UI
An Avangrid company

UI Old Town Substation Rebuild

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Old Town Substation Rebuild Project?

The Old Town Substation Rebuild Project (Project) involves the rebuild of The United Illuminating Company's (UI's) existing 115/13.8-kilovolt (kV) Old Town Substation located at 280 Kaechele Place in the City of Bridgeport. The Project is necessary to provide safe and reliable power to customers in the Greater Bridgeport region. The Project will be located on approximately 2.25 acres of UI property adjacent to and encompassing the existing Old Town Substation.

Why is UI proposing to rebuild Old Town Substation?

The existing Old Town Substation was built more than 50 years ago and most of its equipment must be replaced now or in the near future to assure the continued reliability of the electric system. UI studied the current and future electric needs that the substation must meet, taking into consideration the substation's system reliability performance and physical conditions. Based on the study results, UI concluded that the existing 0.9-acre substation site is not large enough to accommodate the improvements required and that the optimal solution would be to build a new Old Town Substation that will meet present and future reliability demands and conform to UI and industry standards.

How is the existing Old Town Substation important for providing electric service to the Greater Bridgeport Area?

The existing Old Town Substation connects the regional transmission grid to UI's electric distribution network in northern Bridgeport, from which power is transmitted to customers in Bridgeport, Trumbull, Easton, and Fairfield. The substation is linked to the regional transmission system At the substation, the 115-kV power is "stepped down" to 13.8 kV, for transfer to UI's customers in the Greater Bridgeport region. In all, the existing Old Town Substation serves approximately 17,000 customers in this region.

Why is UI proposing the Project now?

UI's technical review determined that the aging equipment at the existing Old Town Substation is not adequate to meet future needs. The Project will allow UI to continue to provide reliable power to its customers.

Where will the Project be located?

The Project will be located on approximately 2.25 acres of UI property adjacent to and including the 0.9-acre site of the existing Old Town Substation. Access to the substation will be via Kaechele Place.

How much property does UI own adjacent to Kaechele Place? Will all the property be used for the Project?

UI owns the 0.9-acre property at 280 Kaechele Place, where the existing Old Town Substation is located. In addition, UI owns approximately 3 acres of currently undeveloped land that abuts the existing substation site to the north/northeast. UI proposes to use only 2.25 acres for the Project; the remaining property will not be developed.

What facilities are proposed for the Project?

The proposed Old Town Substation will include new 115/13.8-kV electrical equipment, a control enclosure, and a 13.8-kV switchgear enclosure. In addition, nine new steel monopoles will be installed to connect the substation to the existing Eversource 115-kV transmission lines. A perimeter chain link fence with privacy slats, approximately 14 feet tall and topped with barbed wire, will be installed around the substation.

What will happen to the existing Old Town Substation?

After the new substation is placed into service, the existing Old Town Substation will be decommissioned and removed.

What types of construction activities will be required?

To construct the new substation, site preparation activities such as vegetation removal, grading, and filling will be performed to create a level area. Rock hammering will be performed as needed. Blasting may be required, depending on the depth and type of bedrock encountered. To minimize the amount of grading, UI will construct a concrete retaining wall around portions of the perimeter. After the site preparation work is complete, typical substation construction work will include foundation, enclosure, and equipment installation, 115-kV and 13.8-kV line connections; testing; commissioning; and restoration.

What is the Project construction schedule?

UI proposes to commence construction in the second quarter of 2026, depending on the receipt of regulatory approvals for the Project. Construction will require about 18 months; completion of the Project is planned for the second quarter of 2024, including full site restoration, is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2028.

What are typical construction work hours?

Typical construction work hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Some construction activities may involve work outside of these hours or on Sundays.

How much will the Project cost? Who will pay for it?

The total estimated Project cost is approximately $63 million. Because the Project is needed for the reliability of the New England Bulk Electric transmission system, a portion of the Project costs will be regionally shared by all New England customers.

What regulatory approvals are required for the Project?

Various regulatory consultations and approvals are required for the Project. Key regulatory agencies include the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). UI also has and will continue to consult with the City of Bridgeport.

What environment studies has UI conducted to review the possible impacts of the Project?

