



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Green Valley Road Indian Creek and Mound Springs Creek Bridge Replacements Underground Utility District Formation Engineer's Report October 31, 2016

Recommendation

Conduct a public hearing and adopt an ordinance to establish an Underground Utility District (UUD) along Green Valley Road and the proposed Indian Creek and Mound Springs Creek Bridge Replacement Project.

Background

The Green Valley Road at Indian Creek and Mound Springs Creek Bridge Replacement Project (Project) was initiated through Caltrans and the Highway Bridge Program (HBP) to replace two deficient bridges and improve substandard roadway geometrics. The Project consists of widening Green Valley Road from Stagecoach Road to Mortara Circle, and replacing two bridges at Indian Creek and Mound Springs Creek. In April 2011, the County received federal authorization to complete the planning, environmental phase, and scope for Indian Creek, and in April 2012, Mound Springs Creek received its federal authorization. In August 2016, the Board approved widening Green Valley Road from Stagecoach Road to Mortara Circle to fill in the gap between the two bridges. The County is looking to have the draft Environmental Document (ED) and technical studies for the Project completed by April 2017. The ED and technical studies will include a discussion about the potential UUD included as part of the Project.

Utility Participation

Currently, a number of overhead utility lines exist adjacent to Green Valley Road and within the future widening areas of the Project. These utility owners include Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and Pacific Bell Telephone Company dba AT&T California (AT&T). In order to accommodate the Project improvements, these overhead utilities will require relocation. Division staff have concluded that relocating these utilities to alternate overhead locations will be a significant effort and require considerable tree and brush clearing that would significantly impact the adjacent residential properties on Green Valley Road. Due to the complexity of this effort, staff have proposed the formation of an UUD within the limits of the Project, in an effort to avoid additional negative impacts to the adjacent residences, simplify construction sequencing operations, and improve the aesthetics of the Project area by eliminating a heavy concentration of overhead utility lines. Staff has directed the environmental consultant to include a discussion in the ED that notes the potential formation of an UUD.

Division staff have analyzed the cost differences associated with relocating the utility poles overhead vs. undergrounding the lines. For overhead relocations, PG&E requires a 30 foot easement for the poles in which all trees must be cleared. For underground relocations, PG&E only requires a 10 foot

easement for the joint trench. This accounts for a two-thirds savings on easements necessary for relocation of the poles within the Project. The utility poles are currently within the County's right of way and therefore would need to be relocated at PG&E's cost. If the County moves forward with the UUD for this project, those costs to relocate the overhead poles would be credited back to the County. The design costs associated with the UUD would be approximately the same as relocating the poles and lines overhead. This is because regardless of whether the poles and lines get relocated overhead or underground, there is still a significant amount of coordination with the utility companies to relocate their facilities for the Project.

Funding for the design and construction of UUD facilities is available from the Rule 20A tariff program, which is managed by PG&E. This program was established in 1967 by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), so that privately owned utility companies would set aside a small portion of billings into a fund available to be used for UUD projects. As these funds accrue, the various cities and counties with PG&E's service area are allocated a proportional amount of funds. A similar Rule 32A.1 tariff program exists for AT&T facilities.

Funding

Preliminary costs for the UUD are as follows:

Design Coordination: \$125,000 (potentially 88.53% would be reimbursable from HBP)

Right of Way Coordination: \$75,000 (potentially 88.53% would be reimbursable from HBP)

Construction: \$2,100,000 (100% of which is reimbursable from tariff funds)

Estimated Construction Credit: \$150,000

The project will also receive a construction credit on the undergrounding for the overhead poles because the poles are located within the County's right-of-way. If the poles were relocated overhead, as they exist today, the relocation cost would be solely on the affected utility owners. Since the utility owner would not have to relocate overhead the cost for that relocation is given back to the County as a construction credit. That credit is estimated to be \$150,000 to relocate the existing poles and overhead utilities outside the County's right-of-way.

The total estimated UUD costs are \$2,150,000 of which \$2,127,060 (approximately 99%) would be paid for from tariff funds and HBP if the 88.53% of Design Coordination and Right of Way Coordination is reimbursed from HBP. The estimated \$22,940 County share associated with Design and Right of Way coordination of the UUD would be covered by the various funding sources for the Project.

As of May 31, 2015, the account balance of the Rule 20A program available to El Dorado County is \$16,580,612. This number does not include the 2016 Allocation which can be assumed to be the same as the 2015 Allocation of \$541,885 which would make the account balance \$17,122,497. The account balance also takes into account the Diamond Springs Parkway Phase 1A Project that will go to construction in 2017. The Division has received confirmation from PG&E that the Project is eligible to utilize Rule 20A program funds for the UUD, and PG&E has acknowledged notification of the proposed UUD. Staff have also communicated with AT&T representatives regarding the proposed UUD and their associated financial responsibilities in association with the Rule 20A program.

UUD Formation Steps

The following is a list of the steps necessary in formation of the Green Valley Road at Indian Creek and Mound Springs Creek Bridge Replacement Project UUD:

1. Identify the project envelope: These have been established with design of Green Valley Road Project 77127 and 77136. This task has been completed.

2. Map the project boundaries: From the parcels, a property owner mailing list was developed for later use. Division staff has obtained the parcel list for the Project through GIS data. Mailing lists for the UUD will be extracted from this data. This task has been completed.
3. Create an engineer's report: The report will outline the estimated costs to the County and utility participation. This step has been completed.
4. Conduct public outreach prior to the formation hearing: Rule 20A procedures recommend conducting public outreach with the affected communities. Division staff made a presentation regarding the proposed UUD formation at a public meeting on October 20, 2016 that was held in the Planning Commission Board Room. Letters were mailed to 12 affected parcel owners in the Green Valley Road UUD. This step had no financial obligation to the County. This step has been completed.
5. Meet with other interested agencies: Including PG&E, AT&T, and El Dorado Irrigation District to coordinate undergrounding. Staff met with AT&T, PG&E, and EID representatives on September 7, 2016 to discuss the proposed UUD formation, and initiate correspondence between agencies. Staff met with the utilities, immediately following the monthly utility coordination meeting on October 5, 2016. This step had no financial obligation to the County. This step has been completed.
6. Prepare an informational Board item regarding formation of the UUD: The item will provide a brief history of the project and discuss estimated costs and the future formation hearing that is necessary to establish the UUD. This item will also request the Board to direct the Acting CDA Director to sign the application documents so that PG&E can initiate UUD formation on their end. It is anticipated the Board informational item will be on December 6, 2016. This step has no financial obligation to the County.
7. Conduct the Formation Hearing: A hearing at the Board is required for establishment of the UUD. All affected parcel owners are required to be notified by Certified Mail in advance of the formation hearing. Comments received at the October 20, 2016 public meeting will be incorporated with the staff report accompanying the Resolutions forming the district. Once all public comments have been heard and considered, the Board will decide whether to establish the UUD. If the UUD is established, staff and the utility companies will begin working on the specific design of the UUD and implement into the Project contract documents. Only after UUD establishment is design work eligible for reimbursement. It is anticipated the Board hearing date will be on December 6, 2016.