



Frequently Asked Questions Winter 2018

Distribution Work

1. What is the “distribution” system?
 - A. The distribution portion of an electric system consists of the wires and poles typically visible along the public roads, which ultimately connect to your home or business. It is this portion of the system that is undergoing an upgrade throughout the Island beginning in July 2017 (note: a small section of distribution work in Newport was actually completed in Spring 2016). More information about how the entire electric system works can be found on the project website (OnIslandNGRID.com).
2. What is being upgraded?
 - A. Significant portions of the existing distribution system across the Island will be upgraded from 4 kilovolt (kV) service to 14kV. This will require the running of new wires along several roads and properties on the Island, along with new, taller poles to ensure the higher-voltage lines meet electric safety standards.
3. How tall will the new distribution poles be?
 - A. The new wood poles will be approximately 5-10 feet taller than the existing wood poles.
4. Will this result in double poles around the Island?
 - A. This work will result in a number of temporary double poles along the project route. There is a new agreement in place between the utilities who share these poles to ensure a timely transfer of wires and equipment to the new poles and removal of the old ones. We cannot place an exact timeline on the removal, but we can say that this new agreement will expedite the process. Eventually, all double poles will be removed.
5. When is the work being done?
 - A. The initial phases of work began in July 2017 and are expected to take approximately 6-8 months to complete. Additionally, tree work (to adequately clear any work areas along the route) will be performed in advance of the electrical work. More information about National Grid’s approach to tree trimming is available on the website. Additional phases of the distribution work are scheduled for 2018 and 2019 – details will be made available as they are finalized.

6. What is the daily work schedule going to be?
 - A. Unless we encounter extenuating circumstances that require extended work hours, our regular schedule will be Monday-Friday, 7:00am-3:00pm or Monday-Thursday, 7:00am-5:00pm. We do not anticipate any regular need to work outside of these hours.

7. Which roads/areas will be impacted by the distribution line work?
 - A. There are several areas along the Middletown/Newport border that will see an impact from this work over the next several months. The main streets include: Aquidneck Avenue; East Main Road (at West Main Road); Green End Avenue; High Street; Mitchell Lane; West Main Road (to Vernon Avenue); and Valley Road (see map for more detail).

8. Does any work take place on private property?
 - A. Yes, there is a small percentage of work that will require access to private property (primarily in the vicinity of the Vernon Substation). National Grid will work closely with property owners to coordinate a mutually-agreeable work plan.

9. Is this work part of the recently approved Aquidneck Island Reliability Project (AIRP)?
 - A. No, it is not part of the scope of work that was recently reviewed and approved by the Rhode Island Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB). But the distribution work will utilize the improvements being installed in connection with AIRP. Together, both projects are called the OnIsland project (more details about OnIsland below).

OnIsland Overview

1. What is the 'OnIsland' project?
 - A. OnIsland, which includes the more formally-named Aquidneck Island Reliability Project, is an infrastructure project being undertaken by National Grid to upgrade several major components of the electric transmission and distribution system on the Island. Once completed, the estimated \$90 million project will deliver more reliable and secure electricity to the residents and businesses on Aquidneck Island in the towns of Middletown, Portsmouth and the City of Newport.

2. Why is this work necessary?
 - A. The electrical system that serves Aquidneck Island is antiquated and currently operating near its limits. The purpose of this project is to enable National Grid to continue to provide reliable electric supply to its customers on Aquidneck Island. The project will improve the reliability of electric supply to the area by increasing the loading capability of the transmission system, expanding the distribution system, and maintaining acceptable voltages on Aquidneck Island consistent with regulatory requirements and good utility practice.

3. Has this project been approved by the appropriate agencies?
 - A. Yes, the AIRP (the transmission component of the OnIsland project) has received approval from the Rhode Island Energy Facility Siting Board, which is the statewide agency with jurisdiction over this type of work.
4. Where is the electricity supplied from?
 - A. The power from the electric grid for Aquidneck Island is supplied via transmission lines from the north (Fall River, Mass. area).
5. What is the expected timeline for completion?
 - A. Construction will happen in phases with completion anticipated sometime in 2021.
6. What is the exact route the construction will follow?
 - A. Construction is within the existing ROW for the 61 and 62 Lines. Please refer to the maps on the website (**OnIslandNGRID.com**) for details on where the ROW is located.
7. What will happen to the old substations?
 - A. The old substations – five in total -- will be retired and removed from their respective locations. National Grid will maintain ownership of the properties where the substations were located after they have been removed.
8. What will the new transmission lines look like?
 - A. The new transmission lines will be installed on taller structures, but in a more streamlined manner, resulting in an appearance that's not much different from what's currently in place. Please refer to project simulations located on **OnIslandNGRID.com** to view simulations of the new transmission lines.
9. How is this project being funded?
 - A. The cost of this project will be blended into the cost of running the utility.

