STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD

THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC COMPANY D/B/A NATIONAL GRID NOTICE OF INTENT APPLICATION TO RELOCATE AN EXISTING TRANSMISSION LINE UNDERGROUND	:	**DOCKET NO. SB-2016-02**

DECISION AND ORDER

On May 27, 2016, the Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (National Grid or Company) filed a Notice of Intent Application with the Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB or Board) pursuant to Rule 1.6(f) of the Board's Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules).[1] The application proposes to relocate and bury three existing 115 kV overhead electrical transmission lines known as T1, T2, and T3 (Existing Lines) in the City of Providence.[2] The Existing Lines, which are supported by three existing steel towers and are approximately 1,300 feet in length, connect the Franklin Square Substation with the South Street Substation. Because building constraints have made it impossible to upgrade equipment in the control building, National Grid is building a new South Street Substation in a different, nearby location.

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[1] Rule 1.6(f) provides for an abbreviated review of an application for the construction of power lines of more than 1,000 feet, but less than 6,000 feet, or the modification or relocation of existing power lines. After the application is filed and a public hearing held in one or more of the cities or towns affected by the project, the Board must make a determination within sixty days of the filing as to whether the project "may result in a significant impact on the environment or the public health, safety and welfare." If the Board finds no significant impact, the project does not constitute a major alteration. The applicant will, accordingly, be licensed to proceed without further review.

[2] The application provides a detailed description of the work to be performed as well as an extensive analysis of the impacts upon the natural and social environments and electromagnetic field levels. At the public hearing, the Board admitted as full exhibits the application and the Environmental Report as National Grid Exhibits 1 and 2, respectively. Additionally, the Board marked National Grid's Response to Data Requests as Exhibit 3, the Docketing Letter as Exhibit 4, and the slide presentation as Exhibit 5. The application and attachments are available at the Public Utilities Commission located at 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island or on-line at http://www.ripuc.org/efsb/2016_SB_2.html

CV South Street Landing LLC (CV Landing), the developer who owns the property between the two substations, requested that National Grid bury the Existing Lines to benefit the redevelopment of its properties. Specifically, CV Landing is redeveloping an existing building to house university administrative offices and a nursing education center. It is also constructing a parking garage on its property between the property where the South Street Substation is located and Eddy Street. In addition to agreeing to pay for the costs associated with burying the Existing Lines, the developer has agreed to install a new pedestrian walkway in furtherance of the Coastal Resources Management Council's (CRMC) urban coastal greenway policy. Once the project is complete, the three steel towers and current control house will be removed. National Grid's application stated that it has obtained all necessary approvals from CRMC, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and the City of Providence Downtown Design Review Board, Building Department, and Zoning Board of Review.

In order to accomplish the undergrounding of the lines, National Grid proposed two routes so as to prevent the accidental severance of all of the lines in a single instance. Of the two routes, only one will require an easement be granted and the developer has agreed to grant it. All property rights along the other route belong to National Grid. The application described the cable types, circuit and trench arrangements, and scope of work associated with the relocation and burial of the Existing Lines. Since the lines will be underground, there is little maintenance required for the right of way which National Grid will inspect periodically.

To determine the cost the developer should pay, National Grid estimated the cost to bury the lines at $9,635,717. From that amount, it deducted $2,652,295, the cost it would incur in connecting the Existing Lines to the South Street Substation. That resulted in a total cost to the

developer of $6,983,422. National Grid plans to commence construction during the summer of 2016 and complete the project by the summer of 2019.

In the application, National Grid stated that, because the project is an underground project, community outreach has been limited. Four alternatives, including a "no-build" alternative, were considered for the two routes. Besides rejecting the "no-build" option, National Grid also rejected a route along Richmond Street. The Company eschewed that route because it is approximately twice as long as the other two routes and because of the potential traffic impacts during the construction phase.

In the application, National Grid described as minimal the effects to the natural environment that would occur as a result of the burial of the Existing Lines. National Grid noted that the soils along the proposed route consist primarily of urban fill materials. Historical operations at the site have resulted in the imposition of restrictions on use of the property as well as soil management requirements, and DEM notification requirements. National Grid has stated that it will implement best management practices, including the use of straw bales, silt fences, straw waddles, and other forms of erosion control measures to minimize impacts and will regularly monitor these measures during construction. Additionally, the Company represented that excess soils removed from and placed alongside trenches created for the undergrounding of the lines will be covered until being returned to the trenches. After construction is complete, disturbed areas will be stabilized and pervious areas will be stabilized with low maintenance shrubs and trees.

National Grid does not expect any adverse impact to groundwater. The only surface water resource on or adjacent to the project area is the Providence River, which has limited primary use because of its poor water quality. Two potential impacts to the Providence River are the introduction of turbid stormwater caused by soil erosion and sedimentation from disturbed soils

and fuel spillage near the river. National Grid will implement measures to avoid these impacts. Those measures will include covering all soil materials stored on site and not maintaining or fueling equipment near the river.

