

MAIN ST UTILITY POLE REMOVAL -- **Version 7.8.17**

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1. PREFACE, AUTHORSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This material has been prepared by many people, and certainly not by me alone. I am writing it down, but there are many ideas and suggestions in this document which come from other residents, engineers, private school representatives and administrators, and local business-persons. They have all contributed to this scheme, and devoted considerable time to it. I am the messenger and writer, but I am not the sole author. Let that be very clear. This is NOT a one man show.

We wish to thank the Selectmen, Town Administrator and DPW for allowing VHB, the town's consultant traffic engineers, who are responsible for the Main Street Reconstruction Project, to review this proposal. We look forward to their comments on July 11, and to working collaboratively with them in future.

2. CONCEPT DIAGRAMS : Plans 1 & 2 (attachments).

(Diagrams for Plans 3 and 4 will be added later)

See the attachment. It contains two (2) diagrams, not one. It contains diagrams of Plan 1 and Plan 2.

These two diagrams and NOT intended to be engineered plans. They are not to scale. The purpose is to illustrate the intent of these alternative routes for the proposed "trunk route" of new poles, located off of Main St.

However we have far more detailed plans than these ...We have plans down to the scale of individual poles. These details have all been worked out to a schematic level of detail, and in most cases we have the property owners agreement, in principle, to place poles on their land, at no cost to the Town.

Do not let the diagrammatic nature of the plans deceive you into thinking that this is just a "pipe dream", with no substance.---- quite the contrary. It has substance, and it has support of the affected property owners whose lots will contain actual poles of the new trunk route.

3. BASIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

The basic *goal* is to remove all utility poles and wires from the downtown section of Main St.

Why? Because the poles and wires are just plain ugly. They can be moved out of sight of the civic, religious, cultural and business heart of our town ---away from what can be, could be, potentially, a very beautiful Town Center, full of historic significance. Plus a small, but potentially beautiful and successful commercial block, with its own historic buildings.

Dennis Flynn, former President of the Community House Trust, called our town a true "jewel in the rough". And he was right. He has left town, unfortunately, but we, who remain, can continue his goal and polish this jewel so that it shines. That is NOT difficult to do, because we have plenty of experts in this town who can administer this project. What is lacking is our lack of will, and we also face the impending lack of time as the start of street construction approaches, and the unique window of opportunity closes...

The potential beauty of our Town Center can make a huge impact on property values throughout the whole town, as every realtor knows. Visitors come to downtown FIRST, then they look for houses SECOND. Beauty downtown counts, a lot. Why did we save the golf course, which is, after all, very close to downtown? We did it only partially for golf, but MOSTLY IT WAS TO SAVE THE BEAUTY. That was why we first bought it, and then saved it permanently, by putting a Conservation Restriction on it.

So beauty is very, very important. Beauty can encourage new investment and pride in our town.

Why have other towns routinely moved the poles and wires out of their downtown streets? It is obvious. . It is because they have pride, they want to get rid of the ugly stuff, and they need to do that to encourage new investment and revitalization.

This is NOT a new idea. It has been done thousands of times before, for obvious reasons. Now, today, we have this unique opportunity to do it, while massive street reconstruction is underway.

There will not be another chance like this. We will never again be excavating our Main Street to a depth of 3 feet deep, from one side to the other side, for over 1.5 miles, and, in doing so, removing absolutely everything for that entire 1.5 miles -- asphalt, earth, trees, gutters, drains, etc ----- Oh no, my mistake, I take that back, sorry, I meant to say "removing absolutely everything EXCEPT FOR THE POLES, WHICH WILL REMAIN, BUT BE MOVED A FEW FEET, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER..

OK so NOW we see the irony of this project. It is NOT a beautification project at all. It never was. It was to repair drains, install curbs, and increase traffic flow. It was NOT to enhance the beauty and value of our town. That is a very hard and sad thing to admit, but it is true. That is not to say that the street project is not worthwhile, overall, especially because we do not have to pay for it---- the State does. We have decided to accept the "gift" and, in doing so, we have had to swallow hard and obey the rigid State rules, which do not allow the reconstruction project to become a beautification project.

