# Findings of Fact | Site Plan Review City of Portsmouth Planning Board

Date: <u>June 18, 2025</u>

Property Address: 400 Spaulding Turnpike

Application #: LU-25-50

Decision: 

Approve Deny Approve with Conditions

#### Findings of Fact:

Per RSA 676:3, I: The local land use board shall issue a final written decision which either approves or disapproves an application for a local permit and make a copy of the decision available to the applicant. The decision shall include specific written findings of fact that support the decision. Failure of the board to make specific written findings of fact supporting a disapproval shall be grounds for automatic reversal and remand by the superior court upon appeal, in accordance with the time periods set forth in RSA 677:5 or RSA 677:15, unless the court determines that there are other factors warranting the disapproval. If the application is not approved, the board shall provide the applicant with written reasons for the disapproval. If the application is approved with conditions, the board shall include in the written decision a detailed description of the all conditions necessary to obtain final approval.

Site Plan Regulations Section 2.9 Evaluation Criteria - in order to grant site plan review approval, the TAC and the Planning Board shall find that the application satisfies evaluation criteria pursuant to NH State Law and listed herein. In making a finding, the TAC and the Planning Board shall consider all standards provided in Articles 3 through 11 of these regulations.

	Site Plan Review Regulations Section 2.9 Evaluation Criteria	Finding (Meets Standard/Criteria)	Supporting Information
1	Compliance with all City Ordinances and Codes and these regulations.  Applicable standards:	Meets Does Not Meet	Applicable standards:  Site Plan Review Regulations Section 2.15.1 – Minor amendment for after-the- fact review and administrative approval.  Zoning Ordinance Article 10, Environmental Protection Standards, Section 1017.60 - Public and Private Utilities within Rights-of-Way in Wetlands and Wetland Buffers.
2	Provision for the safe development, change or expansion of use of the site.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The project does not include any expansion or change in use; a gate will be installed to maintain safe access for utility maintenance on the right-of-way.

	Site Plan Review Regulations Section 2.9 Evaluation Criteria	Finding (Meets Standard/Criteria)	Supporting Information
3	Adequate erosion control and stormwater management practices and other mitigative measures, if needed, to prevent adverse effects on downstream water quality and flooding of the property or that of another.	<u>Meets</u> Does Not Meet	The existing gravel access driveway is stable and perimeter protective measures consisting of silt socks were installed to minimize potential impacts to nearby wetlands. Appropriate erosion and sediment controls will be implemented during the installation of the gate.
4	Adequate protection for the quality of groundwater.	The project does not include any expansion or increase in develope areas. Adequate water quality prowere implemented during the utility maintenance project and the progate will not affect groundwater of	
5	Adequate and reliable water supply sources.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The project does not include any expansion or increase in developed areas. Adequate water quality protects were implemented during the utility maintenance project and the proposed gate will not affect groundwater quantity.
6	Adequate and reliable sewage disposal facilities, lines, and connections.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive do not affect sewage facilities on the site.
7	Absence of undesirable and preventable elements of pollution such as smoke, soot, particulates, odor, wastewater, stormwater, sedimentation or any other discharge into the environment which might prove harmful to persons, structures, or adjacent properties.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The project does not include any expansion or increase in developed areas. Adequate water quality protects were implemented during the utility maintenance project and the existing gravel access drive is stable.
8	Adequate provision for fire safety, prevention and control.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive do not affect fire safety, prevention, or control.

	Site Plan Review Regulations	Finding	Supporting Information	
	Section 2.9 Evaluation Criteria	(Meets Standard/Criteria)		
9	Adequate protection of natural features such as, but not limited to, wetlands.	<u>Meets</u> Does Not Meet	The project does not include any expansion or increase in developed areas. Water quality protects were implemented during the utility maintenance project to minimize potential impacts to nearby wetlands. Appropriate erosion and sediment controls will be implemented during the installation of the gate.	
10	Adequate protection of historical features on the site.	Meets  Does Not Meet	A "no affect" finding was provided by the NH Division of Historical Resources during their review of the 2023/2024 utility maintenance project.	
11	Adequate management of the volume and flow of traffic on the site and adequate traffic controls to protect public safety and prevent traffic congestion.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive do not affect traffic flow.	
12	Adequate traffic controls and traffic management measures to prevent an unacceptable increase in safety hazards and traffic congestion off-site.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive do not affect traffic flow.	
13	Adequate insulation from external noise sources.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive do not generate noise or affect external noise.	
14	Existing municipal solid waste disposal, police, emergency medical, and other municipal services and facilities adequate to handle any new demands on infrastructure or services created by the project.	<u>Meets</u> Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive do create any new demand for municipal services or public facilities.	
15	Provision of usable and functional open spaces of adequate proportions, including needed recreational facilities that can reasonably be provided on the site	<u>Meets</u> Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive are limited to Eversource's maintenance of the utility right of way and not reasonably available for functional open space or recreational opportunity.	

	Site Plan Review Regulations Section 2.9 Evaluation Criteria	Finding (Meets Standard/Criteria)	Supporting Information
16	Adequate layout and coordination of on-site accessways and sidewalks in relationship to off-site existing or planned streets, accessways, bicycle paths, and sidewalks.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The proposed gate and access drive are limited to Eversource's maintenance of the utility right of way and not reasonably available for public access.
17	Demonstration that the land indicated on plans submitted with the application shall be of such character that it can be used for building purposes without danger to health.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The project does not include any expansion or change in use; a gate will be installed to maintain safe access for utility maintenance on the right-of-way.
18	Adequate quantities, type or arrangement of landscaping and open space for the provision of visual, noise and air pollution buffers.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The project does not include any landscaping or open space; a gate will be installed to maintain safe access for utility maintenance on the right-of-way.
19	Compliance with applicable City approved design standards.	Meets  Does Not Meet	The gravel access drive and proposed gate on Portsmouth Ford's parcel represents a Minor Amendment to the current Site Plan.

#### Other Board Findings:

- Work was completed by Eversource on the subject property in 2024 under a
  Conditional Use Permit (CUP) granted by the City on June 22, 2023 (LU-23-60).
  Eversource replaced forty-five (45) wooden utility structures with steel structures on the
  E194 and U181 Lines in Portsmouth and Newington.
- The CUP permitted direct impacts to the adjacent wetland and to the wetland buffer.
  Following CUP approval, Eversource obtained landowner authorization from the
  Portsmouth Ford to access the right-of-way directly from Echo Avenue. As such,
  Structures 19 and 19 (E194 and U181) were accessed by a more direct route with no
  wetland impacts.
- Review and after-the-fact approval of an updated CUP with the amended wetland buffer impact has been requested by Eversource to the City of Portsmouth Conservation Commission and Planning Board under separate cover.
- Eversource proposes to retain the constructed access to Structures 19 and 19 (E194 and U181) for future maintenance and emergency repairs.
- Where permanent access through the buffer to Structures 19 is requested, the existing boulder barricade will be replaced with a steel gate, resulting in a change to Portsmouth Ford's previously approved Site Plan.

