

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Date: 7/9/12
Item No.: 13.b

Department Approval



City Manager Approval



Item Description: Discuss Draft Overhead Electric Undergrounding Policy

BACKGROUND

The City Council requested staff to work with the Public Works, Environment, and Transportation Commission to develop a policy on Overhead Electric Undergrounding. Property owners have occasionally asked for the overhead electric power lines to be undergrounded as a part of street reconstruction projects. The City Council approved the undergrounding of the electric lines on the Ramsey County Rice Street interchange project. This project utilized the Community Requested Facilities Surcharge as a funding mechanism for this work.

The PWETC was presented a draft policy for their review and provided feedback for revisions. The Commission has recommended the policy to the City Council. A copy of the draft policy is attached. (Attachment A)

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The City is committed to improve transportation corridors for all users and modes of transportation. Frequently conflicts exist to construct facilities for all modes in crowded right of ways. Undergrounding helps to reduce the conflicts and improve safety.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Undergrounding is a community cost for existing overhead electric lines under Public Utilities Commission rules. Community Requested Facilities Surcharge on electric utilities bills is available to the Council as a funding mechanism or other statutory authorized funding mechanisms such as property tax levies.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is seeking Council feedback and direction on the draft policy as provided.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Discuss the draft policy and provide direction to staff.

Prepared by: Duane Schwartz, Public Works Director
Attachments: A: Draft Overhead Electric Undergrounding Policy

CITY OF ROSEVILLE, MINNESOTA **POLICY**

SUBJECT: UNDERGROUND CONVERSION OF OVERHEAD ELECTRIC
UTILITY LINES

POLICY NO.:

EFFECTIVE DATE:

BACKGROUND:

Underground conversion of overhead electric utility lines and associated facilities by companies is desirable when the City Council finds that the public health, safety or general welfare would require the removal of poles, overhead wires and associated overhead structures with the underground installation of wires and facilities for supplying electric, communication, cable television or similar or associated service within certain corridors, and the City Council has, by adoption of this policy, declared the designated corridor, an Underground Utility Corridor.

PURPOSE:

To establish a policy for conversion of overhead utility lines by utility companies when the City Council determines that undergrounding of overhead utilities is in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare; and asserts its right to require conversion of overhead utilities in the exercise of its statutory powers.

POLICY:

It shall be the policy of the City Council to:

- A. Exercise the City's rights to require, and enforce as necessary, utility companies to convert overhead utilities to underground when it is in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare of the general public. Such power shall not be restricted except as limited by state law in any form by any qualifying criteria except that such lines or facilities must be within the public right of way, City owned property, or other property within the public jurisdiction within the City of Roseville.
- B. Identify and prioritize projects as follows:
 - 1. All utilities within the City of Roseville with overhead facilities shall provide to the City Manager each year no later than January 31st, a complete list of all overhead utility locations in a format as prescribed by the City Manager. This list shall be accurate as reasonably possible and no utility will be held liable for accidental omissions or errors.
 - 2. The City shall develop and bring before the City Council a master plan for undergrounding based on the most recent capital improvement plans of all roadway

jurisdictions within the City of Roseville. The projects shall be prioritized based on the following criteria:

- 1st Criteria: Any previously funded underground utility priority corridor project which was subsequently removed from funded list and placed on deferment.
- 2nd Criteria: All identified corridor reconstruction projects where utility pole relocation is necessary for the public facilities construction.
- 3rd Criteria: All identified undergrounding corridor projects contiguous to previous undergrounding.
- 4th Criteria: Any corridor adjacent to public facilities, schools, retail areas, and parks, and recreation facilities.
- 5th Criteria: Corridors with over 5000 ADT traffic volumes. These corridors provide access for emergency first responders and would benefit from minimum risk of obstruction from damaged overhead facilities.
- 6th Criteria: Corridors with existing or planned major pedestrian facilities.
- 7th Criteria: Tree preservation
- 8th Criteria: Entry corridors to the city where aesthetics create a positive image for visitors and residents.

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a. Funding of projects:

Undergrounding of overhead electric utility lines will be funded utilizing the PUC authorized Community Requested Facilities Surcharge which has an established maximum stacking amount on a customer's electric bill. CRFS Projects will be limited by the amount available for additional surcharge.

This policy does not prohibit neighborhood initiated request of undergrounding if alternative sources or methods of funding are identified.