This is despite the very best efforts of the Main St Working Group, which has tried, hard, to add as much beauty to it as they can, while living under the tight State rules. They will replant the trees which will be removed, and more, etc. But overall, they have been forced to tinker around the edges of a massive road asphalt project.

So the visual impact of the Reconstruction project will still, inevitably, leave much to be desired, despite the best efforts of the Working Group, which has done all that is possible under the state rules , AND SPENDING STATE MONEY..

Now we come to the crunch, because we have the ability and authority to do more ---IF WE SPEND OUR OWN MONEY ON IT.

Consider this: The removal of the poles will arguably have a bigger (and certainly more positive) visual impact than all the work of the Street Reconstruction, except at one point – the noticeably larger intersection of Main and Rte 85 After the above-ground elements of the Street surface (such as new curbs) turn dirty with age, then most of the street will look almost exactly the same as it does today. But if we remove the poles now, then they will be gone forever.

Of course, everyone asks --- What will it cost? We will come to that, and it is not that complicated.

4. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The key objectives relate to HOW it is done, in more detail, to get the greatest bang for the buck:

(1) Timing to be coordinated. . It is important to take advantage of the disruption caused by the street reconstruction, by implementing the removal of all poles at the same time. (We do not want to extend the construction period any longer).

(2) The new trunk route must be continuous. For obvious technical reasons, we need to re-connect the two, severed ends of the existing trunk route. The route does NOT have to be straight, like it is today along Main St. Electricity flows in whatever direction the wires run.

(3) To minimize costs. The chief way of reducing cost is to avoid "undergrounding", which is extremely expensive, due to the massive concrete vaults required. Instead, the plan is to remove the entire line of poles which now exists along Main St, in front of buildings, and replace that line of poles with a new line of poles behind buildings.

NOTES on pole locations—see item (5) below

(a): This is NOT a new idea. Many towns and cities do this, including Boston. Numerous small towns throughout New England do this, very effectively. That is why they have lovely towns and villages.

(b) Just because the poles are in back of the buildings does NOT mean that the poles are in the back yard. NO. The poles are outside the entire lot, and only the wires travel across the private lot to the building. The only exceptions to this are the very few lots where we need poles to be within those lots – there is a total of only four (4) such lots, and the owners of all four have agreed, in advance, to allow poles within their lots.

(4) To minimize the number of poles overall.

(5) To locate the new poles so that they cause the least visual intrusion.

(6) To minimize the number of new poles on PRIVATE property, which will, in turn minimize the number of easements required.

There will NOT be giant poles near everyone's back yard. There is a total of 4 poles located within private lots, AND ALL OWNERS of these 4 lots HAVE ALREADY AGREED to provide aerial easements, at no cost, to National Grid, in principle.

90% of lots will have NO need for an intermediate pole within the lot. In some rare cases, it may be more practical for wires to be strung from a pole outside the lot, to a first house, and then from the first house to a second house, etc., with cross easements. The aim is to minimize the number of poles, big and small. Many buildings will be served with cables from poles located on side streets. All pole locations will be subject to public review, and how each house is connected with cables will be discussed individually with each homeowner.

(7) To find a new route for the poles that has an existing (or potential) maintenance driveway, alongside or near to the poles, thus allowing easy maintenance of poles.

(8) To integrate the new scheme into the official "Main Street Reconstruction" Project", so that there is NO delay to start of road construction, and NO jeopardy to the funding of that project.

(9) To manage the implementation of the pole relocation scheme, so that it is designed in parallel (alongside) the street project, and so that it can be implemented with least disruption to the construction of the street.

(10) To implement the scheme so that the existing poles can remain in place, and NEVER be moved temporarily, until they are actually removed permanently, and this must, by necessity, occur AFTER the new poles have been installed and the entire new system has been powered up, thus allowing the existing poles to be removed.

