



# Town of Sudbury

## Historical Commission

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### Memorandum

August 25, 2020

To: Sudbury Conservation Commission and Planning Board

From: Sudbury Historical Commission

Re: Eversource Sudbury-Hudson Transmission Reliability and DCR Mass Central Rail Trail Projects

The Historical Commission understands that the Conservation Commission and Planning Board are currently holding hearings to review and permit the above named projects.

As you may or may not be aware, the Historical Commission, as a Consulting Party, is also reviewing the projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. At the conclusion of the Commission's review, it will provide comments to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) on how the projects as currently designed will impact Sudbury's historical and archaeological resources within the project area. In order to avoid or minimize such impacts, the Commission will also make recommendations for the inclusion of provisions in a Memorandum of Agreement between Eversource and ACOE that would require plan design changes to avoid and restore, rather than demolish and/or replace, historical and archaeological resources.

As some aspects of the project plans that are within the scope of the Conservation Commission and Planning Board reviews – are also within the scope of the Historical Commission's review, we would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the historical resources that are of concern to the Historical Commission.

The Commission is reviewing the projects' impacts on various historic buildings (Section Tool House and South Sudbury Station), structures (Hop Brook Bridges #127 and #128), tracks, and individual railroad features – including the granite culverts, that comprise the historic 1881 Central Massachusetts Railroad Corridor Complex (CMRCC) – most of which have been identified in surveys conducted by Eversource's cultural resource consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group (CHG).

The two Hop Brook Bridges and the Section Tool House are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and the culverts and tracks, and other railroad features contribute to the historical significance of the entire Central Mass Railroad Corridor Complex in Sudbury, believed to be eligible for National Register listing as an area-wide district.

CHG surveys - the Reconnaissance-Level Historic Properties Survey and the Archaeological Intensive (Locational) Survey identified two railroad culverts along the project corridor. However, during the August 13, 2020 Conservation Commission hearing the slide presentation of photos of the culverts along the ROW that were shown indicate there are many more than just two "historic" culverts. As a result, the Commission is assessing the number and location of the historic railroad culverts and awaits permission to conduct its own site visit.

The condition of the granite culverts and the restoration of them is also a concern, The Historical Commission recommends that not only the culverts be restored (in accordance with historic preservation

standards) rather than be replaced, altered or allowed to remain in disrepair, but that the two Hop Brook Bridges #127 and #128 be restored rather than be demolished/replaced or partially demolished/partially replaced, and that not all of the railroad track be removed.

Finally, as the Historical Commission's review of the projects will most likely conclude after the Conservation Commission issues Order of Conditions (OC) to Eversource and DCR, and as it is highly likely the Historical Commission will recommend numerous changes to the projects' design that will affect the bridges, tracks, paving and culverts, our Commission suggests that each OC include a caveat provision that the terms of the OC are contingent on and would require modification if the ACOE Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement requires changes to the project plan subsequent to the issuance of the Order of Conditions.

The Historical Commission also suggests that the Planning Board's decision also include the same caveat in its approval of the projects.

We look forward to discussing this matter with your Commission and Board, and answer any questions you may have.