



## New Haven Operations Facility

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September 24, 2019

Judith Whitney, Clerk  
Vermont Public Utility Commission  
112 State Street, Drawer 20  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2701

Re: New Haven Operations Facility Project  
Certificate of Public Good – Section 248 Permit Process  
45-Day Notice of Project Filing

Dear Ms. Whitney:

This letter and enclosed information describe the Vermont Electric Power Company Inc. and Vermont Transco LLC (collectively VELCO) proposed New Haven Operations Facility (the Project), which includes the construction of new facilities on VELCO owned property in the Town of New Haven consisting of a backup operations and data center located at 760 Main Street.

We anticipate filing our formal petition with the Vermont Public Utility Commission (the Commission) on November 13, 2019, requesting a Certificate of Public Good to construct the Project. The state permitting process requires VELCO to provide notice to the Town of New Haven and other stakeholders at least 45 days prior to a formal filing with the Commission.<sup>1</sup> For your information, attached to this letter are a Project overview and general site layout depicting the proposed aesthetic mitigation plan.

Before the Project is filed with the Commission, VELCO will conduct informal discussions to address concerns you may have about the impact of the Project. VELCO held one public meeting in September, and is scheduled to participate in another in October 2019 to share information, collect feedback and address concerns from the affected community and interested parties. The Town of New Haven, adjoining landowners, and other stakeholders will also receive notice when our petition is filed with the Commission. Please note that the Planning Commissions may make recommendations to VELCO within 40 days of the submission of this 45-day notice, which date is November 4, 2019. Relatedly, Commission Rule 5.402(A) establishes that municipal and regional Planning Commissions “shall make recommendations, if any, to the [Commission] and to the petitioner at least 7 days prior to filing the petition with the [Commission].” Planning Commissions also have the right to make revised recommendations within 45 days after the date the petition is filed with the Commission, if the petition contains new or more detailed information that was not previously included in these plans. While Section 248(f) and Commission Rule 5.402(A) focus only on the Planning Commission comment process, VELCO welcomes feedback from the affected municipal

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<sup>1</sup> The process is governed by Commission Rule 5.400, which can be viewed on the Commission’s website at <http://puc.vermont.gov/>.

bodies and state agencies. In order to incorporate your feedback prior to the November 13, 2019 anticipated filing date, VELCO is requesting that comments be submitted by October 25, 2019.

For additional information regarding the Commission's processes, including your right to participate in the proceeding, please refer to the "Citizen's Guide to the Public Utility Commission." The Citizen's Guide can be found on the Commission's website at <https://puc.vermont.gov/document/citizen-guide-public-utility-commission>.

The Commission's website also includes a guidance document on public participation that contains information on the Commission process at <https://puc.vermont.gov/document/public-participation-and-intervention-proceedings-public-utility-commission>.

As the Project is still in the design phase, we will continue discussions and expect to receive feedback on this Project from various stakeholders. As stated above, we expect to make the formal filing with the Commission on November 13, 2019. If you are interested in a presentation on this Project, have comments or want further information, please contact Peter W. Lind, Senior Project Manager, at 802-770-6292 or [plind@velco.com](mailto:plind@velco.com). So that we may better address any questions or concerns you may have, please contact us before October 25, 2019.

**The documents that accompany this letter have been electronically filed using ePUC.**

Sincerely,



Peter W. Lind, Senior Project Manager  
Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc.

Enclosures:

Attachment A – Project Overview

Attachment B – New Haven Operations Facility – Overall Ortho Site and Aesthetic Mitigation Plan