# Findings of Fact | Wetland Conditional Use Permit City of Portsmouth Planning Board

Date: <u>June 18, 2025</u>

Property Address: 400 Spaulding Tpke.

Application #: LU-25-50

Decision: ☐ Approve ☐ Deny ☐ Approve with Conditions

#### Findings of Fact:

Per RSA 676:3, I: The local land use board shall issue a final written decision which either approves or disapproves an application for a local permit and make a copy of the decision available to the applicant. The decision shall include specific written findings of fact that support the decision. Failure of the board to make specific written findings of fact supporting a disapproval shall be grounds for automatic reversal and remand by the superior court upon appeal, in accordance with the time periods set forth in RSA 677:5 or RSA 677:15, unless the court determines that there are other factors warranting the disapproval. If the application is not approved, the board shall provide the applicant with written reasons for the disapproval. If the application is approved with conditions, the board shall include in the written decision a detailed description of all conditions necessary to obtain final approval.

In order to grant Wetland Conditional Use permit approval the Planning Board shall find the application satisfies criteria set forth in the Section 10.1017.50 (Criteria for Approval) of the Zoning Ordinance

	Zoning Ordinance Sector 10.1017.50 Criteria for Approval	Finding (Meets Criteria for Approval)	Supporting Information
1	1. The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.	Meets  Does Not  Meet	This work was part of a previously approved project that had previously approved impact to the wetland for access to Eversource's Pole #19. The actual work that occurred eliminated the impact to the wetland resource and shifted impacts to the wetland buffer.
2	2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.	Meets Does Not Meet	The poles that had to be replaced are located directly within the wetland buffer behind the Ford Dealership. To access the poles, there is no way to bring in equipment without entering into the buffer.

	Zoning Ordinance Sector 10.1017.50 Criteria for Approval	Finding (Meets Criteria for Approval)	Supporting Information	
3	3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.	After work on replacing the poles finished, the work pad directly under the poles was naturally revegetated which is the area adjacent to the wetland to the north. The most adverse impact of this project is the permanence of the crushed gravel access road leading to the poles. This was left in place for future maintenance needs but a silt soxx buffers it from the wetland to the south, which should remain as a permanent installation with replacement over time as needed.		
4	4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.	Meets  Does Not  Meet	The temporary alteration to the buffer that occurred as part of this work included the work pad underneath the poles. This area has been allowed to naturally revegetate, which has since occurred. The access road has altered the natural vegetative state but it was noted during the site walk that vegetation is already growing through it and a silt soxx remains in place to protect the adjacent wetland. This seems sufficient for buffering the wetland from the permanent impacts of the accessway.	
5	5. The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.	Meets Does Not Meet	When this violation of the original permit was first noticed, the work pad had not yet revegetated, and the access road contained many layers of crushed gravel for accessing the poles and for parking Ford Dealership vehicles off lot. Since this occurred, an agreement has been made to prevent future parking of vehicles within this area, a silt soxx has been replaced south of the accessway to prevent impact to the wetland, the property owners have removed a large amount of gravel from the accessway, and the work pad has started to naturally revegetate.	

	Zoning Ordinance Sector 10.1017.50 Criteria for Approval	Finding (Meets Criteria for Approval)	Supporting Information
6	6. Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.	Meets Does Not Meet	The work pad area has been returned to a natural state and while it is not feasible to allow full revegetation of the accessway due to future needs for maintenance, most of the crushed gravel has been removed which created a much thinner layer of impact to the buffer, allowing vegetation to poke through in some areas.
7	Other Board Findings:		



## City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire

## Wetland Conditional Use Permit Application Checklist

This wetland conditional use permit application checklist is a tool designed to assist the applicant in the planning process and for preparing the application for Conservation Commission and Planning Board review. The checklist is required to be uploaded as part of your wetland conditional use permit application to ensure a full and complete application is submitted to the Planning and Sustainability Department and to the online portal. A pre-application conference with a member of the Planning and Sustainability Department is encouraged as additional project information may be required depending on the size and scope of the project. The applicant is cautioned that this checklist is only a guide and is not intended to be a complete list of all wetland conditional use permit requirements. Please refer to Article 10 of the City of Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance for full details.

**Applicant Responsibilities:** Applicable fees are due upon application submittal to the Planning Board (no fees are required for Conservation Commission submission). The application will be reviewed by Planning and Sustainability Department staff to determine completeness. Incomplete applications which do not provide required information for the evaluation of the proposed site development shall not be provided review by the Conservation Commission or Planning Board.

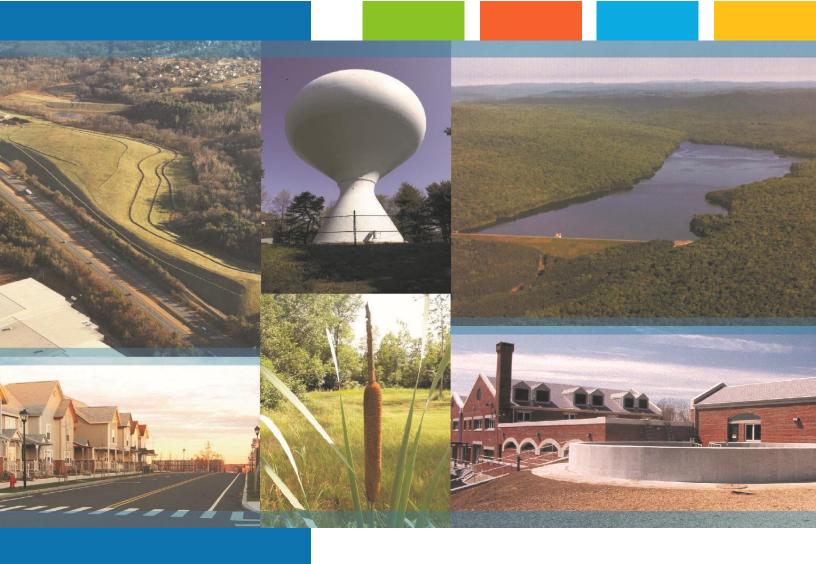
Name of Applicant: Eversource Energy	Date Submitted: <u>03/25/2025</u>
Application # (in City's online permitting): LU-25-50	
Site Address: 400 Spaulding Turnpike	$_{Map:}^{238}$ $_{Lot:}^{2}$

Ø	Required Items for Submittal	Item Location (e.g. Page or Plan Sheet/Note #)
<b>'</b>	Complete <u>application</u> form submitted via the City's web-based permitting program	Section 2.1, Page 2-1
<b>'</b>	All application documents, plans, supporting documentation, this checklist and other materials uploaded to the application form in OpenGov in digital <b>Portable Document Format (PDF)</b> . One hard copy of all plans and materials shall be submitted to the Planning and Sustainability Department by the published deadline.	online 03/25/2025; hard copy 04/17/2025; Section 4, Page 4-1