Since the project area does not contain any significant vegetation, there will be no negative impact to vegetation. The Company will plant trees and shrubs in certain areas. National Grid provided that emissions generated during construction will be of short duration and not significant. Once construction is complete, no air emissions will be generated. The project is not expected to have any long-term impacts on land use or recreation. Because the area is a commercial/industrial area, the predominant source of noise is traffic, which National Grid represented will only be temporarily impacted during construction-related activities. The community will be impacted only to the extent of construction-related traffic, and the project will not adversely affect economic or social conditions of the surrounding area. The burial of the Existing Lines will result in a positive impact on visual resources. National Grid represented that it will protect the public's and its workers' health and safety by employing a number of measures to maintain safety during construction.

The Company represented that the levels of the electric and magnetic fields for the proposed configurations of the buried lines for both average loading and peak loading will be lower than the current levels of the existing configuration. Dust and odor generated by soil excavation will be controlled with methods such as sprinkling, covering, mulching, and/or use of foams. Finally, National Grid will retain the services of an environmental monitor throughout the entire construction phase of the project to ensure strict compliance with all regulations and permit requirements.

At the public hearing on June 28, 2016, the Company presented two witnesses to describe the project and its effects as set forth in the Application and the Environmental Report and to respond to inquiries by the Board: Robert Galgano, a consulting engineer with Energy Initiatives Group working as the project manager for National Grid, and Erin Whoriskey, a lead environmental scientist with National Grid.

Mr. Galgano described the area where the South Street and Franklin Square Substations are located. He noted how these two substations serve over 150 MW of critical load to the downtown Providence area, which includes hospitals, the downtown network, and the capital district.[3] Mr. Galgano stated that the new substation will be several hundred feet away from the existing substation but will remain on the same parcel of property. He provided a slide depicting the property and identified the property boundaries and the location of the existing and new substations.[4] He also described the route of the Existing Lines and towers that support them.[5] He then pointed out the route of the three underground lines and explained that National Grid chose two diverse routes for the underground lines to ensure the critical load is not compromised.[6] He provided that CV Properties agreed to grant National Grid an easement to cross any of its property.[7]

Mr. Galgano stated that National Grid had obtained permits from CRMC and DEM for the underground routes.[8] He explained that the complexity of the project requires a large number of circuits and a significant amount of time to energize the new substation account for the

[3] Hr'g Tr. at 7-8 (June 28, 2016).
[4] *Id.* at 9-11.
[5] *Id.* at 12.
[6] *Id.* at 12-13.
[7] *Id.* at 13-14.
[8] *Id.* at 17-18.

approximate three-year time period for completion.[9] Finally, he maintained that the community outreach and interaction with various stakeholders were overwhelmingly positive.[10]

Ms. Whorisky has responsibility for all environmental aspects of the proposed project. She described how National Grid will engage in soil and groundwater management, including covering excavated soil with poly sheeting, straw wattles, hay bales, and active dewatering on the site.[11] She provided that the site will include a landscaped pedestrian walkway.[12] She testified that there will not be any long-term environmental impacts and the short-term impacts will be minimized through the use of best management practices as described above.[13] Finally, she opined that the project itself will have a positive impact on the area and the environment.[14]

After the Company's presentation ended, the Chairperson solicited public comment. Scott Dumont, the project engineer with CV Properties, offered that removal of the overhead lines will result in a positive visual impact and will ease in the development of the area. He also stated that the creation of the walkway will become an important resource to the area.[15]

Immediately upon conclusion of the public hearing, the Board conducted an Open Meeting which had been properly noticed. The Board found the incorporation of the undergrounding of the lines with the reconstruction and the reconnection of the South Street Substation to be a positive step in revitalizing the area. The Board further found that because the Developer is paying for the burial of the lines, there will be no adverse financial impact on ratepayers. National Grid need not implement the least cost option to connect the existing lines to the substation. The Board also found the project will have no significant impact to the environment or public health, safety, and

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[9] *Id.* at 18-19.
[10] *Id.* at 20-21.
[11] *Id.* at 25, 27.
[12] *Id.* at 28.
[13] *Id.* at 29.
[14] *Id.* at 30-31.
[15] *Id.* at 31-32.

welfare. The social and environmental impacts resulting from the construction will be temporary and minimal. Moreover, the Board is assured that National Grid will engage in appropriate mitigation measures to minimize any disturbances to vegetation and soil and to the social environment. Finally, the Board notes that the creation of the new pedestrian walkway will provide an opportunity for the public to access and enjoy area. By a unanimous vote, the Board voted to issue the license.

ACCORDINGLY, it is:

(~~100~~) ORDERED:

The Energy Facility Siting Board hereby grants to the Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid a license, under R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-98-11, to relocate and bury three existing 115 kV overhead electrical transmission lines, as previously described, subject to the Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid's receipt of all other permits required for the project.

DATED AND EFFECTIVE at Providence, Rhode Island on June 28, 2016, pursuant to an open meeting decision. Written Order issued August 19, 2016.

ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD

Margaret E. Curran, Chairperson

Janet Coit, Member

Parag Agrawal, Member