ashland Planning Board in accordance with the Town of Ashland Scenic Roads Bylaw (§249 Article III).

What specific zoning bylaws is this application associated with?: Scenic Road Permit

**Benefits of Project:**

The Project will eliminate an existing pressure drop along Eversource's Hopkinton-Ashland Transfer Line. Due to the infrastructure restrictions associated with the existing Transfer Line, Eversource is limited in its ability to transport liquefied natural gas and natural gas supply from transmission providers along the Transfer Line during periods of high demand. This physical limitation could have a negative effect on the supply to customers during periods of high demand. Therefore, the Project improves the performance and reliability of the natural gas distribution system in the greater Framingham area of Eversource's service territory, by providing Eversource with alternative means to transport and supply gas to this area of its system.

**Existing use and condition of the property and surrounding neighborhood:** (Please list all non-conformities.)

Chestnut Street and Cedar Street; surrounded by a mixture of forested, industrial, and residential areas.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By signing below you assert this application is complete and accurate to the best of your knowledge:

**Signatures:**

Applicant/Agent: Rebecca Weissman Applicant's Name: Rebecca Weissman

Agent's Relationship to Applicant: Consultant Firm: SWCA Environmental Consultants

Owner: N/A Owner's Name: N/A

Note: If the applicant is not the owner, please have the owner sign above or submit a letter of permission with the application.



THE RED THERMO SECURED SP® LOGO IN THE LOWER CORNER OF THIS CHECK MUST BE TEMPORARILY WHEN WARNED BY TOUCH OR FRICTION. SEE BACK FOR ADDITIONAL FEATURES.

020180

11-24/210

DATE *Jun 26, 2022*

SWCA, INC.  
IMPREST ACCOUNT  
15 RESEARCH DRIVE  
AMHERST, MA 01002

PAY  
TO THE  
ORDER OF

*Town of Ashland*  
*Two hundred fifty*

\$ *250.00*

DOLLARS

WELLS  
FARGO  
Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

MEMO *07545-PTL/02*  
*Permit Dep. Fee*

*[Signature]*



⑈020180⑈



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) has prepared this Scenic Roads Application for the Ashland Planning Board on behalf of NSTAR Gas d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource), for the Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Replacement Project (the Project). A previous application for the Project was approved and a permit was issued on October 24, 2019; however, the Project has not yet been constructed and the original permit has expired. The Project involves replacing approximately 3.71 miles of buried 6-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipe with 12-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipe in the Towns of Hopkinton and Ashland, Massachusetts. Approximately 2.6 miles of the replacement pipeline are located in the Town of Ashland.

The Project will eliminate an existing pressure drop along Eversource's Hopkinton-Ashland Transfer Line (Transfer Line). The Transfer Line is an existing, high-pressure distribution pipeline that runs from Eversource's Wilson Street Gate Station in Hopkinton to the Pond Street Gate Station in Ashland within an existing 20–30-foot-wide permanent easement. This approximately 25,000-foot-long pipeline includes approximately 2,200 feet of 12-inch-diameter pipe on the Hopkinton end (west), approximately 3,100 feet of 12-inch-diameter pipe on the Ashland end (east), and approximately 19,600 feet of 6-inch-diameter pipe between the two 12-inch-diameter sections. The 6-inch-diameter section of pipeline is the subject of this replacement project.

Due to the infrastructure restrictions associated with the existing Transfer Line, Eversource is limited in its ability to transport liquefied natural gas and natural gas supply from transmission providers along the Transfer Line during periods of high demand. This physical limitation could have a negative effect on the supply to customers during periods of high demand. Therefore, the Project improves the performance and reliability of the natural gas distribution system in the greater Framingham area (which includes the Town of Ashland) of the Eversource's service territory, by providing the Company with alternative means to transport and supply gas to this area of its system.

The Project will cross two designated scenic roads in the Town of Ashland, Chestnut Street and Cedar Street. Existing conditions at both crossings are depicted in Figures 1-3. During construction, Eversource will temporarily disturb existing stone walls along the two roads as the replacement pipeline is installed within the easement. All local, state and federal laws regarding noise, vibration, dust, refueling, and traffic, in addition to requirements and directives in the Eversource Operations and Maintenance plans and Construction Standards, will be followed. Pipe installation will be per local station and federal regulations. Any additional Department of Public Works or Fire Department regulations or requirements will also be adhered to. Best management practices, including sweeping roadways of any debris or sediment after each work day, will be implemented. Measures to control dust will also be taken, including entrance track pads, and making water trucks available on site at all times. All disturbed areas will be restored to their pre-construction conditions upon completion of the Project. The enclosed application for consent has been prepared and filed with the Ashland Planning Board in accordance with the Town of Ashland Scenic Roads Bylaw (§249 Article III).