(11) To provide National Grid with the maximum possible financial incentive to cooperate with Town. This financial incentive is uniquely applicable to the town of Southborough because it is ONLY in this particular project that existing poles are to be moved a few feet. National Grid can totally AVOID having to pay for moving existing poles a few feet--- IF it is able to install the new line of poles fast enough to enable it to remove all the existing poles, in their entirety, forever. (The potential cost savings to National Grid could run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars).

5. FUNDING OPTIONS FOR THE TOWN

The method of paying for a new system could be as follows:

(1) The Town to pay National Grid to DESIGN the new system. According to town DPW, this may cost about \$60,000. Several alternative routes will be examined, and obviously National Grid will take into account the Town's suggestions. This will result in one, final, agreed design -- and that final design will be the basis of a detailed cost estimate prepared by National Grid, which will be presented to Town Meeting for consideration of a vote to approve funding the scheme.

The cost is NOT known at this time, but it is certain that it will be far less than undergrounding.

(2) If Town Meeting votes to approve the scheme prepared by National Grid, then National Grid will construct the new system.

Town funding can be from several possible sources, including the following:

(a) Funded by approving a Capital Budget item, typically bonded and paid for over a period of many years, (This is the same manner we would pay for a new bridge).

(b) Funding by adding a very small premium to all electric utility bills, over a period of many years. This is the usual way that municipalities pay for removal of overhead utilities, including undergrounding.

6. PLANS 1 thru 4 ARE ALTERNATIVES

Plans 1 thru 4 are alternatives. You can have Plan 1 OR Plan 2, etc. Or, of course, you can have other (so far unknown), alternative trunk routes proposed by National Grid.

Plans 1 and 2 are exactly the same east of Rte 85. They are different west of Rte 85. Plan 1 has some undergrounding west of Rte 85. Plan 2 has no undergrounding west of Rte 85. Plan 2 utilizes the existing major Transmission Line, providing excellent access for National Grid maintenance trucks.

Plan 3 simply extends Plan 2 further westward, From Parkerville Rd to Deerfoot Rd, in order to include the Burnett House.. However, there are considerable cost disadvantages, and the poles may be too visible from the Burnett House.

Plan 4 differs from Plans 1, 2 and 3, by moving the line from the south to the north side of Main at the start, near Boston rd. This results in less undergrounding (40 ft, versus 300 ft). Plan 4 also greatly shortens the length of utility pole trunk line west of Rte 85.

7. STARTING AND ENDING POINTS OF PROPOSED SYSTEM

The new route starts at Boston Rd, just west of Lamy Insurance. A new line of poles will extend straight west to Park Street, running behind Lamy Insurance, Mauro's Restaurant (the "Spa"), and Mauro's Market (which is soon to be called "Vinny's Downtown Market").

The route passes, in the air, on poles, along Park St to Main St, where there is an existing utility pole. At this pole the cables go down the pole and travel underground, westward, under Main St, for about 300 feet, until they reach another existing utility pole located on the north-east corner of 16 Main St, which is a 3 family house. At the existing pole, located at this north-east corner of # 16, the cables come vertically out of the ground, up this pole, then travel in the air, over the side yard of # 16, to a new pole to be located on the north-east corner of Woodward School land. This proposed pole on Woodward land will be about thirty feet from the existing school playground, but it will NOT interfere with any school or recreation activities.

After the cables reach the new pole in the vicinity of the Woodward playground, the trunk route turns due west, and passes through existing openings in the tree belt (or narrow wood) situated along the northern boundary of the school land. This route will be close to, and parallel with, the school driveway, and it therefore provides excellent accessibility for National Grid maintenance vehicles. The route across Woodward School land ends at Rte 85.

8. PLANS 1 AND 2 - EASEMENTS NECESSARY FOR NEW UTILITY LINE

Between Boston Road and Park St, the line crosses over properties owned by three separate individuals or businesses. Aerial easements will be necessary for cables to cross over these three properties. They are the Lamy Insurance building, Mauro's Restaurant (Spa), and Mauro's Market (Vinny's Downtown Market). The subject of the easements is now being discussed informally with all three property owners, and so far all have readily agreed to provide easements, at no cost. However, this is in concept form, and obviously the technical and legal details need to be worked out, later.

