



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Aldinger and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Jim Arndt, Director of Public Works
Dana Greenwood, City Engineer
Stephanie Katsouleas, Senior Civil Engineer

DATE: August 7, 2007

SUBJECT: Summary of Utility Underground District 05-6 Public Meeting Held to Review Construction Design Plans.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council:

- Receive and file this report summarizing the public meeting held to address the revised design plans for Utility Underground District 6, and
- Approve a parking pass program to address the parking problem(s) that will be created as a result of the construction project.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

There are no fiscal implications in receiving this report.

BACKGROUND:

District 6 is generally described as The Strand to Highland Ave., between Marine Ave. and 15th Street (see Attachment A). It was formally recognized by City Council in May, 2000 following the submittal of petition signatures by more than 60% of affected homeowners. Several years later (summer 2005), draft design plans were finalized by the three utilities and an evening public meeting was held to provide District 6 homeowners the opportunity to review draft construction plans prior to voting and construction. Approximately 10 homeowners attended that meeting. No comments or requests were submitted to the City that night or any time thereafter prior to voting in October/November 2005. The district was ultimately approved on November 21, 2005 by 63% of homeowners who cast ballots, and a resolution was passed by City Council authorizing the legal formation of the District.

Following legal delays, District 6 construction was scheduled to begin in September, 2006. However, while marking the streets for construction Edison's contractor determined that the plans were not viable as drawn due to recently installed infrastructure (gas, sewer, storm drains). The plans were subsequently revised by Edison, Verizon and Time Warner over the next 10 months. Significant changes from Edison's original plans include:

- Eliminating one (1) large vault and associated vent pipes on 21st Pl. midway up the alley.
- Downsizing six (6) large vaults in the alleys from 16th Pl. - 20th Pl. and on Ocean Dr. at 20th Pl.
- Downsizing and relocating one (1) large vault on Ocean Dr. from 16th Pl. to 18th St.
- Adding two (2) small vaults and associated vent pipes on Ocean Dr. 18th Pl. and 19th St.
- Adding four (4) large vaults and associated vent pipes on east side of Highland Ave. between Marine Ave. and 15th St. along with a new trench line over that distance.
- Realigning/relocating six (6) trench lines from the north to the south side of the alleys between 15th Pl. - 20th Pl., which in turn impacted the original vault and vent pipe locations.

Other significant impacts carried over from the original project design include the installation of six (6) new riser poles and associated guy wires in the alleys between 15th Pl. and 21st Pl. and one new guy wire on an existing pole on 16th Pl., all located east of Highland Ave. Because no above ground facilities are identified on Verizon and Time Warner design plans, staff did not evaluate the breadth of their changes in the public right-of-way.

In early July, staff employed several outreach methods to notify homeowners of the upcoming date, time, location and intent of a second public meeting to review new construction plans. These methods included:

- Mailing notices to all homeowners in District 6 as well as those just outside the district boundary who will be affected by the project (see Attachment B).
- Providing supplemental, infrastructure-specific letters to 40 homeowners whose properties are located proximate to vent pipes, guy wires and/or riser poles (see Attachment C).
- Posting a notice of the meeting in the Beach Reporter (July 6, 2007, Attachment D) and on the City's new website in several locations (calendar, meetings and events, Public Works webpage, District 6 webpage).
- Contacting via telephone the four property owners adjacent to Highland Ave. whose homes lie outside the district boundary but which are adjacent to planned, above ground vent pipes.

DISCUSSION:

A second public meeting to review design plans was held on July 24, 2007, and approximately 65 residents attended. Staff displayed Edison's and Time Warner's new draft (color coded) designs, provided related handouts (Attachment E) and fielded questions and comments for approximately 1½ hours. Representatives from Edison and Time Warner were also present and answered questions as appropriate. Southern California Edison's public affairs representative, Scott Gobble, brought an actual 8" vent pipe for audience reference on sizing and style. The general themes of the comments received and staff responses to those comments included:

1. **Dissatisfaction with vent pipe locations and desire to have them moved:** Staff explained that we as a policy do not override Edison's planned vent pipe locations for aesthetic reasons. However, we did field checked every planned vent location to ensure that homeowners will be only minimally impacted. In the majority of cases, the smallest vents available (8" diameter) will be installed at property lines.
2. **Dissatisfaction among homeowners on the east side of Highland who are not part of the district but will be impacted by the project, specifically regarding vent pipes and riser poles placed adjacent to their properties:** The transition of an underground network back to an overhead system often requires additional infrastructure to complete the transition. In 6 of the 7 riser pole locations planned, the existing pole configurations eliminated them from being able to also serve as risers due to: 1) lack of space for guy wires, 2) existing transformers on poles, 3) conduit congestion and 4) presence of mid-span wires. City staff made efforts to personally contact and work with every affected homeowner east of Highland regarding the impact. Eight were reached and four were non-responsive to staff efforts as of this report date. Several (minor) modifications have been made following these contacts.
3. **Clarification and further explanation about why the plans had to be redesigned and reason for the construction delay:** Several improvements took place between the time Edison completed its designs and construction commenced, which include upgraded gas lines, sewer line repairs and a new storm drain. The design problems were discovered when the subcontractors began marking the street at the start of construction last September. The discovery halted the project and 10 additional months were taken to complete new design plans by all 3 utilities.
4. **Clarification about the purpose of vent pipes and the volume of noise that will be created by transformers in vaults.** The vents are used to allow the heat generated by the underground transformers to escape. They are non-mechanical and serve only to allow air to circulate through the vault. The vaults create no discernable noise when operational.
5. **Curiosity about when construction will start, its duration and what impact it will have on residents.** Once Verizon's and Time Warner's design plans are completed, Edison will analyze the joint trench allocation and forward all three sets of plans to the contractor for new pricing. The contractor may then take up to 4 weeks to price, and another 2-4 weeks to stage and obtain materials. Staff anticipates a start date near the beginning of October. Likewise, the duration of construction will not be known until provided by the contractor. The impact of construction on residents during the daytime will be significant and will include open trenches, limited parking/garage access, loud noises, port-o-potty placement, etc., all issues typical of construction projects in the public right-of-way.
6. **Desire to have specific construction schedules as soon as possible:** Staff committed to providing a schedule as soon as it becomes known.
7. **Desire to have smaller/shorter street lights in lieu of the ones proposed, and even more if necessary to meet lighting needs:** There are some more expensive street light alternatives, but this project was priced using standard 25' marbelite poles (the cheapest option) and changing the street lights "like-for-like" in terms of height and location to the