V	Required Items for Submittal	Item Location (e.g. Page/line or Plan Sheet/Note #)
<b>'</b>	Basic property and wetland resource information. (10.1017.21)	Section 2.1, Page 2-1
<b>'</b>	Additional information required for projects proposing greater than 250 square feet of permanent or temporary impacts. (10.1017.22)	Section 2.2, Page 2-1; Section 4.1.1, Page 4-2; Appendix B
<b>V</b>	Demonstrate impacts as they relate to the criteria for approval set forth in Section 10.1017.50 (or Section 10.1017.60 in the case of utility installation in a right-of-way).  (10.1017.23)	online 03/25/2025; hard copy 04/17/2025; Section 4, Page 4-1
<b>'</b>	Balance impervious surface impacts with removal and/or wetland buffer enhancement plan. (10.1017.24)	Section 4.1.2, Page 4-2

$\square$	Required Items for Submittal	Item Location (e.g. Page/line or Plan Sheet/Note #)
•	Wetland buffer enhancement plan. (10.1017.25)	Section 4.1.2, Page 4-2
	Living shoreline strategy provided for tidal wetland and/or tidal buffer impacts. (10.1017.26)	N/A
<b>V</b>	Stormwater management must be in accordance with Best Management Practices including but not limited to:  1. New Hampshire Stormwater Manual, NHDES, current version.  2. Best Management Practices to Control Non-point Source Pollution:  A Guide for Citizens and City Officials, NHDES, January 2004.  (10.1018.10)	Section 4.2.1, 4.3.2, Page 4-2; project plans, Appendix A
	Vegetated Buffer Strip slope of greater than or equal to 10%. (10.1018.22)	N/A
	Removal or cutting of vegetation, use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. (10.1018.23/10.1018.24/10.1018.25)	N/A
	All new pavement within a wetland buffer shall be porous pavement. (10.1018.31)	N/A
	An application that proposes porous pavement in a wetland buffer shall include a pavement maintenance plan.  (10.1018.32)	N/A
	Permanent wetland boundary markers shall be shown on the plan submitted with an application for a conditional use permit and shall be installed during project construction.  (10.1018.40)	N/A
Ø	Requested Items for Submittal	Item Location (e.g. Page or Plan Sheet/Note #)
<b>'</b>	A narrative/letter addressed to the Conservation Commission Chair (if recommended to Planning Board then an additional narrative addressed to the Planning Board Chair at that time) describing the project and any proposed wetland and/or wetland buffer impacts. Please visit the <a href="WCUP">WCUP</a> instruction page for further application instructions.	online 03/25/2025; hard copy 04/17/2025
<b>V</b>	If New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Standard Dredge and Fill Permit is required for this work, please provide this permit application at the same time as your submission for a Wetland Conditional Use Permit.	NHDES Utility SPN 2022-03496, received 10/06/2023

Applicant's Signature: Stefam M. Tutreauct Date: 05/02/2025



E194 and U181 Structure Replacement Project Echo Avenue, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

# CITY OF PORTSMOUTH AFTER-THE-FACT CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Eversource Energy 13 Legends Drive Hooksett, New Hampshire

March 2025

Tighe&Bond





E5034-200 May 30, 2025

Rick Chellman, Chair City of Portsmouth Planning Board 1 Junkins Avenue Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801

Re: Eversource E194 and U181 Structure Replacement Project
After-the-Fact Wetland Conditional Use Permit
Echo Avenue, Portsmouth, NH

Dear Mr. Chellman and Members of the Planning Board:

On behalf of Eversource Energy dba Public Service Company of New Hampshire (Eversource), Tighe & Bond is submitting the following after-the-fact Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the above referenced project.

This work was completed under an existing CUP which was granted on June 22, 2023 (LU-23-60). Eversource Energy replaced forty-five (45) wooden utility structures with steel structures on the E194 and U181 Lines in Portsmouth and Newington, due to their overall age and condition. As part of the approved access to Structures 19 and 19 (E194 and U181), the CUP permitted 6,286 square feet (SF) of impacts to the adjacent wetland and 1,644 SF of impacts to the wetland buffer.

Following City approval and the issuance of the CUP, Eversource obtained landowner authorization from the Portsmouth Ford auto dealership to access the right-of-way (ROW) directly from Echo Avenue. As such, construction deviated from what was permitted by the CUP in this area, and both structures were accessed by a more direct route with no wetland impacts. This re-route eliminated direct wetland impacts; however, impacts within the wetland buffer increased from the permitted 1,644 SF to an as-built total of 3,685 SF.

Enclosed is a project description and supporting documents for a request to permit after-the-fact wetland buffer impacts associated with the constructed access to Structures 19, including project mapping, the Wetland Resource Area Description and Assessment Report that was included in the original 2023 CUP application, and representative site photographs.

The Conservation Commission reviewed this CUP at its meeting on May 14, 2025, and voted to recommend approval of this application to the Planning Board with the following conditions:

- 1. In accordance with Section 10.1018.40 of the Zoning Ordinance, applicant shall permanently install wetland boundary markers, which may be purchased through the City of Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department. The Commission recommends placing two markers on either side of the proposed gate at the bottom of the access road. These markers must be installed prior to the start of any work.
- 2. Applicant shall include a note on this plan set to indicate that parking and/or vehicle storage is prohibited in this accessway unless required for utility maintenance by Eversource.

Pursuant to Condition #1, wetland boundary markers will be installed on either side of the proposed gate prior to the start of work. Pursuant to Condition #2, the Site Plan has been updated to include the suggested note regarding parking and/or vehicle storage being prohibited. A copy of the updated Site Plan (dated January 7, 2025, revised through May 27,



2025) was filed with the City Planning Department and uploaded to the City's online permit system on May 28, 2025.

We trust the enclosed information addresses the requirements for the CUP application and site plan approval. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at (603) 231-9918 or at STetreault@tighebond.com.

Respectfully,

TIGHE & BOND, INC.

Stefanie M. Tetreault Project Manager

Enclosures

Copy: Conservation Commission, City of Portsmouth

Ashley Friend, Licensing and Permitting, Eversource Energy

4.3

## Filing Fee Check (File Copy)

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Tighe&Bond

#### **Appendices**

- A Project Mapping
- B 2023 Wetland Resource Area Description and Assessment Report
- C Site Photographs



# FILE COPY

FILE COPY

# **Check Details**

Check issued: 01/30/2025 Check number: 9036 From: Tighe & Bond, Inc.

**Amount:** \$1,300.00

Payable to: City of Portsmouth

**Delivered to:** jdegler@tighebond.com **Documents:** Yes - see Remittance below

**Message from sender:** Hi, attached is your Tighe & Bond electronic check. Any questions please email

AP@tighebond.com.