(In fact, for the record, ALL downtown businesses I have spoken to, without exception, support the removal of utility poles, in concept form. The issue is cost, as always).

The easement across # 16 Main has been readily agreed to by that property owner, who would much prefer to have utility poles and cables pass through his east side yard, down to Woodward School, than pass directly in front of his historic building, which was built in the early 1800's --- making it almost 200 years old.

Note that the existing, official "Main St Reconstruction Plan" has the poles and cables located just a few feet from the front facade of 16 Main St (as is the case with ALL other historic properties on the south side of Main St). Ironically, these poles will be moved 5 feet CLOSER to these properties under the official plan.

(Many have asked -- "What is the reason for moving the poles and cables 5 feet closer to these historic buildings? ". The answer is because of rules imposed on the street design by the State Highway Dept. which requires that poles be more than 2.5 feet AWAY from a raised sidewalk curb. This rule totally ignores the fact that Southborough has installed utility poles right on the curb line along many streets, such as Boston Rd, Woodland Rd, Rte 85, and Southville Rd. This has not caused any accidents.)

One more fact about the "official plan" that should be noted here, is that the movement of poles and cables, 5 feet further south, will require the savage cutting of the branches of the tall pin oaks, which will lose all their branches on the side closest to the cables, thereby making these majestic trees look ridiculous.

Therefore it should be no surprise that the property owner of # 16 Main is fully on board with the new proposal to remove all utility poles from Main St. In fact this owner, (who owns literally hundreds of housing units through the Metrowest region) firmly believes that this proposal --- to remove all utility poles and cables from Main Street --- will increase property values throughout Southborough, for the simple reason that the entire downtown will look so dramatically different and better without the utility poles.

9. PLANS 1 AND 2 - WEST OF RTE 85, THE PLANS DIFFER.

PLAN 1 GOES NORTH OF Rte 85, PLAN 2 GOES SOUTH OF Rte 85. After reaching Rte 85, PLAN 1 takes the new trunk route north, up Rte 85, (on new poles which will be paid for and installed, in any event, by the Main Street Reconstruction Project).

SHORT UNDERGROUNDING UNDER MAIN ST, AT RTE 85

There is compelling reason to place a short section of cables underground where Rte 85 crosses Main St. Of course, the cables could remain overhead, and pass over Main St, but let us face the facts squarely, and not try to dodge them. The facts are that this new intersection is going to be doubled in asphalt area, and have multiple traffic lanes, and handle far greater traffic volumes, and it will have multiple, new traffic signals, all hanging on metal arms over the street. This will, unfortunately, look very UNattractive, but it is unavoidable. It is the price we must pay for having the street project State funded.

The Main Street Working Group has tried very hard to minimize the impact of this intersection. For instance, the metal signal poles and mast arms are going to be painted light green or blue, in a worthy attempt to hide them visually. They will not be the ugly and visually intrusive "black" used at the signals on Rte 85, at Richards Rd and at Southville Rd. This new color scheme of light green or blue was thankfully voted to be the official color, by the Main St Working Group, at an official meeting of the Group in April 2017.

Now the issue here at Rte 85 and Main St is whether to make the intersection look even worse, visually, by stringing across it the new areal trunk route of utility cables and poles. There is absolutely no doubt that the overhead utility trunk line would be an eyesore at this particular location, because it is so exposed and highly visible. Therefore the obvious solution is to underground this VERY SHORT section of cables along Rte 85, for about 100 feet,

(Note that a continuous line of poles already exists along Rte 85, north - south, and also along School St / Latisquama Rd, and at Middle Rd, which are also north-south.).

10. PLAN 1 - WEST OF RTE 85, LINE GOES NORTH UP RTE 85, THEN TURNS WEST

After crossing under the intersection of Main St and Rte 85, the trunk route of new poles then turns west, when it reaches a point just north of the Library parking lot.

