

Madalyn Letellier

From: John Henderson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2026 4:15 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Naima Sait; Katya Henderson
Subject: public comment submission for hearing on Thursday May 14, 2026
Attachments: Hudson-EV-public-comment.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Re: Eversource petition for Grant of Location, 10 ft of conduit in Hudson Street from Pole 202/19 to a new handhole at 135 Hudson Street.

Document attached.

-John

John C. Henderson, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]
Somerville, MA 02144
[REDACTED]

John C. Henderson
[REDACTED]
Somerville, MA 02144
[REDACTED]

May 13, 2026

Somerville City Council
c/o Kimberly M. Wells, City Clerk
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143
via [REDACTED]

Re: Public Hearing, Thursday, May 14, 2026 — Eversource petition for Grant of Location, 10 ft of conduit in Hudson Street from Pole 202/19 to a new handhole at 135 Hudson Street

Dear Councilors,

I am writing as a noticed abutter and 25-year resident of 135 Hudson Street. I support Somerville's EV charging program and eagerly welcome the new chargers on my block. My comment concerns one specific issue with the installation as currently designed: **access to the sidewalk.**

The concern

The petition before the Council on Thursday is narrowly for 10 feet of conduit between Pole 202/19 and a new handhole. But the handhole's location anchors where the new 150A distribution cabinet will sit, and that cabinet's placement determines whether any usable pedestrian path remains on the Hudson Street sidewalk. Once the petition is approved as drawn, the geometry is locked in.

The sidewalk in front of 135 Hudson Street is 74 inches wide. The Ball Square sidewalk on Josephine Avenue, which will host a similar EV charger installation, is 90 inches wide. That is 16 inches wider than the sidewalk at Hudson. At Ball Square, the curbside cabinet pad leaves 48 inches of clear pedestrian path. A comparable cabinet placed curbside on the narrower Hudson sidewalk would leave only about 32 inches. Somerville requires abutting property owners to maintain a 36-inch clear path in winter (somervillema.gov/snow), which is also the ADA minimum for accessible pedestrian routes. As shown in the Commonwealth Electrical Technologies equipment layout dated 8/11/25, however, the cabinet at Hudson Street is not currently sited at the curb. It is sited inboard on the sidewalk, which would leave a clear path substantially below even that 32-inch curbside figure. This effectively eliminates accessible pedestrian passage past the equipment for anyone with a wheelchair, walker, or stroller.

The City already committed to a fix

On September 18, 2025, the Director of the Office of Sustainability & Environment sent a memo to this Council announcing the MassCEC On-Street Charging Solutions Program and listing Hudson/Labyrinth as one of six sites. On November 13, 2025, the City's presentation to the Traffic Commission ([full presentation here](#)) included a slide for the Hudson Street site (slide 8 of 21, reproduced as Figure 1 below) explicitly stating that the installation "will include pavement extension to maintain access." The pavement extension was specifically the engineering response to the fact that this site, with head-in parking on a narrow residential sidewalk, requires additional curb width to preserve pedestrian access. The current Eversource petition appears to address only the conduit installation; the pavement extension is not visible in its scope.

What I am asking

I am asking the Council, before approving this grant of location, to ensure that the installation it enables will preserve pedestrian access on the Hudson Street sidewalk. There are two ways to get there:

1. Relocate the distribution cabinet to the curb, downstream of the charger pedestals. The two charger pedestals must sit near the parking spaces they serve, but the distribution cabinet's placement is discretionary — it can sit anywhere along the conduit run. Approximately 12 feet of unobstructed curb is available downstream of the proposed charger locations before the next curb cut. Moving the cabinet to that curbside position, away from the corner pedestrian crossing at Pole 202/19, would preserve the largest possible clear path on the existing sidewalk. If a curbside placement using the Ball Square pad dimensions still falls short of the 36-inch standard, a narrower concrete apron around the cabinet could recover the remaining inches: the Ball Square pad overhangs the 24-inch cabinet by approximately four inches on each side, and trimming that apron is a straightforward way to reach compliance without a pavement extension. This is the simpler and lower-cost fix.