## **Notes**

# Activity

ACTIVITY TYPE	TIME	DATE	
Tracy Houle issued check 9036	08:13 AM EST	01/31/2025	
Check 9036 printed by Jeremy Degler	16:44 PM EDT	03/13/2025	
Check 9036 file copy printed by Jeremy Degler	16:45 PM EDT	03/13/2025	

# Section 1 Project Description

From October 2023 through June 2024, Eversource Energy replaced forty-five (45) wooden utility structures with steel structures on the E194 and U181 Transmission Lines in Portsmouth and Newington, due to their overall age and condition. Forty-two (42) of these structures were located within Portsmouth. These included Structures 13-16, 19, 37-41, 43-45, 48-54, 65.5 and 66 on the U181 Line, and Structures 12-14, 19, 41-53, 65.5, and 66 on the E194 Line. Additionally, static wire work was conducted at STRs 65-67 on the U181 and STRs 65-67 on the E194. The proposed structure replacements were required to maintain the safety and reliability of the existing transmission system.

This work was completed under an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) which was granted on June 22, 2023 (LU-23-60). As part of the approved access to Structures 19 and 19 (E194 and U181), the CUP permitted 6,286 square feet (SF) of impacts to the adjacent wetland and 1,644 SF of impacts to the wetland buffer.

Following City approval and the issuance of the CUP, Eversource obtained landowner authorization from the Portsmouth Ford auto dealership to access the right-of-way (ROW) directly from Echo Avenue. As such, construction deviated from what was permitted by the CUP in this area, and both structures were accessed by a more direct route with no wetland impacts. This re-route resulted in a total elimination of the direct wetland impacts; however, impacts within the wetland buffer increased from the permitted 1,644 SF to an as-built total of 3,685 SF.

The following narrative describes existing conditions and the completed activities within jurisdictional areas. Project Mapping is provided in Appendix A, the Wetland Resource Area Description and Assessment Report that was in the original 2023 CUP application is included in Appendix B, and representative photographs of the project area are found in Appendix C.

# Section 2 Existing Conditions

### 2.1 Project Site

The E194 and U181 transmission lines originate at the Newington Substation off Gosling Road in Newington and run southwest of the Piscataqua River. The lines then extend southeast, parallel with Route 4 before turning southwest again, parallel with Interstate 95. The lines continue southwest through Great Bog in Portsmouth before turning west and terminating at the Ocean Road Substation in Greenland. The topography is generally flat throughout the right-of-way (ROW) with slight depressions and hills located in the less developed reaches. The areas surrounding the ROW are mostly commercial, industrial, and residential, with some large portions of forested and wetland areas closer to the Greenland town line.

The proposed limit of work covered by this after-the-fact CUP is the constructed access route to Structures 19 and 19 (E194 and U181). This work area is located northeast of Echo Avenue, directly across from the Portsmouth Ford automotive dealership. Based on review of aerial imagery, access from Echo Avenue in this location has historically been used for routine ROW maintenance and vehicle storage from Portsmouth Ford. Representative site photographs are provided in Appendix C.

#### 2.2 Jurisdictional Wetland Resource Areas

There are multiple wetland resource areas within this portion of the E194 and U181 ROW corridor. Jurisdictional wetland resource areas within the project area were identified and delineated on December 21, 2022, and January 4, 9, and 17, 2023 by Tighe & Bond wetland scientists, including a New Hampshire Certified Wetland Scientist. Refer to the Wetland Resource Area Description and Assessment Report that was included in the original 2023 CUP application provided in Appendix B for a detailed description of these areas.

#### 2.2.1 Wetlands

Wetlands within the project area are characterized as a mixture of palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS) and palustrine emergent (PEM) systems. These wetlands are situated within disturbed areas in the ROW, surrounded by development. The original CUP permitted 6,286 SF of impacts to the adjacent southern wetland. The as-built conditions eliminated all direct impacts to wetlands.

#### 2.2.2 100-foot Buffer Zone

The 100-foot Buffer Zone within the project area consists of the existing maintained ROW and impervious area (e.g., parking lots and roadways), with some upland areas in and adjacent to the ROW. The original CUP permitted 1,644 SF of impacts to the adjacent southern wetland buffer. The as-built conditions resulted in a net increase of impacts to the wetland buffer, up to 3,685 SF.

# **Section 3 Completed Activities**

### 3.1 Structure Replacement and Maintenance

The structure replacements consisted of drilling holes up to four feet in diameter and the installation of a steel caisson into each hole approximately 15 to 20 feet (10% of structure height plus 2 feet) below the ground surface. The new poles were placed into the caissons and backfilled with clean, suitable materials. Spoils generated from the drilling operations were placed in appropriate upland areas at least 100 feet away from wetland areas and then stabilized.

Once the new poles were installed, old poles were then removed by cutting them below the ground surface. The old poles, cross-arms, wires, and accessory equipment were removed and disposed off-site. The pole butts associated with the existing poles were only removed if they impacted the structural integrity of the new poles.

#### 3.2 Access

Access road improvements and development were needed to provide reliable access for the proposed work. As part of the approved access to Structures 19, the CUP permitted 6,286 SF of impacts to the adjacent southern wetland and 1,644 SF of impacts to the wetland buffer.

Following City approval and the issuance of the CUP, Eversource obtained landowner authorization from the Portsmouth Ford auto dealership to access the ROW directly from Echo Avenue. As such, Structures 19 were accessed by a more direct route. This route resulted in a total elimination of the direct wetland impacts; however, impacts within the wetland buffer increased from the permitted 1,644 SF to an as-built total of 3,685 SF.

Where permanent access through the buffer to Structures 19 is requested under this CUP, the existing boulder barricade will be replaced with a steel gate. This will prevent further encroachment within the buffer and limit use to future maintenance and emergency repairs within the ROW at Structures 19.

#### 3.3 Work Pad Construction

The proposed project included the construction of 100-foot by 100-foot gravel work pads to provide level and stable surfaces needed to facilitate the structure installations. Work pads in upland areas were constructed using crushed stone, top-dressed with 1.5- to 3-inch diameter clean stone. 68 SF of wetland impact was permitted to construct suitable work pads at Structures 19, though during construction, wetland impacts were avoided altogether. Areas of soil disturbance around the work pads were stabilized with seed and straw mulch.

### 3.4 Construction Sequence

The work began in October of 2023 and was completed in June 2024. The following is a description of the general construction sequence. The actual sequence and schedule was determined by the selected contractor(s).

- Install sediment and erosion controls
- Upgrade access roads and build work pads, install construction mats where needed
- Conduct structure replacements
- Remove construction mats and stabilize/restore disturbed areas
- Stabilize exposed soils within the ROW
- Remove erosion and sedimentation controls following stabilization

Pending review and approval of the proposed activities, Eversource will replace the existing boulder barricade with a steel gate. Appropriate construction-period best management practices will be implemented to minimize potential impacts to the nearby wetland resource areas.