Customer Benefits/Impacts

1. Will the OnIsland project only benefit customers on Aquidneck Island?
 - A. The infrastructure upgrades being completed during this project will directly benefit customers (residential, commercial and industrial) on the Island.
2. How will this project impact rates?
 - A. It is not possible to determine a direct rate impact for this project at this time. National Grid, like all utilities, has an annual capital investment program, of which this project would be a part. The cost of our capital program is factored into our rates, which are reviewed and set by the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission.

3. What can I expect for road closures?
 - A. Much of the transmission work will happen in National Grid-owned rights-of-way or away from roadways with little impact on traffic. The substation work will have minimal impacts on traffic. The distribution work will result in limited traffic impacts, however National Grid will take a number of measures to reduce the impact on traffic during construction.
4. What is the environmental impact of this project?
 - A. The proposed Project was designed and constructed in a manner that minimizes and mitigates the potential for adverse environmental impacts. The Project will have minimal impact on the geologic, soil, surface water, groundwater, and wetland resources.
5. Will this project take place in the summertime?
 - A. We will work with the towns, city and businesses to determine ways in which we can maximize our construction schedule while minimizing impacts on the communities. The current project schedule, which is subject to change, began in the spring of 2016 (distribution line work) and is anticipated to continue into 2021.
6. How will this project benefit me or my business?
 - A. The primary benefit will come in the form of more reliable delivery of electricity to help our customers continue living an increasingly connected life. The electrical system that serves Aquidneck Island is antiquated and currently stretched to its limits. The project will improve the reliability of electric supply to the area by increasing the loading capability of the transmission system, expanding the distribution system, and maintaining acceptable voltages on Aquidneck Island consistent with regulatory requirements and good utility practice. This means that on the days with the highest need for electricity – hot summer or frigid winter – the residents on Aquidneck Island will have more reliable electrical service. Further, the new substations will have considerably enhanced automation, greatly assisting National Grid in reducing the duration of outages. The enhanced automation will allow certain functions to be controlled remotely avoiding the need to send a worker to the site.
7. Will upgrading and rebuilding these transmission lines change electric and magnetic field levels (EMF) at the edge of the right of way?
 - A. Yes, electromagnetic fields (EMF) at the edge of the right of way for the transmission lines will actually be reduced because the new structures holding the wires will be taller than the existing ones and the lines will be configured in a vertical orientation (versus the current horizontal configuration) towards the center of the ROW. Please download the PDF on EMF (available on **NationalGridUS.com**) for more general information on the topic.
8. Will this project cause any power outages or disruptions?
 - A. Power outages may take place on a limited basis as service is switched from the old equipment to the new equipment. However, the outages will be brief, and National Grid will make an effort to notify those who are likely to experience an outage for this reason prior to the outage taking place.

Additional Information

1. How can I stay updated on project progress?
 - A. OnIsland updates will be provided regularly through a number of channels including OnIslandNGRID.com and Twitter (**@OnIslandNG**), as well as periodic paid advertising, community information sessions and public relations efforts. We are also planning to launch a regular construction update email that residents and business can opt to receive (see OnIslandNGRID.com for details).

2. Will there be public meetings on the project?
 - A. Yes. National Grid has conducted several public information sessions (in person and online) since the project was announced in early 2015. We remain fully committed to providing the community with the opportunity to see the plans and comment on them as we draw closer to more active construction. There will likely be additional community meetings held in Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport (see website for details on dates, times and locations of the scheduled meetings). In addition to the website, National Grid has established a customer hotline (**401-400-5862** or **800-568-4558**) to provide a channel for customers who have questions or concerns about the project at any time.

3. What does National Grid do to minimize environmental impacts?
 - A. Protecting the environment in the communities we serve is paramount. National Grid is a recognized leader in the development and operation of safe, reliable and sustainable energy infrastructure to meet the needs of its customers and communities. We achieve this is by implementing best management practices, environmental monitors, and seeking new and innovative ways to lessen the environmental impact of our past, present and future projects.

4. Does National Grid participate in any programs to help the environment?
 - A. National Grid works closely with federal and state agencies, environmental organizations, local communities, and other interested parties to make sure our operations are done in a manner that protects the environment. Please visit the environmental section on **NationalGridUS.com** for more information on how National Grid is committed to both protecting and enhancing the environment.

5. Who should I contact with questions while construction is under way?
 - A. You can contact us in a number of ways:
 - Call us on our 24/7 hotline number at **401-400-5862** or **800-568-4558**
 - Email us at **OnIsland@nationalgrid.com**
 - Or send us a tweet at **@OnIslandNG**

6. What is National Grid doing to conserve energy in addition to providing reliable energy?
 - A. National Grid has been a national leader in energy conservation and energy efficiency. To learn more about National Grid's energy efficiency services, please visit our Energy Solutions page on **NationalGridUS.com**.

7. How can I report a power outage?

A. You can report an outage by visiting the Report An Outage page on **NationalGridUS.com** or by downloading the **National Grid mobile app** or call **(800) 465-1212**.

8. Where can I pay my bill?

A. For information about bills and payment options please visit the Bills and Payments page on **NationalGridUS.com**.