**SERVICE LIST**

**MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES / OFFICIALS  
 AND INTERESTED PARTIES**

<p><i><b>Via Certified Mail and email</b></i>                  New Haven Selectboard                  Attn: Steve Dupoise, Chair                  78 North Street                  New Haven, Vermont 05472                  Email: <a href="mailto:stevedupoise@yahoo.com">stevedupoise@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><i><b>Via Certified Mail and Email</b></i>                  New Haven Planning Commission                  Attn: Rob Litch &amp; Benj Putnam, Co-Chairs                  c/o Aaron Brown, Town Administrator                  78 North Street                  New Haven, Vermont 05472                  Email: <a href="mailto:newhavenzoning@gmavt.net">newhavenzoning@gmavt.net</a></p>
<p><i><b>Via Certified Mail and Email</b></i>                  Addison County Regional Planning                  Commission                  Attn: Adam Lougee, Executive Director                  14 Seminary Street                  Middlebury, VT 05753                  Email: <a href="mailto:alougee@acrpc.org">alougee@acrpc.org</a></p>	<p><i><b>Via Certified Mail and Email</b></i>                  Richard H. Saudek                  1350 Dodge Road                  Montpelier, Vermont 05602                  Email: <a href="mailto:rhs@diamond-robinson.com">rhs@diamond-robinson.com</a></p>
<p><i><b>Via Certified Mail and Email</b></i>                  John St. Hilaire (Courtesy Copy)                  Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.                  85 Swift Street                  South Burlington, VT 05403                  Email: <a href="mailto:jsthilaire@vermontgas.com">jsthilaire@vermontgas.com</a></p>	<p><i><b>Via Certified Mail and Email</b></i>                  Carolyn Anderson (Courtesy Copy)                  Green Mountain Power Corporation                  163 Acorn Lane                  Colchester, VT 05446  <a href="mailto:carolyn.anderson@greenmountainpower.com">carolyn.anderson@greenmountainpower.com</a></p>

**STATE OFFICIALS**

<p>Vermont Public Utility Commission  <i>(via ePUC)</i></p>	<p>Vermont Agency of Transportation  <i>(via ePUC)</i></p>
<p>Vermont Agency of Natural Resources  <i>(via ePUC)</i></p>	<p>Vermont Division for Historic Preservation  <i>(via ePUC)</i></p>
<p>Vermont Department of Public Service  <i>(via ePUC)</i></p>	



## New Haven Operations Facility Project Overview

### Introduction

Vermont Electric Power Company Inc. (VELCO) was formed when local distribution utilities joined together to create the nation's first statewide "transmission only" company in order to provide access to clean hydro power and build and maintain the state's high-voltage electric transmission grid.\* VELCO constructs, owns and operates most of this in-state, high-voltage transmission grid (essentially 115 kV and above), that connects Vermont to the regional and national electric power supply system. VELCO's network also provides the electric supply to the Town of New Haven's local distribution utility, Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP).

The New Haven Operations Facility (the Project) is driven by the need for VELCO to maintain the safe and reliable operation of the bulk electric system within the region, and consists of constructing a backup control and data center. As explained in this overview, we expect to file a request with the Vermont Public Utility Commission (Commission) for permission to undertake the Project on November 13, 2019, and assuming the Commission and other approvals are granted, currently plan for it to be constructed and in service by December 2022.

This proposed project overview describes the following:

- Project need
- Project description
- Alternative sites considered
- Project's impact
- Anticipated Project filing date with the Commission
- Local and Regional Planning Commissions' Rights to comment on the Project Plans

### Project Need

Electric energy remains a cornerstone of our local and state economies, our quality of life, and our communities. Households, businesses and public services like schools and hospitals all rely on electricity for communication, lighting, heating, ventilation, and the operation of appliances and equipment. If transmission facilities fail, large geographic areas can lose their electric service. Transmission utilities such as VELCO are required to design, operate and maintain a transmission network according to national and

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\* Transmission refers to the part of the electric system that operates at high voltage and carries large amounts of electricity from generation plants to the lower-voltage distribution system, which supplies electricity to local areas.

regional reliability standards. Under these standards, VELCO is required to have primary and backup operational facilities that do not depend on each other and must be able to bring the backup facility online within two (2) hours after a loss of the primary operations center. VELCO's current backup facility is too close to the primary facility such that a significant weather event or other event poses a high risk of impacting both facilities. This Project will serve as VELCO's backup control and data center.