#### 3.5 Protective Measures

Work was performed utilizing the latest *Best Management Practices Manual for Utility Maintenance in and Adjacent to Wetlands and Waterbodies in New Hampshire* (NH DNCR 2019) to limit impacts to the environment. Perimeter protective measures consisting of silt fence, straw wattles, and/or straw bales were installed around the structure to minimize potential impacts to the nearby wetland resource areas. Water bars were also installed in areas of road improvements and in areas with steep slopes as identified by the contractor. Areas of disturbed soil were mulched with hay or straw following the completion of work. No equipment or material was stored within wetland resource areas. Erosion controls were implemented during construction, as noted on the project plans in Appendix A, to minimize any potential impacts during construction.

# Section 4 Regulatory Compliance

### 4.1 City of Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance - Article 10

Work was completed in compliance with the requirements set forth in the City of Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance (Article 10, Environmental Protection Standards). The work complied with the criteria set forth in Article 10, Section 1017.60, Public and Private Utilities within Rights-of-Way in Wetlands and Wetland Buffers, discussed below.

(1) The proposed construction is in the public interest;

The construction was in the public interest, as these structure replacements are necessary to continue reliable transmission of public utilities.

(2) Design, construction, and maintenance methods will utilize best management practices to minimize any detrimental impact of such use upon the wetland and will include restoration of the site as nearly as possible to its original grade, condition, and vegetated state;

Eversource utilized Best Management Practices, as described in Section 3.5, during construction to mitigate impacts to wetland resource areas. Following construction, disturbed areas were restored to previously existing conditions, where feasible. Where access was constructed to Structures 19 through the buffer, Eversource proposes to retain this impact area after-the-fact, for future maintenance and emergency repairs, as shown on the attached Site Plans in Appendix A.

(3) No alternative feasible route exists which does not cross or alter a wetland or have less detrimental impact on a wetland; and

The work was designed in consideration of environmental impacts. The replacement activities were limited to the existing maintained ROW and limits of work were established to allow only for work necessary to complete the structure replacements. Access to the structures was primarily by utilizing existing access routes in previously disturbed areas to replace the existing infrastructure. Work associated with the replacement of Structures 19 resulted in no direct wetland impacts. The after-the-fact impact proposed by this CUP application was necessary to achieve a direct route to the replacement structures once landowner authorization was obtained, and resulted in 2,041 SF of additional impact to the buffer, beyond what was originally approved. Overall, the as-built condition resulted in the least overall impact on the wetland, as shown on the attached Site Plans in Appendix A.

(4) Alterations of natural vegetation of managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.

There was no proposed alteration of woodland vegetation, as all work was within the maintained extent of the ROW. As noted above, the limits of work were established to allow work only necessary to complete the structure replacements; where access was constructed to Structures 19 through the buffer, Eversource proposes to retain this impact area after-the-fact, for future maintenance and emergency repairs, as shown on the attached Site Plan in Appendix A.

#### 4.1.1 Wetland Functions and Values Assessment

Pursuant to Article 10, Section 1017.22 of the City of Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance, a project that proposes the temporary or permanent alteration of greater than 1,000 square feet of wetland and greater than 250 square feet of wetland buffer requires a function and values assessment and wetland buffer description. A copy of the Wetland Resource Area Description and Assessment Report, including those for the Echo Avenue Wetlands, that was included in the original 2023 CUP application provided in Appendix B.

#### 4.1.2 Wetland Buffer Impervious Surface Impacts

Impacts resulting from the construction of gravel access paths to work pads will not increase impervious surfaces within wetland buffers. A wetland buffer enhancement plan is not feasible due to the nature of the proposed work and the need to retain viable access for future maintenance within the ROW. Vegetation within the ROW is routinely maintained and access will be necessary for future utility maintenance.

#### 4.2 State Permits

#### 4.2.1 Alteration of Terrain

The overall project exceeded 100,000 square feet of earth moving activities and as such required an Alteration of Terrain (AoT) permit from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) AoT Bureau. This permit was obtained on July 29, 2023 (AoT-2427).

#### 4.2.2 Utility Statutory Permit-by-Notification

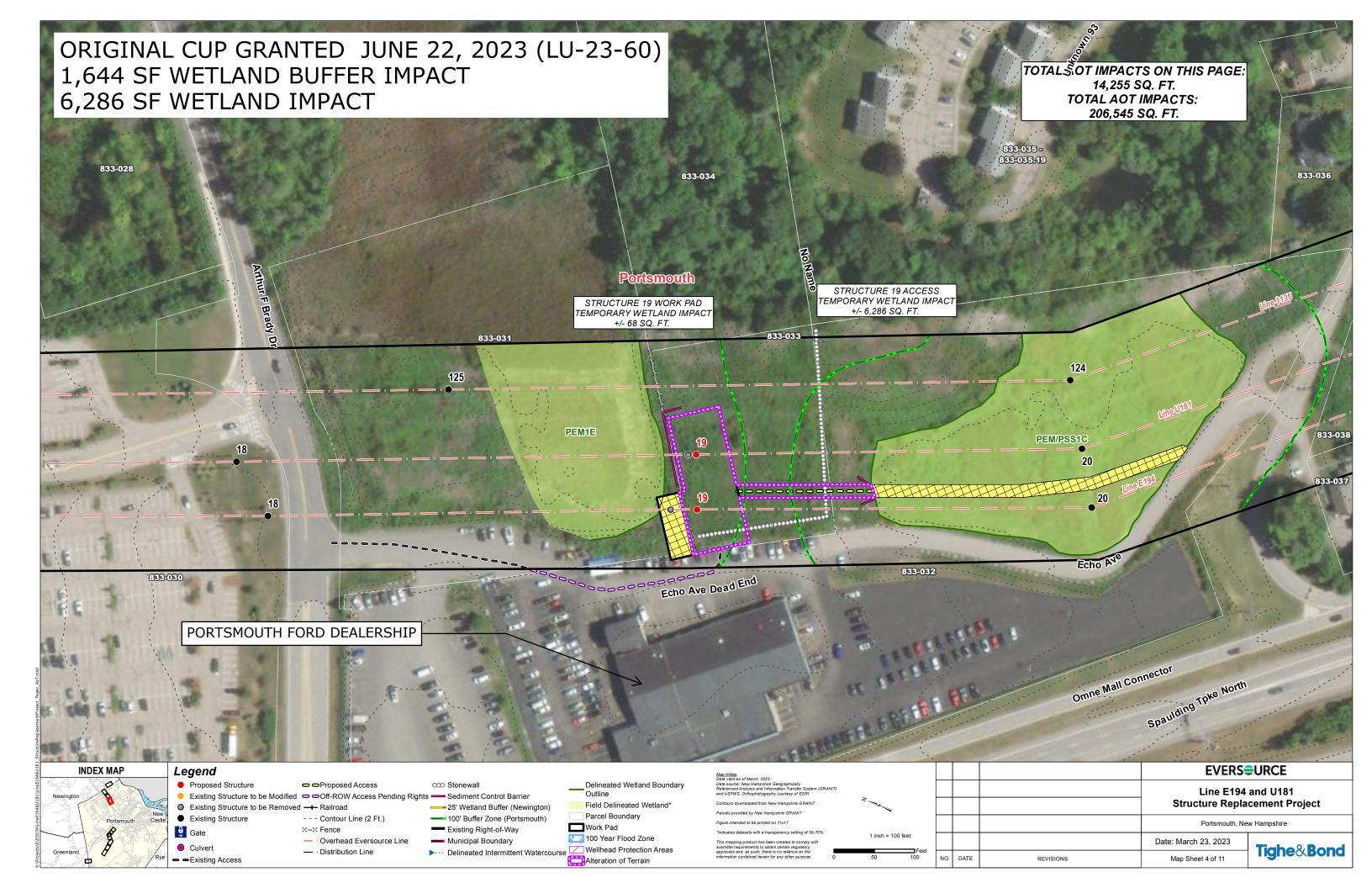
This project included direct impacts to wetlands and waters of the state, and thus required authorization under NH RSA § 482-A. Utility Statutory Permit-by-Notification applications were filed in September 2023 for each municipality where work was completed (NHDES file numbers 2022-03511 and 2022-03496).