Heading west, it passes north of Town Hall parking lot, to the north east corner of the Burnett Cemetery. Then the line must go underground because it would otherwise ruin the visual beauty of the St Mark's driveway, which leads to housing for faculty, and to the House of the Head of School. This short section of underground cables passes north of the Burnett Cemetery. It emerges from underground after passing the Burnett Cemetery, then travels on poles, through the air, passed the Fay School tennis courts, where the cables will be masked by the tall trees surrounding the tennis courts. Then the trunk route travels through woodland on land of St Mark's School, down to Main St, opposite the new driveway entrance leading in Fay School. That is the "terminus" of the proposed, new, trunk route of new poles.

Fay School and St Mark's School are both supportive of the goal of removing all utility poles from the downtown section of Main St, which is made up mostly of historic buildings.

11. PLAN 1 - MAJOR DISADVANTAGE IS THE LONG UNDERGROUND SECTION, WEST OF RTE 85.

There is a notable disadvantage of PLAN 1 related to cost ---because it is necessary to build a short section of underground vault, north of the Burnett Cemetery. This is where the existing, small driveway leads to St marks School Faculty houses, including the house of the Head of St Marks School. The section of underground is about 150 feet long. If this route is taken, then this section has to be underground, but it could be under lawn grass next to the driveway, assuming St Mark's approval.

12. PLAN 2 - WEST OF RTE 85, TRAVELS SOUTH ALONG RTE 85, TO REACH MAJOR TRANSMISSION LINE CORRIDOR, RUNNING WEST TO PARKERVILLE RD.

Plan 2 is "preferred" over Plan 1. It is identical to Plan 1 when east of Rte 85, but at Rte 85 it changes. At Rte 85, the trunk route runs south down Rte 85, passed the golf course, all the way to the Reservoir. (Note that there are already poles all along Rte 85). At the Reservoir, the trunk line turns west on new poles and runs along the major electric transmission line right-of-way, all the way to Parkerville Rd. Then turns back north, up to Main St, on existing poles. After reaching Main St, it connects with the existing trunk route and continues westward, to Westborough, unchanged.

13. PLAN 2 HAS THE FOLLOWING ADVANTAGES: No undergrounding west of Rte 85.

(1) No costly undergrounding west of Rte 85, and

(2) A much more simple trunk route west of Rte 85, running alongside a maintenance driveway used for access to the major electric transmission line.

14. SIGNIFICANT INCENTIVE FOR NATIONAL GRID TO MOVE FASTER THAN NORMAL

We are informed that National Grid can take many months to react to proposals from Towns, even though National Grid is required, by State law, to respond and come up with an official plan endorsed by National Grid --- provided the Town pays National Grid, up front, the full amount of the design fees, which allows National Grid to design the new trunk route and prepare a cost estimate. This design fee will be about \$60,000.

Any delay by National Grid in coming up with a design and cost estimate can (potentially) delay the Town voting at Town Meeting, for obvious reasons.

It is critically important, for us in Southborough, to take advantage of one distinct advantage we have over other towns who are in a similar situation --- namely the situation where the towns are asking National Grid to prepare plans to remove poles. We, in Southborough, have a really important incentive for National Grid to act much faster than normal. This is an incentive that other towns do NOT have.

This incentive is that National Grid are going to have to pay 50% of the cost of moving the existing poles where required on the current, official, "Main Street Reconstruction Plan". Because many poles are being moved under the existing, official plan, the cost to move them by National Grid will be very large --- we are talking many hundreds of thousands of dollars, just to move existing poles a few feet.

This expenditure by National Grid can be entirely avoided if National Grid is able to leave the existing poles where they are, and not move them temporarily, they ultimately totally REMOVE THEM FOREVER ---- until later, when they can remove the existing poles entirely --- AFTER they have built the new trunk route.

15. TIMING OF WORK BY NATIONAL GRID

the key timing issue is to have National Grid move faster than usual on the design, and get a cost estimate in a timely manner, thereby allowing Southborough Town Meeting to vote approval at an early date. The sooner the date, the shorter the time that the existing poles need to remain in place, unmoved.

