

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Agenda Number:**  
**Prepared on:** 10/11/04  
**Department Name:** Public Works  
**Department No.:** 054  
**Agenda Date:** 11/23/04  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimate Time:**  
**Continued Item:** NO  
**If Yes, date from:**

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Phillip M. Demery, Director  
Public Works Department

**STAFF CONTACT:** Mark A. Schleich, Deputy Director  
Martin J. Wilder, Manager x8750

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Underground Utility District along East Valley Road and Olive Mill Road in Montecito, First Supervisorial District

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**Recommendation(s):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Receive the attached Road Commissioner's report, which sets forth the boundary of a utility undergrounding district along East Valley Road and Olive Mill Road (inclusive of fronting properties) in Montecito, the project schedule; and the estimate of project costs;
- B. Set a public hearing for December 7, 2004 to ascertain the need for forming the utility undergrounding district. (Estimated time 10 minutes);
- C. On December 7, 2004, consider adoption of the resolution creating the proposed utility undergrounding district.

**Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:**

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 2. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

**Executive Summary and Discussion:**

The California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) enacted tariff Rule 20 in 1968 to provide a mechanism to place existing overhead utilities underground. Pursuant to CPUC regulations, utility companies with existing overhead utilities must plan for conversion from overhead to underground services along roadways meeting certain criteria. The criteria generally includes any one of the following:

1. Such undergrounding will avoid or eliminate an unusually heavy concentration of overhead electrical facilities;

2. The street or road or right-of-way is extensively used by the general public and carries a heavy volume of pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
3. The street or road or right-of-way adjoins or passes through a civic area or public recreation area or an area of unusually scenic interest to the general public; or
4. The street or road or right-of-way is considered an arterial street or major collector as defined in the Governor's Office of Planning Research General Plan Guidelines.

Section 20A of Rule 20 requires the electric companies to set aside funds for allocation to counties and cities for undergrounding overhead utilities along arterial roadways meeting the aforementioned criteria. These allocations are used as a planning tool and are credited to counties and cities on an annual basis based on a formula that accounts for overhead facilities and service meters in their jurisdiction. The Edison credit allocation is approximately \$275,000 per year. Allocations can build up until sufficient funds are available to finance a project. In addition, the tariff rules allow for the use of up to five future years of allocations (mortgaging). Phone and cable companies follow suit on 20A qualifying projects pursuant to their own tariff rules but do not set aside annual allocations but rather budget these costs annually.

The County of Santa Barbara utilizes an Underground Utility Committee established by the board to plan undergrounding projects. Projects under this program are planned in either the Pacific Gas & Electric service territory or in the Southern California Edison service territory. The committee acts on behalf of the Road Commissioner to recommend projects to the board in accordance with Chapter 34 of the County Code.

At this time, a utility undergrounding project has been proposed along East Valley Road from Pimiento Lane to Hot Springs Road and Olive Mill Road from Channel Drive to SR 101 in Montecito including 37 properties that front these roadways. The project is a result of planning by the community of Montecito, the Montecito Association, the Public Works Department, the Planning & Development Department, and affected utility companies (Southern California Edison, Verizon Communications and Cox Cable). This project was recommended for approval by the board by the Utility Undergrounding Committee on June 30, 2004. The East Valley Road segment will adjoin the San Ysidro Road/East Valley Road intersection Underground Utility District established by the board on September 11, 1968 (the County's first undergrounding district in the Edison territory) as well as a privately undergrounded area near Channel Drive.

The most recent Southern California Edison territory undergrounding projects have been the Hollister Avenue/Fairview Avenue intersection (1996), Upper State Street east of Modoc Road (1995), Santa Claus Lane (1995), and Los Carneros Road (1995). The board also approved a proposed project along El Colegio in Isla Vista in February of this year. The El Colegio project will utilize the allocation balance plus two years of future mortgage allocations. The estimated cost of the East Valley Road/Olive Mill Road project is approximately \$1.6 million and is planned for 2007. This amount will be funded by the 2007 allocation plus five future mortgage allocations. In the event cost estimates indicate that the whole project cannot be completed for \$1.6 million, the portion of the project on Olive Mill Road will be scaled back or eliminated as needed to provide a project for this amount.

The proposed scope of work includes the removal of the overhead electrical, telephone and cable services along the boundary area described above and includes undergrounding utility service connections to the affected properties (up to 100 feet). All project costs except service connections will be borne by the utility companies. Each affected property will be required to connect to the underground utilities. Service

connections not originating from the proposed undergrounding locations will not be affected. Southern California Edison service connections may vary in cost between \$100 and \$400 per property. The property owner will also be responsible for building permits, if required, that may be associated with electrical panel modifications estimated at \$470 for single meter services to \$750 for multiple meter services. Reconnecting Verizon service connections may vary in cost from no cost to \$400 per property. The cost of reconnecting Cox Cable service connections may vary between \$100 and \$500. Total service reconnection costs (for electric, phone, and cable), therefore, are expected to range between from \$200 to a high of \$2,050. Each resident will have site specific conditions that will vary the cost of reconnecting.

The attached report details the boundaries of the proposed district, the estimated costs and/or available funding, and the project schedule. Completion of the underground construction work by the utility companies is expected by December 2007 with conversion of service connections to the properties by April 2008.

**Mandates and Service Levels:**

There are no changes in programs or service levels with this action.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Project design and construction to be borne by Southern California Edison are estimated at \$1.6 million. Verizon and Cox Cable do not track a credit balance for allocations for undergrounding projects under their tariff rules but rather plan undergrounding work in fiscal year budgeting. The property owner will be responsible for certain service reconnection costs. County costs include only administrative functions and are budgeted in Department 054, Fund 0001, Program 4001, Account 7460 as shown in the FY 2004/2005 budget.

**Special Instructions:**

1. Public Works staff will notify the property owners and utility companies within 10 days after the adoption
2. Clerk of the Board; please return one copy of the executed resolution prior to recording to the Public Works Department, resource Recovery & Waste Management Division, attention Martin Wilder for proper noticing after adoption.
3. Resolution to be recorded in the County Recorder's Office.

**Concurrence:**

County Counsel