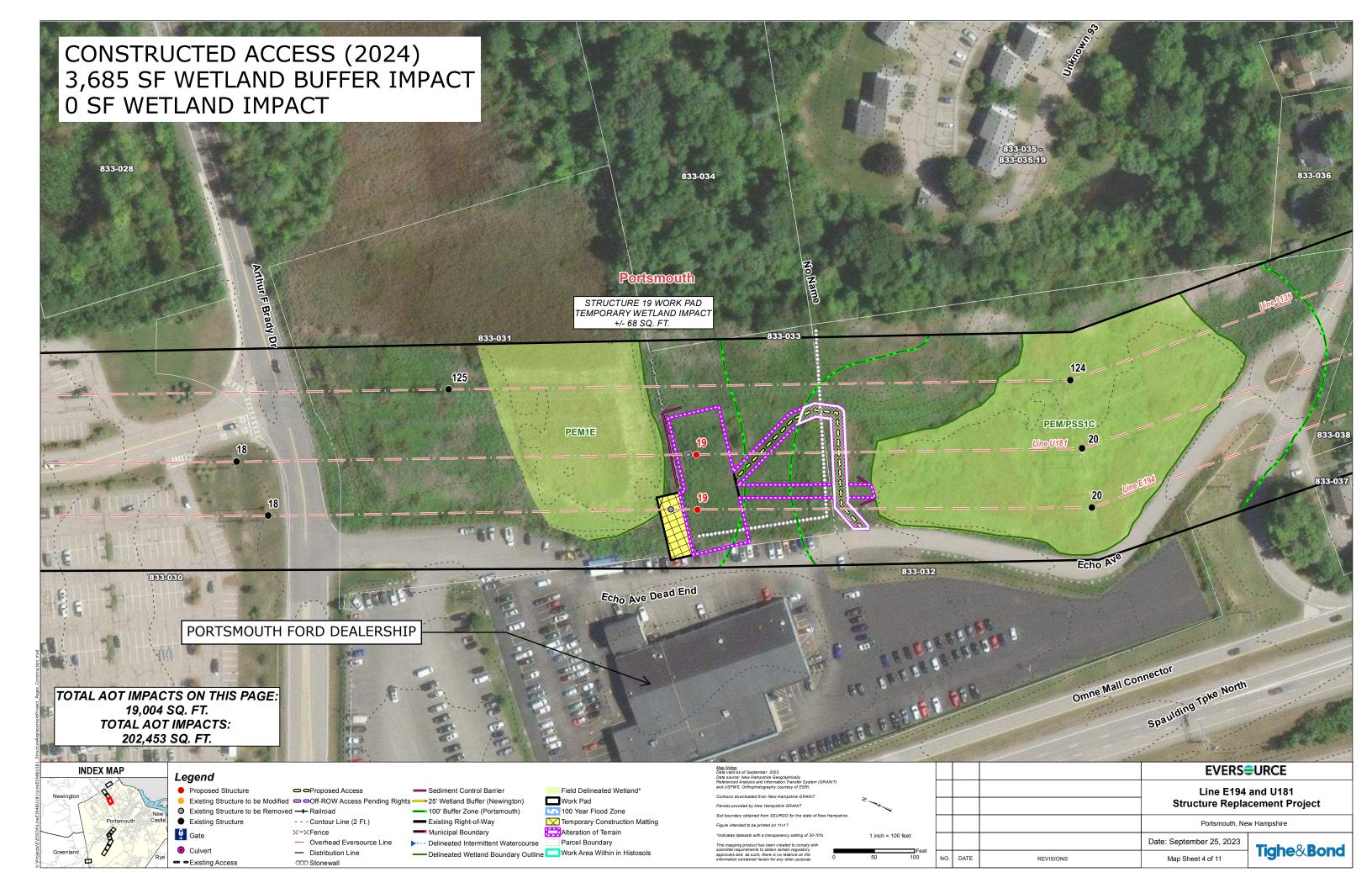
#### 4.3 Federal Permits

#### 4.3.1 EPA 2022 Construction General Permit

The total of work completed exceeded one acre of earth moving activities and required a Construction General Permit (CGP) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A Notice of Intent (NOI) and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) was completed in September 2023, at least 14 days prior to the start of construction. The project was monitored by a SWPPP inspector throughout the duration of construction.

**APPENDIX A** 





**APPENDIX B** 

# E194 & U181 Structure Replacement Project Wetland Resource Area Description and Assessment

**To:** Katy Wilkins, Project Manager, Tighe & Bond, Inc.

**FROM:** Julia Novotny, Environmental Scientist, Tighe & Bond, Inc.

Jeremy Degler, Project Environmental Scientist, CWS, PWS, CWB,

Tighe & Bond, Inc.

**DATE:** March 22, 2023

On December 21, 2022 and January 4, 9, and 17, 2023, Tighe & Bond wetland scientists conducted a wetland resource area investigation within and adjacent to the location of the E194 and U181 transmission line right-of-way (ROW) in support of a structure replacement project proposed by Eversource Energy (Eversource). This memorandum presents a summary of the wetland resource areas investigated at the Project Site and a functions and values assessment for these resource areas.

### **Project Location**

The project area consists of the existing maintained transmission line ROW that contains the E194 and U181 Lines. This ROW is comprised of a mixture of impervious area, maintained upland, and wetland. The surrounding landscape areas are comprised of impervious surfaces (e.g., roadways and parking lots), industrial, commercial, and residential areas, in addition to forest and wetlands. The ROW runs from the Newington Substation off Gosling Road to the Ocean Road Substation on the Greenland/Portsmouth border.

### **Methodology of Wetland Resource Investigations**

The wetland delineation was conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in the *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual*, Technical Report Y-87-1 (January 1987), the *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Northcentral and Northeast Region* (January 2012). Locations of wetland boundaries were surveyed using a global positioning system (GPS) unit with sub-meter accuracy.

## **Summary of Jurisdictional Wetland Resource Areas**

The following sections discuss the wetland resource areas identified in the project area and summarize their characteristics.