UI researched existing environmental features in the Project vicinity and conducted studies of environmental resources on and in the vicinity of the Project site. Data and information was compiled concerning soils, wetlands, watercourses, the potential presence of vernal pools, floodplains, vegetation and wildlife, land uses, cultural resources, visual resources, noise, transportation, and air quality.

What are the existing environmental characteristics of the Project site?

The Project site consists of the existing Old Town Substation and UI's adjacent, undeveloped property, which is characterized by forest, shrub, and herbaceous vegetation. The site is upland, but a small wetland is located on a portion of the UI property that is not proposed for Project development. Land uses in the vicinity of the Project site include a funeral home, retail and professional office facilities, residential development, and the City of Bridgeport's Elton Rogers Woodland Park, which borders the site to the east and south. The Eversource ROW crosses the park.

What are the Project's anticipated environmental impacts?

The Project will result in the conversion of part of UI's currently undeveloped property to utility use. However, this land use change will be consistent with an extension of the existing uses (i.e., the existing Old Town Substation and the Eversource ROW) that have been part of the local environment for decades. During Project construction, UI will implement best management practices and mitigation measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. Such measures will be in full compliance with the Project's regulatory approvals.

Will the Project affect the visual environment?

As a result of the Project, the presently undeveloped UI property will be converted to utility use. This will change the visual environment in the immediate vicinity. However, due to a combination of topography, nearby commercial land uses, and existing vegetation, UI anticipates that the new substation will not be a prominent feature of the landscape. The slatted perimeter security fence that will be installed around the new substation will further limit overall visual impacts.

Will the Project increase noise levels?

Project construction will generate noise typical of work activities involving heavy equipment operation and earth moving. However, the noise will be localized to the Project site and immediate vicinity and will occur only during construction. The operation of the new substation will not result in a change in ambient sound levels because the equipment at the new substation will be similar to that at the existing Old Town Substation.

Has UI studied the Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) that will be generated by the new substation?

UI has retained a specialized consultant to measure EMF at the existing Old Town Substation and to perform modeling to identify EMF levels as a result of the Project. The studies conducted thus far anticipate that EMF from the Project will be the same as that from the existing substation and 115-kV transmission lines, and in any case will be well below EMF levels deemed acceptable for the general public by international health-based standards.

What kind of lighting will be installed at the substation?

UI will install permanent lighting at the new Old Town Substation for safety and security purposes. The illumination from these lights will be visible in the immediate vicinity of the substation. In general, the lighting at the substation is expected to be consistent with the lighting at the existing Old Town Substation and the illumination of commercial facilities in the vicinity. UI will employ additional lighting only for work at night under abnormal or emergency conditions. The lights at the new substation will incorporate UI's standard design for illumination of substation yards (i.e., the use of area lights mounted on equipment support structures, perimeter fence posts, and enclosures).

Did UI evaluate other sites for rebuilding Old Town Substation?

UI reviewed seven potential locations for the new substation, including the Project site. The sites were assessed based on size, property ownership, proximity to the Eversource 115-kV lines and UI distribution system, land use and environmental features, constructability, and general cost. Except for the proposed Project site, all the alternatives would require UI to acquire property for the new substation. Overall, the proposed Project site was found to represent the best solution for rebuilding Old Town Substation and thus maintaining a reliable system for UI customers.

Will any full-time UI personnel have offices at the new substation once it is placed in service?

No. The substation will be operated remotely. However, UI personnel will periodically be at the station to perform routine operation and maintenance activities, as is the case at the current Old Town Substation.

During Project construction, will UI have to shut off power to any customers?

No. The new substation will be put into service before the existing substation is decommissioned.

If, in the future, electricity demand exceeds the current estimates, does UI have plans to expand the rebuilt Old Town Substation?

Yes the substation will be expandable and will allow for two additional transmission lines to terminate in the substation. This potential expansion was accounted for in the detailed engineering process.

What opportunities are there for public involvement in the Project? Where can the public obtain more information about the Project?

The CSC process involves varied opportunities for public input. Details about the CSC process can be found on the CSC website (**ct.gov/csc** Docket 490). Information about the proposed Project can be found on UI's website (**uinet.com>Reliable Service**) or by contacting the UI representatives at **888.848.3697**.