If they stay in place too long, in the wrong place, then they could get in the way of new street construction.

This new scheme (for utility pole removal) will NOT cause a delay to the start of construction of the street itself, scheduled for next Spring, 2018. Hopefully, the existing poles can stay where they are, unmoved. Then National Grid can install the new trunk alignment of new poles, (south of Woodward, etc). Once that is done, and the new trunk system is complete, then the new trunk line can be connected to individual buildings, (usually at the back side). Then the new trunk line can be powered up, and the old, existing line of poles along Main Street can be removed, in their entirety, forever.

Thus National Grid can totally avoid the small (but costly) movement of all existing poles --- IF they act faster than normal. This gives them a very unusual and big financial incentive to act fast --- because it can save them a lot of money.

16. RECENT RESIDENT COMMENTS

-- LEADING TO NEW "PLAN 3", WHICH INCLUDES THE BURNETT HOUSE

Many residents have commented on the two alternative plans, Plan 1 and Plan 2. .

Among the most significant and helpful suggestions, has been the following one, which has come from the following question:

"Why doesn't your scheme extend westward, beyond Fay School, all the way to Sears Rd ?"

(Note that IF the scheme did extend to Sears Rd, then it would actually parallel the Main Street Reconstruction Project along its entire length.

BURNETT HOUSE --- If we can get to Sears Rd, , their suggestion goes, then we can include the Burnett House within the no-pole solution. Certainly the Burnett House is very significant historically and architecturally to Southborough, The town paid a million dollars to the owner, to put it under a Conservation Restriction which will preserve the structure forever. It is a perfect example of "Adaptive Reuse", and it will soon become one of the finest and most exclusive "Bed and Breakfast's" in the entire USA. That is not an exaggeration. So it deserves to be included in the no-pole zone. IF this can be done with an economical solution.

The following description of Plan # 3 provides one possibly way in which it might be done, without costly undergrounding and without major expense:

17. A. PLAN 3 - EXTENDING PLAN 2 WESTWARD, from Parkerville to Deerfoot.

Let us call this solution "Plan 3".

This extends the local trunk line of new poles, which (in Plan 2) will run alongside the major transmission line, along the northern edge of the Reservoir. Plan 3 simply extends the length from Parkerville Rd to Deerfoot Rd. Then, at Deerfoot Rd, the local trunk line of new poles will run north up Deerfoot Rd to Main Street. From there it will connect back to the existing trunk route and be unchanged, running westward along Main St to Westborough,

(Please note that there are already poles in existence along both Parkerville Road and Deerfoot Road).

Local service to buildings east of Deerfoot Rd could (at some expense) be provided by removing a few hundred feet of the existing, large, trunk poles and lines, and replacing them with SMALLER AND

FEWER cables, to reach the west end of the Fay School campus. From there, (Fay Campus) there will be no poles (big or small) on Main St, all the way to Boston Rd.

Therefore, we COULD include the Burnett House within the "no major pole" solution for Main St. However, it would be at some considerable extra cost, and it has some downsides --- read on.

17. B. DOWNSIDE TO PLAN 3.

1. The alignment of the major transmission line shifts to the south side of the Reservoir at this point, west of Parkerville. This will make the trunk line more visible looking south from the Burnett house, which is a negative.
2. Poles will still be required along Main St east of Deerfoot Rd, as far as the main entry driveway into Fay School. Removing large poles and replacing them with smaller poles seems like an extra expense for little gain.

Therefore, there may minimal to no advantage to Plan 3. In fact, it may be undesirable. Plan 2 seems preferable, visually, and economically.

17. C. PLAN 4.

East of Rte 85, Plan 4 consists of the following:

At the start, or East end, at Newton St / Boston Rd -- the trunk line starts NORTH of Main St .

(Note, this is different from Plans 1, 2 and 3, where the start is SOUTH of Main St.)

