



REPORT FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Underground Utility District No. 42

(Cherry Avenue – 53rd Street to 91 Freeway)

Date of Public Hearing: May 6, 2025

This report is submitted pursuant to Long Beach Municipal Code §15.48.020 (C) for a public hearing to consider the adoption of a resolution establishing **Underground Utility District 42**.

SUMMARY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Creation of Underground Utility District No. 42 will facilitate the undergrounding of overhead utility lines along Cherry Avenue, from 53rd Street to the south side of the 91 Freeway. This includes approximately 1.5 miles of existing overhead utility lines located within Council Districts 8 and 9, replacing the overhead pole-mounted electrical and utility systems with new subterranean facilities.

PROPERTY OWNER DEADLINE

Private property owners must complete necessary electric facility changes (if any) and grant required easements by August 6, 2026 (15 months after the public hearing date).

To assist with conversions, the City has elected to use Rule 20A work credits to fund the installation of underground electric service laterals, modification of service panels, and wiring from the customer's panel to Southern California Edison's (SCE) connection point in the public right-of-way. However, any Work needed to correct code violations or make other non-project-required improvements (such as upgrading from 2-wire to 3-wire service or relocating panels for safety or access) will remain the responsibility of the property owner.

ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR ENTIRE UNDERGROUNDING PROJECT

The planning phase will be completed upon adoption of the resolution. Thereafter, the project is anticipated to take 4 to 6 years to complete, covering the design, pre-construction, construction, and closing phases.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING

Utility Undergrounding is the process of relocating overhead, pole-mounted utilities into underground ducts and structures. Burying these facilities improves the overall appearance of an area, enhances public safety by removing poles and guywires, and expands Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility by increasing parkway space.

RULE 20A

In 1967, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) created electric tariff Rule 20, which guides electric utility companies like Southern California Edison (SCE) in planning undergrounding projects. Rule 20 can be divided into Rules 20A, 20B, and 20C, each of which has specific criteria.

Rule 20A underground conversion projects are funded by all SCE ratepayers. Until 2022, SCE provided annual allocations of work credits to the City of Long Beach for utility undergrounding under Rule 20A. These work credits fund the undergrounding of eligible overhead utilities at minimal to no direct cost to affected property owners, provided the project meets public interest criteria.

The City may elect to use Rule 20A funds for:

- Installation of mainline underground facilities.
- Installation of up to 100 feet of each customer's underground electric service lateral from the public right-of-way.
- Modification or replacement of service panels to accept underground service.

By utilizing Rule 20A credits for service laterals and panel conversions, the City ensures prompt customer conversions and project completion. Upgrades unrelated to the undergrounding effort must be completed at the property owner's expense.

CHERRY AVENUE UNDERGROUNDING PROJECT

The City of Long Beach partnered with SCE to identify possible sites for undergrounding based on public benefit and to comply with regulatory requirements outlined by the CPUC, SCE, and Long Beach Municipal Code. Some requirements for selecting a Rule 20A project include considering areas with a high number of overhead power lines, heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic, and roadways which serve as a major arterial route. SCE requested the City submit a project resolution by June 8, 2025 and the City has selected Cherry Avenue, from 53rd Street to State Route 91, for undergrounding.

Beyond meeting public benefit criteria, relocating powerlines underground along Cherry Avenue will improve a mixed-use area, benefiting residents and businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods. The selected segment of Cherry Avenue also connects to improvement projects along Artesia Boulevard and Market Street, further enhancing the City's upgraded streetscape. Undergrounding will prepare the corridor for future capital improvement projects.

REQUIREMENT UNDER LB MUNICIPAL CODE §15.48.020(C)

Pursuant to Long Beach Municipal Code §15.48.020(C), prior to holding the public hearing, the City Engineer or their designee must prepare a report providing:

- A description of the project.
- The deadline for property owners to complete electric facility changes.
- An estimate of the time required to complete the undergrounding and removal of poles, wires, and associated structures.

This report satisfies these requirements for the May 6, 2025 public hearing.

PROJECT TIMELINE AND PHASES

Phase	Description	Estimated Duration
Planning Phase	Project qualification, rough estimate, consultation with utilities, Underground Utility District formation and adoption.	3–12 months
Design Phase	Engineering, joint trench designs, utility coordination.	6–18 months
Pre-Construction Phase	Easement acquisition, permits, environmental clearances, bid awards.	6–24 months
Construction Phase	Civil trenching, installation of ducts, cables, laterals, panel conversions.	3–18 months
Closing Phase	Removal of poles and wires, property restoration, project finalization.	6–12 months

Total Estimated Timeline (post-planning): Approximately 4 to 6 years, subject to size, complexity, third-party participation, and unforeseen delays.

WORK ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Lateral Conversions and Panel Modifications may be needed during undergrounding.

- Service Laterals: SCE, funded by Rule 20A work credits, will install underground electric service laterals (up to 100 feet) from the customer's electric panel to the new underground system within the public right-of-way.
- Panel Conversions: SCE will modify or replace existing electric panels where necessary to accept underground service, using Rule 20A funds.
- Restoration: SCE will restore private properties to pre-construction conditions, matching existing hardscape and landscape features. All concrete or other hardscape disturbed during construction will be replaced to existing joints or limits.

Property owners will bear the cost for any additional work unrelated to the undergrounding, such as correcting code violations, upgrading service configurations (2-wire to 3-wire), or relocating panels for safety, accessibility, or other reasons. Affected property owners must complete any necessary private electric facility work and grant any required easements by **August 6, 2026 to avoid project delays** and ensure readiness for service connection.

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