



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1382, **Version:** 1

HEARING - Department of Transportation recommending the Board consider the following regarding the establishment of an Underground Utility District as part of the Mount Murphy Road at South Fork American River - Bridge Replacement Project, CIP 77129/36105029:

- 1) Adoption Resolution **171-2019** to create an Underground Utility District as part of the project;
- 2) Direct the Director of Transportation, or designee, to sign all Pacific Gas & Electric Company application documents necessary to initiate work under the Rule 20A Program; and
- 3) Direct the Director of Transportation, 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: 30 Min.)

FUNDING: Electrical Rule 20A Underground Utility Funds (PG&E) and Telecommunication Rule 32A Tariff Funds (AT&T) (100%)

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The Mount Murphy Road at South Fork American River - Bridge Replacement Project (Project) is included in the Department of Transportation's (Transportation) 2018 Capital Improvement Program, as adopted by the Board on June 26, 2018, Item 61, Legistar 18-0616. Currently, a number of overhead utility lines exist adjacent to Mount Murphy Road and within the future widening areas of the Project. These utility owners include Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) and Pacific Bell Telephone Company dba AT&T California (AT&T). In order to accommodate the Project's 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 tree and brush clearing that would significantly impact the adjacent properties on Mount Murphy Road. Due to the complexity of this effort, Transportation staff has proposed the formation of an Underground Utility District (UUD) within the limits of the Project, in an effort to avoid additional negative impacts to the adjacent properties, simplify construction sequencing operations, and improve the aesthetics of the Project's 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. On June 4, 2019, Item 46, Legistar 19-0641, the Board directed Transportation staff to begin preliminary work and public outreach necessary to establish this 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 Project. If the County moves forward with the UUD for this Project, the costs to relocate the overhead poles may also be credited back to the County and will be determined during the right-of-way process. 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 this Project.

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 Tariff Program (Rule 32A) exists for AT&T facilities.

As of March 31, 2018, the account balance in Rule 20A program available to El Dorado County is \$10,128,032. This number does not include the 2019 Allocation which can be assumed to be the same as the 2018 Allocation of \$546,822, resulting in an account balance \$10,675,124. The account balance also takes into account the Diamond Springs Parkway Phase 1A Project which is currently in construction in 2019. Also accounted for in this account balance (and going to construction) are the Missouri Flat Road UUDs and Green Valley Road Bridge Replacement Projects at Indian Creek and Mound Springs Creek. Transportation has received confirmation from PG&E that the Project is 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. The utility agencies shall provide installation a maximum of one-hundred (100) feet of individual electric service trenching and conductor, as well as conduit, backfill, and paving if required. There are exceptions to this one-hundred (100) foot rule and will be evaluated for each parcel based on site considerations, existing infrastructure, and design requirements when working with the utility agencies.

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 this Hearing.

The UUD design and construction work will be completed at the same time as the design and construction of the Project. It is anticipated all utility relocation work as part of the UUD will be completed by 2023. The County will act as the lead trench agent and assist in the coordination of 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 Mount Murphy Road. The utility conduit within the Project will include additional conduit for future needs. This will allow for future utility and broadband installation as necessary and located within the bridge Project limits.

ALTERNATIVES

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

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

See Discussion / Background Section.

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 / COMMENTS

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

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: \$75,000 (County cost 100% would be reimbursable from HBP)
- Right-of-Way Coordination: \$75,000 (County cost 100% would be reimbursable from HBP)
- Utility Engineering: 100% Tariff Program
- Estimated Permanent Relocation, Construction (Rule 20A / Rule 32A): \$1,000,000 (100% of which is reimbursable from tariff funds)
- Estimated Temporary Relocation: \$150,000 (HBP)

The Project may also receive a construction credit on the undergrounding for the overhead poles and will be determined through the right-of-way process based on easements and prior rights. 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 \$1,300,000 of which 100% would be paid for from tariff funds and HBP. 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 Transportation, Fairlane Engineering, attention Matt Smeltzer.

TRANSPORTATION FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

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

Rafael Martinez, Director
Department of Transportation