2. Restore the pavement extension referenced in the City's prior presentations. The September 18, 2025 memo and the November 13, 2025 Traffic Commission slide both stated this installation "will include pavement extension to maintain access." Extending the pavement to fit the cabinet would give Hudson Street the kind of pedestrian clearance that the Ball Square installation already has on its wider commercial sidewalk (see Figures 4 and 5). This is the more involved fix but the one the City has already committed to in writing.

A note on the Ball Square comparison

I visited the Ball Square site on Josephine Avenue this week to measure the existing distribution cabinet there — a cabinet that will support two EV chargers, like the one proposed for Hudson Street. I learned that the Ball Square cabinet **predates** the EV charger program; it is existing Eversource infrastructure that the new chargers will be connected to. The Hudson Street site is different: a new cabinet is being added to an existing, narrower residential sidewalk. The two sites are not directly comparable installations, which is precisely why the City's prior presentations specified a pavement extension for Hudson and not for Ball Square. Figures 4 and 5 below show what curbside cabinet placement looks like in practice at Ball Square — 48 inches of clear pedestrian path preserved on the building side, well above Somerville's 36-inch standard. If a cabinet of the same depth were installed in the same way at the Hudson Street site, the existing 74-inch sidewalk would leave only 32 inches of clearance — below the 36-inch standard, with no margin for snowbanks or any other obstruction.

Thank you for your consideration. My wife or I will attend the May 14 hearing and are available on demand to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

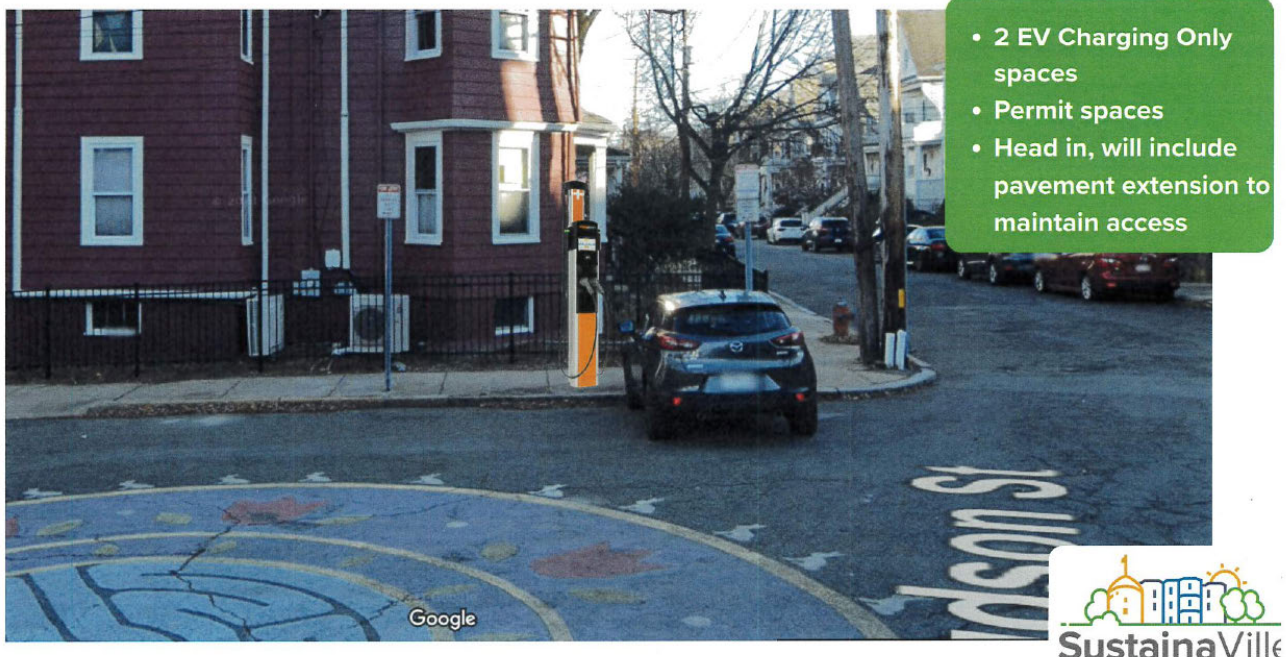
John C. Henderson
135 Hudson Street, Somerville