## **Project Description**

The Project consists of the following primary components:

An 18,000 square foot, two-story building designed to look like a barn and blend in with the rural surroundings of the site. The building design will incorporate energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, and VELCO will seek to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from the U.S Green Building Council. The building will serve the following functions:

- Backup operations center
- System operator training facility
- Data center
- Incident command center
- Secondary office building to be used in the event of a disaster at Rutland headquarters
- Office space for utility-related meetings

Other Project components include:

- Two (2) redundant and independent, 3-phase electric distribution services with power transformers supplied from GMP. The services will require GMP to install two (2) additional phases (wires) and a cross arm on the existing poles along Route 17, from the intersection of Route 7 to the intersection of Town Hill Road. These services will be permitted and constructed by GMP.
- Two (2) backup emergency generators. The generators will be designed to minimize sound emissions and will be housed in a separate, enclosed building that will contain sound mitigating equipment. The generators are intended to be used in the event that both sources of utility power are unavailable. The generators are redundant such that only one would be used at any one time. Each of the generators will be functionally tested each week. The test will consist of consecutively running the generators during the daytime, for a period of 30 minutes each.
- Two (2) redundant and independent chillers. The chiller fans will be controlled with Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs), such that the fan speed will adjust to the cooling load of the information technology equipment located in the backup data center. This will help to minimize noise emissions. The chillers will be placed behind a retaining wall on one side, which will act as a sound barrier for neighbors to the west.
- An eight-foot (8') tall, chain link security fence surrounding the perimeter of the building.

Assuming regulatory approval is obtained, construction is expected to start in August 2020, with a targeted completion date of December 2022.

Attachment B depicts a preliminary site design layout as part of the aesthetic mitigation plan for the Project.

## Alternative Sites Considered

VELCO evaluated a number of potential locations for the Project. The proposed New Haven site was selected based on a number of positive factors, including distance from the primary control center, suitable roadway access and its proximity to reliable and diverse telecommunications and power infrastructure.

## Project Impacts

### *Aesthetics*

Both the Vermont Natural Resources Board and the Commission utilize the so-called Quechee Lakes standard [set forth in the decision *Quechee Lakes Corporation*, #3EW0411-EB and #3O439-EB (1986)] to guide their aesthetics analysis. According to the Quechee Lakes standard, regulators must first determine whether a project will have an adverse impact on aesthetics and scenic and natural beauty. A project has an adverse impact if it is out of character with its surroundings. Specific factors that regulators use to make this evaluation include the nature of the project surroundings, the compatibility of the project design with those surroundings, the suitability of the project colors and materials with the immediate environment, the visibility of the project, and the impact of the project on open space. If regulators conclude that a project will have an adverse effect, the next step in the two-part test is to determine whether the adverse effect of the project is “undue.” The adverse effect is considered undue when regulators find that any one of the following questions is answered “yes”: (1) Does the project violate a clear, written community standard intended to preserve the aesthetics or scenic beauty of the area? (2) Have the applicants failed to take generally available mitigating steps that a reasonable person would take to improve the harmony of the project with its surroundings? (3) Does the project offend the sensibilities of the average person? Is it offensive or shocking because it is out of character with its surroundings or significantly diminishes the scenic qualities of the area? For transmission upgrades, the Commission’s aesthetic analysis, however, does not end with the results of the Quechee test. In addition, the Commission’s aesthetic assessment is “significantly informed by overall societal benefits of the project.” Public Service Board Docket No. 6860, Order of 1/28/05 (footnotes omitted).<sup>†</sup>

VELCO’s aesthetic consultant, T. J. Boyle Associates, LLC (TJB), a landscape architecture and planning firm, has reviewed the preliminary design plans and performed a visual analysis of the areas of the proposed Project. TJB’s preliminary analysis indicates that the Project will not result in an undue adverse impact on aesthetics and scenic and natural beauty of the area. The proposed site of the Project is located along Route 17 in New Haven on property owned by VELCO. The area near the Project includes a variety of residential, agricultural, and utility uses, including a VELCO substation, third-party telecommunications

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<sup>†</sup> The Public Utility Commission was formerly called the Public Service Board.

shelters, electric transmission lines, a Vermont Gas pipeline and three independent septic systems. The proposed Project site is setback on the property, away from the nearby roads. Existing vegetation and landform screen most visibility from the surrounding area. Most of the existing vegetation will be maintained and additional landscaping will be installed to supplement the natural screening. TJB has developed a proposed landscape plan to further improve the screening of the Project. As required by Commission Rule 5.804(B), the proposed aesthetic mitigation plan is shown on Attachment B. VELCO's petition, to be filed on November 13, 2019, shall address any comments received on the proposed plan and will include a full analysis of potential aesthetic impacts and proposed landscaping mitigation measures.

