



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0641, **Version:** 1

Department of Transportation recommending the Board:

- 1) Receive a presentation on the Mount Murphy Road at South Fork American River - Bridge Replacement Project, CIP 77129/36105029; and
- 2) Approve the process for a new Underground Utility District in the area of Coloma as part of the project and direct Transportation staff to begin the preliminary work and public outreach necessary for its establishment. (Est. Time: 30 Min.)

FUNDING: Highway Bridge Program (100%). (Federal Funds)

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The Mount Murphy Road at South Fork American River - Bridge Replacement Project (Project) environmental studies and draft environmental document are nearing completion, and the Project design has continued to progress. A brief Project update presentation will be provided to share the status and overview of the Project features. The intent of this update is to assist in understanding the overall Project design features, constraints, and how the undergrounding of the utilities will benefit the final Project.

Overhead utility poles and guy wires can be considered roadside hazards; an Underground Utility District (UUD) can help eliminate these risks. Due to the considerable community input and the benefit to this rural community area, Department of Transportation (Transportation) staff recommend the Board consider the formation of a new UUD along Mount Murphy Road as part of the Project, to further improve the aesthetics and safety of the Coloma community by eliminating the existing highly visible utility poles and overhead lines along primary transportation routes.

Transportation staff has attended site visit meetings with Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) to propose feasible and logical boundaries of this proposed UUD. The proposed UUD would extend slightly beyond the limits of the proposed Project as described in its current draft environmental documents, as shown in Attachment B. The proposed boundaries of the UUD are laid out to encompass the community's main properties within the bridge Project. The proposed UUD and the Project impacts to utilities do not overlap into State Route 49 and Caltrans right of way. The proposed UUD would require planning and coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), PG&E, AT&T California (AT&T), and State Parks.

Utility companies would be responsible for constructing new underground facilities and removing the existing overhead facilities. Utilities annually allocate funds under Rule 20 to community areas, cities and counties, to cover the cost of converting their utility overhead facilities to underground facilities.

The preliminary steps for initial coordination and planning for the formation of a UUD include public outreach to affected property owners and coordination with the utility companies. After these steps, a public hearing to approve the UUD boundaries by the Board of Supervisors would be necessary.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) The Board could decide against the Project's UUD and this type of future utility relocation would be optional; however, it would require other funding sources.
- 2) The UUD could be formed under a separate independent project.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Transportation staff has communicated with Caltrans and the various utilities regarding potential formation of this UUD. Caltrans and the various utilities were receptive to the initial communication about this potential UUD.

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Project is included in Transportation's 2018 CIP, which was approved by the Board on June 26, 2018, Legistar 18-0616, Item 61, and is funded by Highway Bridge Program funds. The cost of undergrounding utilities is estimated at \$1 million, whereas pole relocation only would cost approximately \$250,000. However, the establishment of the UUD would allow the cost to be funded by County Rule 20A reserves. There is approximately \$16 million in County 20A reserves at this time for undergrounding projects such as this. There is no net County cost associated with this item.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Infrastructure

CONTACT

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