#### **Vegetated Wetlands**

Multiple wetlands were identified within the E194 and U181 ROW, adjacent to the limits of work. Wetlands identified within the ROW were classified as having the characteristics of both palustrine emergent system with persistent vegetation, and a palustrine scrub-shrub system with broad-leaved deciduous vegetation (PEM1/PSS1).

Common vegetation observed included common reed (*Phragmites australis;* FACW), cattail (*Typha sp.; OBL*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria;* OBL), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis;* FACW), curly dock (*Rumex crispus;* FAC), winterberry (*Ilex verticillata;* FACW), willow (*Salix spp.*), glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus;* FAC), red maple (*Acer rubrum;* FAC), common rush (*Juncus effusus;* OBL), reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea;* FACW), white meadowsweet (*Spirea alba;* FACW), red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea;* FACW), speckled

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alder (*Alnus incana*; FACW), tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*; OBL), brambles (*Rubus spp.*), and goldenrod (*Solidago spp.*)

Two streams were identified in association with the delineated wetlands: an unnamed tributary to the Piscataqua River (Newington) and an unnamed tributary to Pickering Brook in Great Bog (Portsmouth). Many of the wetlands within the project area are disturbed from previous ROW work and surrounding development including from commercial, industrial, and residential areas.

#### 100-foot Buffer Zone (Locally Regulated)

The 100-foot Buffer Zone associated with the wetlands identified in the project area consists of a mixture of impervious area (e.g., paved parking lots, roadways), residential, industrial, and commercial areas, as well as forested areas, and maintained ROW. The percentage of Buffer Zone that is developed, including impervious paved areas, is approximately 40 percent. Non-impervious 100-foot Buffer Zone is mainly comprised of maintained shrubby vegetation within the existing ROW and mixed deciduous and coniferous forest on the ROW boundaries.

#### **Functions and Values Assessment**

#### **Gosling Road and Durgin Lane Wetlands**

Wetlands off Gosling Road and Durgin Lane are surrounded by residential and commercial development. They are classified as palustrine emergent and scrub-shrub systems, mostly dominated by common reed, purple loosestrife, and cattail. These wetlands are situated in depressions and flat, low lying areas and are densely vegetated with pockets of standing water. Flood storage, sediment and toxicant retention, and nutrient retention/removal are likely functions of these wetlands. Due to the location of these wetlands in highly developed areas and the dominance of invasive species, they do not provide good aesthetic qualities and are unlikely to provide good wildlife habitat.

#### **Echo Avenue Wetlands**

Echo Avenue wetlands are characterized as palustrine emergent and palustrine scrub-shrub systems. These wetlands are located directly adjacent to commercial and residential development. They are also located approximately 330 feet northeast of Route 4. These wetlands are densely vegetated and some portions are situated in depressions. Functions associated with these areas include flood storage and sediment and toxicant retention. Due to the location of these wetlands in a developed area and the dominance of invasive species, they do not provide good aesthetic qualities and are unlikely to provide good wildlife habitat.

#### **Borthwick Avenue Wetlands**

The wetlands adjacent to Borthwick Avenue are situated in highly disturbed areas. These wetlands are mainly palustrine emergent systems dominated by common reed and cattail. These wetlands are designated as Prime Wetlands pursuant to NH RSA § 482-A:15.

Dense emergent vegetation and organic soils in these wetlands allow for sediment and toxicant retention. Given the proximity of these wetlands to surrounding development and impervious surfaces and their position on the landscape they are likely important in providing flood storage. These wetlands provide little aesthetic qualities as they are dominated by invasive species that obstruct clear views and are surrounded by impervious area and commercial development.

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#### **Great Bog Wetlands**

The wetlands associated with Great Bog are predominantly palustrine emergent and palustrine scrub-shrub systems. These wetlands are associated with Pickering Brook, which flows northeast to southwest through Great Bog. These wetlands are designated as Prime Wetlands.

Due to the dense vegetation in this wetland and the presence of deep water and organic soils, it likely provides sediment and toxicant retention, as well as nutrient retention and transformation. Additionally, the large size of this wetland complex and its position on the landscape allows for flood storage. Great Bog has historic known occurrences of rare, threatened, and endangered plant species, and has aesthetic qualities and recreational opportunities via adjacent trails. This area likely provides good wildlife habitat as Great Bog is large and relatively unfragmented. The aesthetic quality is partially compromised by the dominance of invasive common reed and purple loosestrife, and the proximity of Great Bog to major roads and highways.

**APPENDIX C** 

### **Photographic Log**



Client: Eversource Energy Job Number: 14-5034-200

E194 & U181 Structure Replacement Project

Site: Portsmouth and Newington, NH

Photograph No.: 1 Date: 1/9/2023 Direction Taken: Northwest

**Description:** Overview of the originally permitted access to Structures 19 on the E194 and U181 Lines (indicated by the arrows). This would have resulted in 6,286 SF of impacts to the pictured wetland.



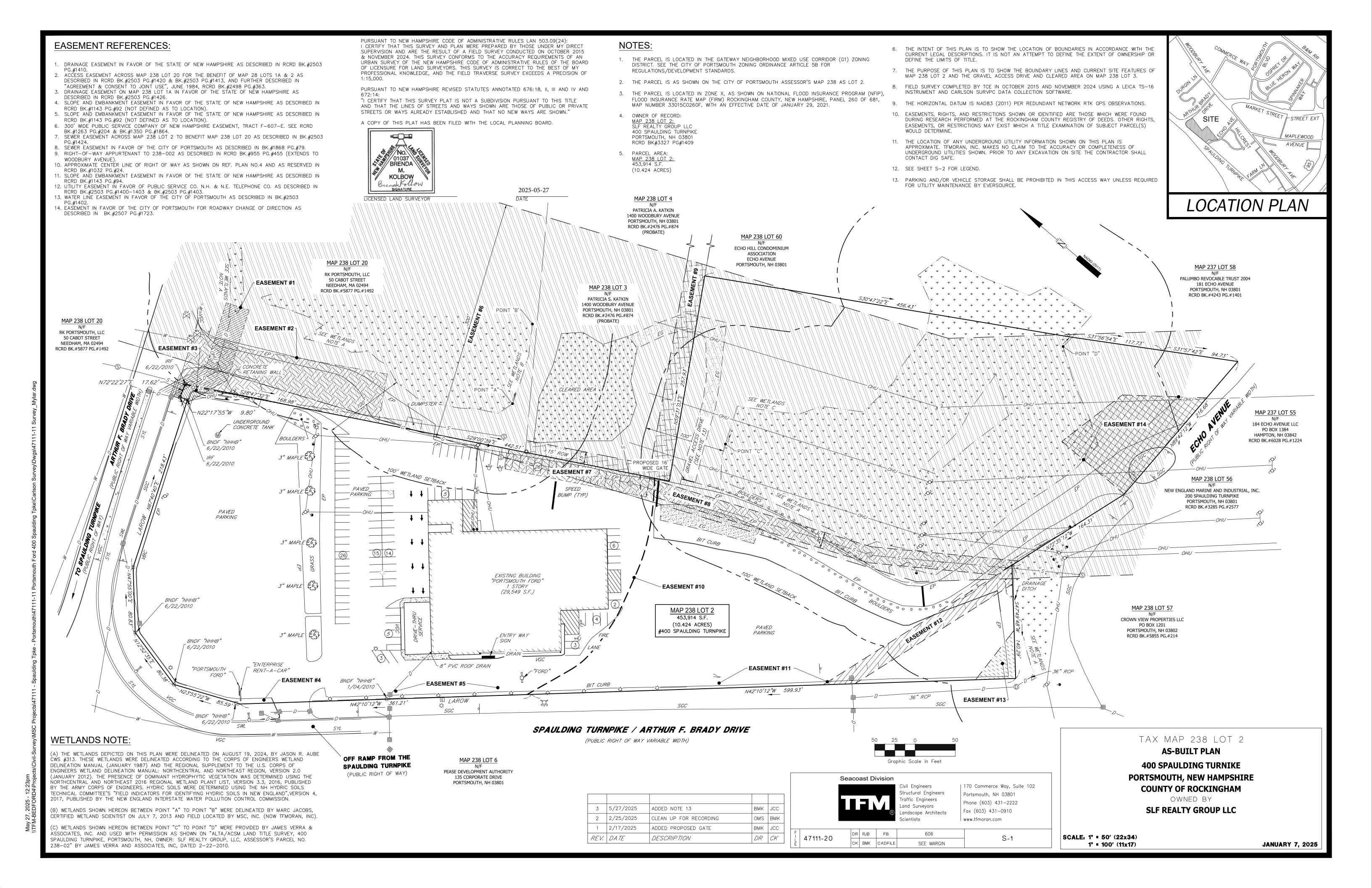
Photograph No.: 2 Date: 3/18/2024 Direction Taken: Northeast