### **Noise**

VELCO's noise control engineer, Resource Systems Group, Inc. (RSG), will assess the potential noise impacts associated with the Project. A complete engineering noise analysis will be provided as part of the Project's filing with the Commission but no undue adverse impacts are expected at the residences closest to the Project, in part due to the noise-mitigating features noted above.

### **Transportation**

The Project poses no long-term traffic impacts in New Haven. VELCO anticipates only limited, short duration traffic impacts, if any, due to deliveries of equipment and material to the site during the construction period (expected to be from August 2020 to December 2022). Such deliveries will use the existing roads with vehicles that are commonly used on public roads. During delivery of any large equipment, VELCO will employ the services of traffic control personnel to safely manage traffic flow.

### **Right of the Local and Regional Planning Commissions to Comment on the Project Plans**

Section 248(f) of Title 30 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated provides that municipal and regional Planning Commissions are entitled to receive notice of projects proposed under the Section 248 statute and to make recommendations to the Commission and to the petitioner. More specifically, municipal and regional Planning Commissions may make recommendations regarding the Project as follows: First, 30 V.S.A. § 248(f)(1)(C), states local and regional Planning Commissions may, "Make recommendations to the petitioner [VELCO] within 40 days of the petitioner's submittal to the planning commission under this subsection." Forty days from the date that VELCO's letter and this Attachment will be provided to municipal and regional Planning Commissions is November 4, 2019. Second, Section 248(f)(1)(D) states that, once the petition is filed with the Commission, such local and regional Planning Commissions may make recommendations to the Commission "by the deadline for submitting comments or testimony set forth in the applicable provision of this section, Commission rule, or scheduling order issued by the Commission." Relatedly, Commission Rule 5.402(A) establishes that municipal and regional Planning Commissions "shall make recommendations, if any, to the [Commission] and to the petitioner at least 7 days prior to filing the petition with the [Commission]." Third, as stated in Commission Rule 5.402(A)(2), local and regional Planning Commissions also have the opportunity to "provide revised recommendations within 45 days of the date on which petitioner has filed a petition with the Commission if the petition contains new or more detailed information that was not previously included in the petitioner's filing with

