



Legislation Text

File #: 16-0982, Version: 1

HEARING - Community Development Agency, Transportation Division, recommending the Board consider the following regarding the establishment of an Underground Utility District, as part of the Green Valley Road at Indian Creek - Bridge Replacement Project, CIP 77127, and Green Valley Road at Mound Springs Creek - Bridge Replacement Project, CIP 77136:

- 1) Conduct a public hearing to consider adoption of Resolution **205-2016** to create an Underground Utility District as part of the Bridge Replacement Projects;
- 2) Direct the Community Development Agency Director, or designee, to sign all Pacific Gas & Electric Company application documents necessary to initiate work under the Rule 20A Program; and
- 3) Direct the Community Development Agency Director, or designee, to sign all related notices to Pacific Bell Telephone Company dba AT&T California, directing this utility company to initiate work required as part of the Underground Utility District formation. (Est. Time 1 Hr.)

FUNDING: Each Bridge Project is funded by Highway Bridge Program (88.53%), and a combination of Regional Surface Transportation Program (Federal Funds) and Traffic Impact Mitigation Fees as the grant match (11.47%). Most of the underground utility relocation is funded through Electrical Rule 20A Underground Utility Funds (PG&E), and Telecommunication Rule 32A.1 Tariff Funds (AT&T).

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Community Development Agency, Transportation Division (Transportation), recommending the Board consider the following regarding the establishment of an Underground Utility District (UUD), as part of the Green Valley Road at Indian Creek (Indian Creek) and Green Valley Road at Mound Springs Creek (Mound Springs) - Bridge Replacement Projects (Bridge Replacement Project/Projects):

- 1) Conduct a public hearing to consider adoption of Resolution **205-2016** to create a UUD as part of the Bridge Replacement Projects;
- 2) Direct the Interim Community Development Agency Director, or designee, to sign all Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) application documents necessary to initiate work under the Rule 20A program; and
- 3) Direct the Interim Community Development Agency Director, or designee, to sign all related notices to Pacific Bell Telephone Company dba AT&T California (AT&T), directing this utility company to initiate work required as part of the UUD formation.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The Bridge Replacement Projects are included in Transportation's Interim 2016 Capital Improvement Program, as adopted by the Board on June 7, 2016 (Item 39). The Projects were initiated through the California Department of Transportation and the Highway Bridge Program (HBP) to replace two deficient bridges and improve the substandard roadway geometrics. The Projects consist of widening Green Valley Road from Stagecoach Road to Mortara Circle and replacing two bridges at Indian Creek and Mound Springs Creek. On July 19, 2016 (Item 38), the Board approved widening Green Valley Road from Stagecoach Road to Mortara Circle to fill in the gap between the two Bridges.

Currently, a number of overhead utility lines exist adjacent to Green Valley Road and within the future

widening areas of the Projects. These utility owners include PG&E and AT&T. In order to accommodate the Projects' improvements, these overhead utilities will require relocation. Transportation staff has 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, Transportation staff has proposed the formation of a UUD within the limits of the Bridge Replacement Projects, in an effort to avoid additional negative impacts to the adjacent residences, simplify construction sequencing operations, and improve the aesthetics of the Projects' area by eliminating a heavy concentration of overhead utility lines. Transportation staff has directed the environmental consultant to include a discussion in the Environmental Document that notes the potential formation of a UUD.

Transportation staff has analyzed the cost differences associated with relocating the utility poles overhead versus 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 Projects. The utility poles are currently within the County's right-of-way; therefore, they would need to be relocated at PG&E's cost. If the County moves forward with the UUD for these Projects, 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 these Projects.

Funding for the Design and Construction Phases of UUD facilities are available from the Rule 20A Tariff Program (Rule 20A), which is managed by PG&E. This program was established in 1967 by the California Public Utilities Commission, 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 within PG&E's service area are allocated a proportional amount of funds. A similar Rule 32A.1 Tariff Program (Rule 32A.1) exists for AT&T facilities.

As of May 31, 2015, the account balance in Rule 20A 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, resulting in an account balance \$17,122,497. The account balance also takes into account the Diamond Springs Parkway Phase 1A Project that will go into construction in 2017. Transportation has received confirmation from PG&E that the Bridge Replacement Projects are eligible to utilize Rule 20A funds for the UUD, and PG&E has acknowledged notification of the proposed UUD. Transportation staff has also communicated with AT&T representatives regarding the proposed UUD and their associated financial responsibilities in association with Rule 32A.1.

Over the past four months, Transportation staff has progressed forward with activities necessary for formation of the UUD, including public outreach, preliminary design, and coordination with the utility companies. Additionally, all property owners affected by the proposed UUD were contacted via mail inviting them to attend a public meeting held October 20, 2016, in the El Dorado County Planning Commission Hearing Room. The meeting was attended by two members of the public and no opposition to the UUD was voiced during the meeting.

The UDD design and construction work will be completed at the same time as the design and

construction of the Bridge Replacement Projects. It is anticipated all utility relocation work as part of the UUD will be completed by 2022. The County will act as the lead trench agent and coordinate the design work with the utility companies involved. The County will obtain rights of entry from the property owners for the service connection work on private property and acquire a designated public utility easement for the joint trench adjacent to Green Valley Road.

ALTERNATIVES

Cancel the formation of the UUD and continue the work of the relocation of the overhead utility facilities as planned within the Projects.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

AT&T and PG&E, and County Counsel has reviewed and approved the various PG&E Agreements and Resolution.

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Department's recommendation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Based on discussions with the utility companies, if the UUD is formed and utilities are relocated underground, the preliminary costs are as follows:

- Design Coordination: \$125,000 (potentially, 88.53% would be reimbursable from the HBP)
- Right-of-Way Coordination: \$75,000 (potentially, 88.53% would be reimbursable from the HBP)
- Construction: \$2,100,000 (entirely reimbursable from Tariff Funds)
- Construction Credit: \$150,000

The Projects 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 borne by 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 the HBP. The estimated \$22,940 County share associated with Design and Right of Way coordination of the UUD would be covered by a combination of Regional Surface Transportation Program and Traffic Impact Mitigation Fees. There is no Net County Cost associated with this item.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

- 1) Clerk of the Board will obtain the Chair's signature on the adopted Resolution.
- 2) Clerk of the Board will forward a copy of the executed Resolution to Matt Smeltzer, Community Development Agency, Transportation Division, Fairlane Engineering.

TRANSPORTATION FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

- 1) Community Development Agency Director, or designee, will sign the PG&E application documents necessary to initiate work under PG&E's Rule 20A.

- 2) Community Development Agency Director, or designee, will sign notices to AT&T directing this utility company to initiate work required as part of the UUD formation.
- 3) Transportation will forward a copy of the Resolution to the utility companies and notify all affected property owners within the UUD.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Infrastructure

CONTACT

Matthew Smeltzer, Deputy Director, Engineering
Community Development Agency, Transportation Division