**Figure 1. View of Chestnut Street from the existing Transfer Line easement, located approximately 100ft south of the Warren Rd/Joanne Dr intersection, facing east.**



**Figure 2. View of Cedar Street from the existing Transfer Line easement facing east.**



**Figure 3. View of the existing Transfer Line easement through residential property (225 Cedar St) west of Cedar Street.**

## **2. EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS**

The existing Transfer Line enters the Town of Ashland just to the southwest of Hardwick Road within a 20-foot-wide easement. The existing easement and pipeline cross residential parcels along Hardwick Road, Pennock Road, Winesap Way, and Indian Spring Road before reaching West Union Street (State Route 135). The easement continues to the east across additional residential parcels before entering Ashland State Park. The easement crosses approximately 1,450 feet of the northern tier of the park before leaving park property and crossing residential parcels with frontage on Metropolitan Way. The easement re-enters the Ashland State Park property to the east of Metropolitan Way and crosses Cold Spring Brook north of the Ashland Reservoir dam and spillway before reaching Chestnut Street.

East of Chestnut Street, the easement and pipeline continue across a residential property with frontage on Chestnut Street before crossing a large parking lot associated with the Chestnut Place Apartment Homes complex on Joanne Drive.

East of Joanne Drive, the existing pipeline easement passes through residential parcels with frontage on Prospect Street, Stage Coach Drive, Wayside Lane, Brimstone Way, and Carriage House Path. The easement also crosses a property managed by the Great Bend Farm Trust which is subject to a conservation restriction. However, the existing pipeline easement pre-dates this conservation restriction; the conservation restriction therefore does not prevent or restrict the Project. The Project terminates at Cedar Street where the existing 6-inch-diameter pipe ends, and the 12-inch-diameter pipe begins.

Eversource has provided a set of construction permit drawings that display detailed information on existing site conditions. As indicated in §249-15 and detailed in the permit drawings (see Attachment A), the two scenic roads crossed by the Project are Chestnut Street and Cedar Street. Prior to commencing earthwork activities, a pre-construction meeting will be held with town staff, at which time photo evidence of preconstruction conditions and a construction schedule will be submitted, along with the name and contact information for the on-site contractor. Eversource will provide the required bonds, prior to the start of construction.

### **3. IN-STREET CONSTRUCTION AT SCENIC ROADS**

The Project route crosses designated scenic roads Chestnut Street and Cedar Street, which both have two travel lanes with varying shoulder widths. Eversource proposes to cross both scenic roads using the open trench construction method. The Project route crosses the roads at a relatively perpendicular angle.

Construction within and across the scenic roads using the conventional open cut method will be based on site conditions and applicable road opening permit requirements. Roadway opening permits have been filed with the Town of Ashland. Permit conditions will determine the day-to-day construction activities at road crossings.

Prior to construction, the “Dig Safe” system, or state or local utility operators, will be contacted so they can mark their facilities that may intersect, or are in proximity to, the proposed pipeline. The contractor may elect to expose the utilities prior to construction to confirm their exact location.

Construction will be scheduled for work within roadways and specific crossings to minimize impacts to commuter traffic. Appropriate traffic management signage and necessary safety measures will be implemented in compliance with applicable permits for work in the public roadway. Arrangements will be made with local officials to have traffic safety personnel, police details, or qualified and trained flaggers available during periods of construction. Detours will be implemented where necessary to maintain sufficient traffic flow. To minimize disturbance to residents, work will not occur before 7:00am and all construction activities will cease by 7:00pm. Construction activities will not occur on Sundays or on federal holidays. No parking or standing of vehicles will occur during construction on Chestnut Street or Cedar Street.

Following the installation of traffic control devices, traffic will be detoured around the open trench during the installation process. The pipeline crossing is installed one lane at a time. As the pipe is installed, successive lanes are alternately taken out of service for pipe installation until the crossing is completed. Another option is to detour traffic around the work area entirely to nearby roadways if required by local permits.