**Description:** Overview of the as-built gravel access to Structures 19 on the E194 and U181 Lines (red arrow). No direct wetland impacts occurred during construction; rather, 3,685 SF of buffer impacts are requested to be retained under this after-the-fact CUP. A steel gate will be installed to replace the existing boulders.



Photographic Log 1

www.tighebond.com



PURSUANT TO NEW HAMPSHIRE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES LAN 503.09(24):
I CERTIFY THAT THIS SURVEY AND PLAN WERE PREPARED BY THOSE UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND ARE THE RESULT OF A FIELD SURVEY CONDUCTED ON OCTOBER 2015 & NOVEMBER 2024. THIS SURVEY CONFORMS TO THE ACCURACY REQUIREMENTS OF AN URBAN SURVEY OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES OF THE BOARD OF LICENSURE FOR LAND SURVEYORS. THIS SURVEY IS CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, AND THE FIELD TRAVERSE SURVEY EXCEEDS A PRECISION OF PURSUANT TO NEW HAMPSHIRE REVISED STATUTES ANNOTATED 676:18, II, III AND IV AND 672:14: "I CERTIFY THAT THIS SURVEY PLAT IS NOT A SUBDIVISION PURSUANT TO THIS TITLE AND THAT THE LINES OF STREETS AND WAYS SHOWN ARE THOSE OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE STREETS OR WAYS ALREADY ESTABLISHED AND THAT NO NEW WAYS ARE SHOWN." A COPY OF THIS PLAT HAS BEEN FILED WITH THE LOCAL PLANNING BOARD.

KOLBOW LICENSED LAND SURVEYOR

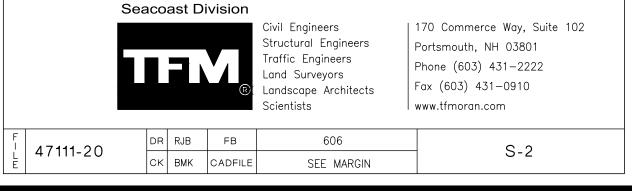
2025-05-27

LEGEND:	
MAP 137 LOT 11	ASSESSORS MAP/ LOT NUMBER
BK. PG. BIT	BOOK/PAGE BITUMINOUS CURB
BNDF EG EP	BOUND FOUND EDGE OF GRAVEL EDGE OF PAVEMENT
IRF LAROW	IRON ROD FOUND LIMITED ACCESS RIGHT OF WAY
PSNH N/F	PUBLIC SERVICE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE NOW OR FORMERLY
NHHB PVC	NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGHWAY BOUND POLYVINYL CHLORIDE
TYP. RCP	TYPICAL REINFORCED CONCRETE PIPE
RCRD	ROCKINGHAM COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS
S.F. SGC	SQUARE FEET SLOPED GRANITE CURB
SWL SYL	SINGLE WHITE LINE SINGLE YELLOW LINE
VBC VGC	VERTICAL BITUMINOUS CURB VERTICAL GRANITE CURB
<b>◎</b> ⊡	IRON PIPE/ROD FOUND BOUND FOUND
•	BOLLARD BOULDER
- <b>①</b>	GUY POLE LIGHT POLE
E C	UTILITY POLE ELECTRIC BOX
↓ □	LIGHT POLE WITH ARM DRAIN MANHOLE
	CATCH BASIN FLAG POLE
	DECIDUOUS TREE
(M)	MANHOLE
(S)	SEWER MANHOLE HANDICAP PARKING
Č.	GAS VALVE
\\$\$\$\$ @ @ ~ \$\\ \\$\$\$\$\$\$	HYDRANT WATER SHUT OFF
××	WATER GATE VALVE
<del></del> 	SIGN OVERHEAD UTILITIES
	CHAINLINK FENCE BOUNDARY LINE
	DRAIN LINE
	SEWER LINE GAS LINE
	WATER LINE EDGE OF WETLAND
	WETLAND SETBACK
	CONCRETE
	GRAVEL
+ + + +	OLEADED ADEA
+ + + +	CLEARED AREA
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	FACENENT #7
	EASEMENT #7
	EASEMENT #8
	п -
	EASEMENT #9
	EASEMENT #12

3	5/27/2025	NO REVISIONS THIS SHEET	вмк	JCC
2	2/25/2025	CLEAN UP FOR RECORDING	OMS	ВМК
1	2/17/2025	NO REVISIONS THIS SHEET	вмк	JCC
REV.	DA TE	DESCRIPTION DESCRIPTION	DR	CK

EASEMENT #13

EASEMENT #14





1. SEE SHEET S-1 FOR AS-BUILT PLAN, NOTES AND LOCATION PLAN.

TAX MAP 238 LOT 2

**AS-BUILT PLAN - LEGEND 400 SPAULDING TURNIKE** PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE **COUNTY OF ROCKINGHAM** OWNED BY

**SLF REALTY GROUP LLC** 

SCALE: 1' = 50' (22x34) 1' = 100' (11x17)

**JANUARY 7, 2025**