Figures

Figures 1–3 are excerpted from the City’s presentation, “City of Somerville Proposed On-Street EV Station Locations,” presented to the Somerville Traffic Commission on November 13, 2025 (Item 4). Full presentation: s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/2025-11/traffic-commission-20251113-item-4-slides.pdf. Figures 4 and 5 are photos that I took at the existing Ball Square cabinet on May 13, 2026.

Figure 1. City presentation, slide 8 of 21.

Hudson Labyrinth (139 Hudson St)



The bulleted text on this slide reads: “2 EV Charging Only spaces · Permit spaces · **Head in, will include pavement extension to maintain access.**” This is the City’s own commitment that the Hudson Street installation would include a pavement extension specifically to preserve pedestrian access.

Figure 2. City presentation, slide 9 of 21. Detail shown in Figure 3, next.

City of Somerville - Hudson Street
 Hudson St, Somerville, MA 02144
 MassCEC On-Street EV Charging Solutions



				Notes: New secondary service from existing pole-mounted transformer on Pole #19. Secondary riser to 150A distribution / meter cabinet, (1) CP6000 charging station.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>CLIENT</td> <td colspan="3">City of Somerville - Hudson Street</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TITLE</td> <td colspan="3">Proposed Equipment Layout</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drawn By</td> <td>SRC</td> <td>Scale</td> <td>NTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date</td> <td>8/13/25</td> <td>Sheet #</td> <td>2 of 2</td> </tr> </table>	CLIENT	City of Somerville - Hudson Street			TITLE	Proposed Equipment Layout			Drawn By	SRC	Scale	NTS	Date	8/13/25	Sheet #	2 of 2
CLIENT	City of Somerville - Hudson Street																				
TITLE	Proposed Equipment Layout																				
Drawn By	SRC	Scale	NTS																		
Date	8/13/25	Sheet #	2 of 2																		

Equipment layout for Hudson Street prepared by Commonwealth Electrical Technologies, dated 8/11/25. The yellow rectangles inboard of Utility Pole 202/19 (curbside, blue circle) are the two new ChargePoint dual-port towers and the new 150A 120/208V Distribution / Meter Cabinet. As drawn, the distribution cabinet sits inboard on the sidewalk.

Figure 3. Detail of proposed equipment placement.



Closer view of the proposed equipment cluster at 135 Hudson Street. The corner area adjacent to Pole 202/19 functions as a pedestrian crossing point, particularly in winter when snowbanks restrict other crossing options. A cabinet position along the curb downstream of the charger pedestals would minimize sidewalk obstruction while preserving the corner crossing.

Figure 4. Ball Square cabinet, viewed along the sidewalk.



The existing Ball Square cabinet hugs the curb on a wider commercial sidewalk. The full pedestrian path remains clear past it — 48 inches of clear width on the building side, well above Somerville’s 36-inch snow-clearance standard. We are asking the City for similar curbside cabinet placement at Hudson Street to support pedestrian access on a narrower sidewalk.

Figure 5. Same cabinet, viewed facing the Broadway corner.



Reverse angle of the same cabinet, looking toward the Broadway/Josephine corner. The weathering and graffiti are visible evidence that this cabinet predates the MassCEC EV charging program. The wider commercial sidewalk and the parallel parking configuration are also visible — conditions that do not obtain at 135 Hudson Street.