Pavement over the proposed trench will be cut, removed, and disposed of properly. The trench is excavated using a combination of a backhoe, vacuum truck, and hand shoveling around existing utilities once the ditch is completed and the pipe is installed (welded, inspected, and coating applied to weld joints). If required, a vacuum truck will be used, but only if excavation is not feasible with the use of a machine or shovel. Existing utilities exposed during excavation will be supported as necessary at their existing elevation to avoid damage. Utility supports will be maintained until backfill and compaction of the pipeline ditch and the exposed utility are completed. The trench is then backfilled according to permit specifications. If the roadway surface was paved, the paving will be restored in accordance with the permit requirements. Since the roads will be repaired following the completion of construction, there will be no effect on the scenic or aesthetic value of Chestnut Street or Cedar Street as a result of the Project

## **4. TEMPORARY TEARING DOWN OR DESTRUCTION OF STONE WALLS AT SCENIC ROADS**

As detailed on the permit drawings (see Attachment A), within the existing easement, there is an existing stone wall located approximately 10 feet west of the shoulder of Chestnut Street. The stone wall is overgrown with vegetation and considered structurally unsound per a 2019 site visit by former Planning Board Chair Preston Crow. The stone wall enters the existing easement from the north and continues approximately 12 feet into the existing easement, crossing over the proposed centerline of the Project.

There is an existing stone wall located approximately 20 feet west of the shoulder of Cedar Street. The stone wall is well maintained and appears to be part of the landscaping for the landowner of this property. Within the existing easement, the stone wall abuts the proposed centerline of the Project and extends approximately 7 feet to the north. The stone wall breaks for the landowner's driveway and then resumes north of the driveway and outside the Project area.

Both stone walls at the scenic roads will be temporarily disturbed within the existing easement as a result of the Project. Since the stones will be removed from their current location within the existing easement, set aside during construction, then the stone walls will be reassembled in the same location with the same materials following the completion of construction surrounding Chestnut Street and Cedar Street, the Project will have no effect on the scenic or aesthetic value of the scenic roads.

The Bylaw defines the tearing down or destruction of stone walls as the destruction of more than 10 linear feet of stone wall involving more than 1 cubic foot of wall material per linear foot above existing grade. Temporary removal and replacement at the same location with the same materials is permitted without Planning Board approval if the Department of Public Works is notified before the work begins so that it confirms that the wall is properly replaced. The Project involves the temporary removal and replacement of the walls at the same location.

## **5. CUTTING OR REMOVAL OF TREES AT SCENIC ROADS**

The Project is located within the existing 20-foot-wide Transfer Line easement at the two scenic road crossings. Trees are defined by the Bylaw as a tree whose trunk has a diameter of 8 inches or more as measured 4 feet above ground. Based on this, no tree removal is anticipated at the Chestnut Street or Cedar Street crossings (see §249-17 Definition of Cutting or Removal of Trees).

## **6. NATURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AESTHETIC, AND HISTORICAL VALUES**

There are no wetlands or waterbodies adjacent to either Chestnut Street or Cedar Street within the Project area and no tree clearing is anticipated at the two road crossings. The stone walls at the two road crossings within the existing easement will be temporarily removed and replaced following the completion of pipeline installation. No historic resources will be impacted by construction within the easement at the two road crossings.

## **7. LEGAL NOTICE**

In accordance with the provisions of the Ashland Scenic Roads Bylaw, the Ashland Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 24, 2022 at [TIME] via a Zoom video conference meeting accessed via [ZOOM LINK] on the petition of Eversource for approval of a Scenic Roads Application for the Eversource Energy Hopkinton to Ashland Transfer Line Project in accordance with Chapter 40, Section 15C of the Massachusetts General Laws and Chapter 249, Section 20 of the Town of Ashland Code.

The project will replace approximately 3.71 miles of existing 6-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipeline with 12-inch-diameter steel natural gas pipe. The project consists of temporary disturbance within the existing pipeline easement at two designated scenic roads, Chestnut Street and Cedar Street, consisting of in-street construction and temporary removal and reassembly of existing stone walls, but no disturbance to nearby trees along the scenic roads.

Parties wishing to be heard on this matter should submit comments to the Planning Board ahead of time and/or join the virtual meeting at the planned time and date via the link indicated above. Materials may be viewed at Town Hall during normal business hours, or at <https://www.ashlandmass.com/543/Current-Cases-Before-the-Planning-and-Zo>. For more information or to submit comments, please contact Peter Matchak at (508) 532-7927 or at [pmatchak@ashlandmass.com](mailto:pmatchak@ashlandmass.com).



**APPENDIX A**  
**Project Permit Drawings**