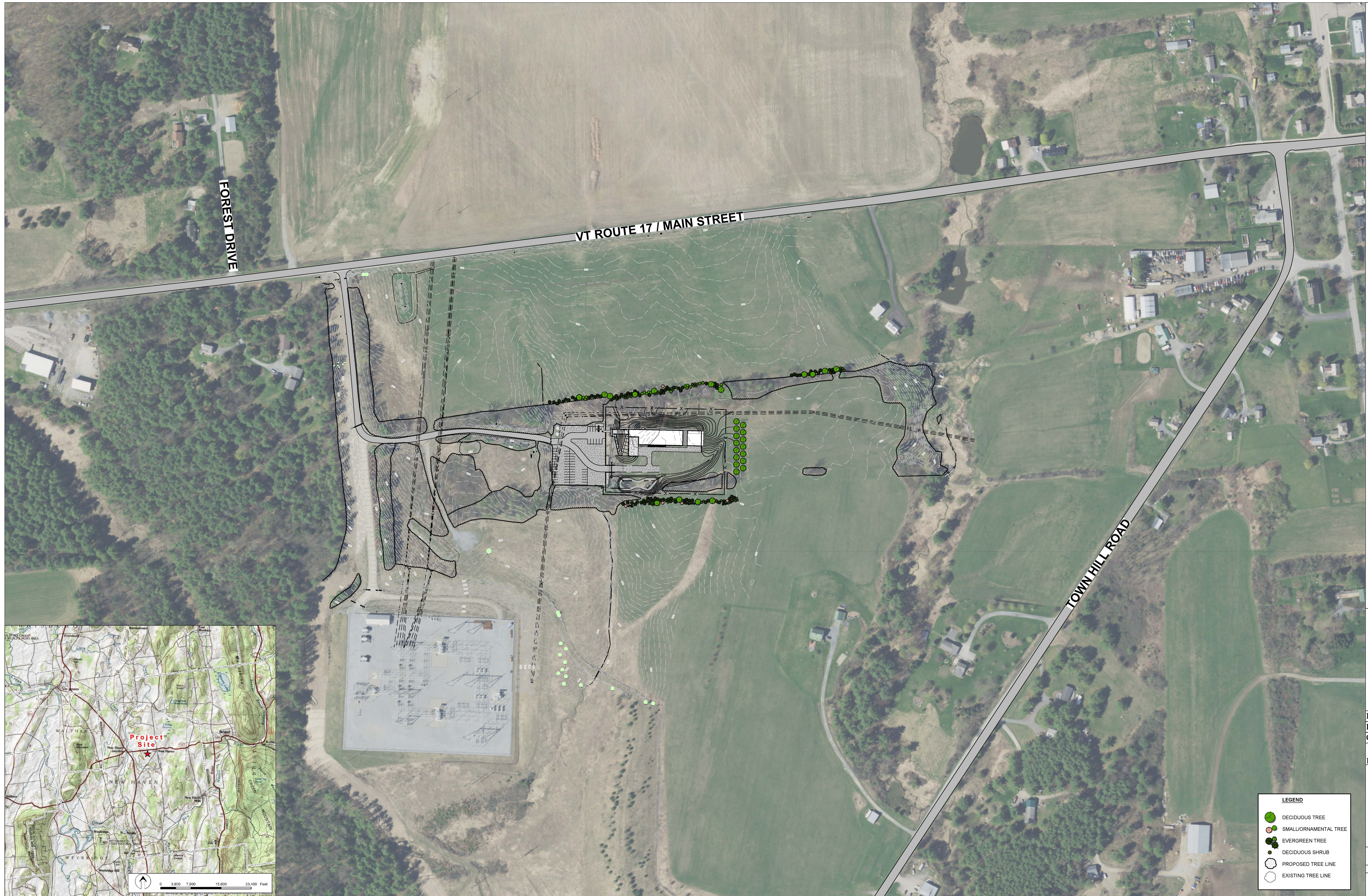
the municipal and Regional Planning commissions.” Recommendations made to the Commission under Section 248(f), or the lack of such recommendations, do not preclude municipal and regional Planning Commissions from presenting evidence during technical hearings if they exercise their right to appear as a party.

For additional information regarding the Commission’s processes, including your right to participate in the proceeding, please refer to the “Citizen’s Guide to the Public Utility Commission.” The Citizen’s Guide can be found on the Commission’s website at <https://puc.vermont.gov/document/citizen-guide-public-utility-commission>.

The Commission’s website also includes a guidance document on public participation that contains information on the Commission process at <https://puc.vermont.gov/document/public-participation-and-intervention-proceedings-public-utility-commission>.

As the Project is still in the design phase, we will continue discussions and expect to receive feedback on this Project from various stakeholders. Please note that the Commission Petition and filing anticipated for November 13, 2019, as well as other pertinent Project updates, will be posted on VELCO’s website at: <http://www.velco.com/newhaven>. If you are interested in a presentation on this Project, have comments, or would like to request further information, please contact Peter W. Lind, Senior Project Manager, at 802-770-6292 or [plind@velco.com](mailto:plind@velco.com).





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# VELCO New Haven Operations Facility

New Haven, Vermont 05742

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Project No.	195601783
Drawn By:	DA
Checked By:	MB
Issue Schedule	
Description	Date

Revisions		
#	Description	Date

AESTHETIC  
 MITIGATION  
 PLAN

## L-100

AESTHETIC MITIGATION PLAN