It starts at the north-east corner of the vacant lot, on the corner of East Main and Newton St. From that pole, the line will pass due west, across the railroad, and behind (north of) the Knights of Columbus Building, the Barber shop, and the Southborough House of Pizza. The poles west of the railroad will be on the property of the Southborough House of Pizza, with the agreement of the property owners.

From there, the line passes over the lot of the former Post Office Building, on the corner of Main and School St. It crosses this lot at the north end, just beyond the truck loading annex. This is with the agreement of the property owners.

The next pole will be on School St. From School St, the line crosses over the corner of the Professional Building at 11 Main, to a new pole which is on the north side of Main St, directly opposite a specific pole on the south side of Main St, at 6 Main St. . This is where the line goes underground, for exactly the width of Main St. i.e. The line goes down one pole on the north, and up the other on the south.

At this point, at 16 Main St, Plan 4 continues westward in exactly the way as Plans 1,2 and 3. It crosses the lot at 16 Main St, with the agreement of the property owner.

This takes the line to Rte 85.

West of Rte 85, the line travels south, along Rte 85, to the south side of Cordaville Hall (the Senior Center). At Cordaville Hall, the line turns due west. And from here on, the remainder of the line continues due west, more or less.

It crosses the southerly side of Cordaville Hall parking lot, all the way to the back, where it crosses the maintenance yard at the north end of the cemetery. All graves are to the south of the line.

Now we come to a wetland area. This is crossed by the overhead line, about one hundred feet to the south, where the wetland narrows down to a 50 ft wide channel. West of the drainage channel is woodland. At the west end of the woodland the utility pole line intersects with the existing major Electric Transmission Line.

This is the same Transmission line as described in Plans 2 and 3, and which Plans 2 and 3 use as the route for the utility poles --- except for one very big difference. In Plans 2 and 3, the utility pole line travels all the way down Rte 85, to the Reservoir, and then meets the Transmission line, and then follows the Transmission line corridor westward.

On the other hand, Plan 4 does NOT go down south as far on Rte 85. Therefore Plan 4 eliminates two sides of a very big triangle, resulting in a much shorter route for the utility poles.

Plan 4 takes the utility pole line along the same Transmission Line to Parkerville Rd, and then north up Parkerville Rd to Main St.

(Note: The wood poles of the utility trunk line are less than one third the height of the steel pylons which hold up the major Transmission cables. There is plenty of vacant space within the corridor of the Transmission line to accommodate the utility pole line.)

17. C. PLAN 4 - ADVANTAGES

Plan 4 consists of a straighter line, and is therefore shorter in overall length. It also has less undergrounding (40 ft direct across in Plan 4, versus about 300 ft of undergrounding along Main St, from Park St to # 16 Main)

18. SEEKING AN INDEPENDENT OPINION OF COST / BENEFIT, AND POSSIBLE IMPACTS

Some comments from residents have been expressions of personal opinions, namely that the whole town will benefit, in terms of reputation and real estate values, from the removal of poles and overhead cables in the downtown area. However, I am well aware that others disagree. Maybe the Main Street Working Group might consider that, in order to get as close as possible to an objective, factual answer to this issue, they could recommend to the Board of Selectmen that the Town hire a professional expert on "town center revitalization", and ask that expert the following specific question:

" What can this proposal (for removing poles and overhead cables) do for downtown revitalization, and for property values throughout the downtown area, and through the whole town? What effect is it likely to have? "

The point here is for town leader to think ahead, to the vote. It is essential to think carefully about what information the voters will want and need in order to make a sensible decision. Maybe it could include getting an objective opinion from a neutral expert, which might help to reduce the level of doubt and argument, one way or the other. It seems to me that Town Meeting will want this kind of information, in addition to National Grid's design layout and cost estimate. .

19. MORE SUGGESTIONS AND THANKS

Please keep your suggestions coming, because they can help improve this plan, and reduce its cost. In conclusion, I am thankful to the Main Street Working Group for taking a good, hard look at this proposal, and to VHB for their forthcoming detailed review.