extent possible. The poles selected are consistent with those found throughout the City and are the shortest standard marbelites available. Any more expensive option would be at an additional cost to the district. Staff recommended that any substantive changes to street light types and locations make their way through the normal channels of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission.

8. **Curiosity about the reliability and useful life of the underground system compared to an overhead system:** The useful life of a new underground system is approximately 30-50 years depending on environmental factors, quality of maintenance and unforeseen impacts. Underground systems are manually inspected/documented every year for reliability and degradation, and improvements are made whenever necessary.
9. **Desire to have parking passes issued to affected residents and relief from parking tickets during construction:** Many residents are extremely worried about the impact construction will have on their ability to access their parking pads and garages during the daytime between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Compounding the problem, Highland Ave., Marine Ave. and 15th Street have only a limited number of free, street parking spots which will likely not meet the demand of residents affected by District 6 construction activities. Therefore, staff recommends that City Council consider and approve one or both of the following:

- Provide parking passes (weekdays, 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) to District 6 residents for the lower level Metlox parking structure, exempting cars from feeding the meters; renewable monthly. Construction is expected to coincide with the school year rather than the popular summer months, a time when the Metlox lower level is not heavily utilized weekdays during the daytime.
- Provide parking passes (weekdays, 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) to District 6 residents for the City Hall parking lot, upper level, exempting cars from the free 2-hour parking limit; renewable monthly.

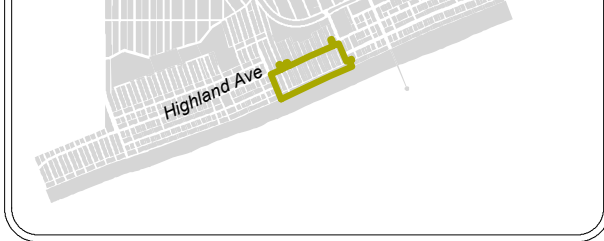
Please note that because construction activities will affect homes intermittently throughout the duration of the project (saw cutting, digging, back filling, temporary paving, permanent paving, equipment install, etc.), the City does not have the staff resources required to track and implement a parking pass program on a house-by house, as-needed basis. Additionally, construction schedules are always subject to change based on weather and other unforeseen conditions. For these reasons, the solutions proposed above would need to be implemented district-wide, on a month-to-month basis over the duration of construction.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that City Council accept and file this report summarizing the outcome of the public meeting held to review the new District 6 design plans.

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|---------------|--|
| Attachment A: | Map of District 6 |
| Attachment B: | Notice to District 6 Property Owners and Other Affected Homeowners |
| Attachment C: | Special Notices to Homeowners Impacted by Above Ground Structures |
| Attachment D: | Public Notice Posting in the Beach Reporter |
| Attachment E: | Meeting Handout |

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July 2, 2007

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
Underground Utility Assessment District 6**

The Strand to Highland Ave from 15th Street to Marine Avenue

Meeting Date and Time:

Tuesday, July 24, 2007
6:30 p.m.

MB Police/Fire Conference Rm.
400/420 15th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Above Ground Vent Pipes



**Below Ground Structures
Vaults & Hand Holes**



Dear Manhattan Beach Property Owner:

In September, 2006, Southern California Edison determined that its construction plans for Utility Underground District 6 were not viable as designed due to other recent infrastructure upgrades (sewer, gas, storm drain). The plans were redrafted by Edison and subsequently forwarded to Verizon and Time Warner for additional changes (if necessary). Completed drafts are expected later this month.

Like the original plans, the new draft plans will identify the location of all planned infrastructure for Edison, Verizon and Time Warner. This includes both above ground and subsurface facilities such as vent pipes, vaults, hand holes and new marbelite street lights. The City of Manhattan Beach City has scheduled a public meeting to provide homeowners in Utility Underground District 6 an opportunity to:

- 1) Review the proposed designs showing all infrastructure planned in the public right-of-way adjacent to each parcel.
- 2) Verify the correct location of each utility stub out relative to individual property service panels, and
- 3) Comment on the proposed designs both at this meeting and by appointment for 10 days following the meeting. **The comment period closes Friday, August 3, 2007.** All comments provided will be considered, and if appropriate, incorporated into the proposed designs.

We strongly encourage all District 6 homeowners to attend this public meeting. Representatives from the City and utilities will be present to answer any questions you may have.

Please note that the schedule for construction in District 6 is not known at this time. Whether the project proceeds with construction or is re-bid prior to construction will be determined by Edison and Verizon once the draft design plans are finalized. The City anticipates a decision on this issue sometime in August. Notification of a new construction schedule will be mailed to all District 6 homeowners as soon as it becomes available.

Should you need additional information, please feel free to contact Stephanie Katsouleas at (310) 802-5368 or via email to skatsouleas@citymb.info.



City Hall 1400 Highland Avenue Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-4795
Telephone (310) 802-5000 FAX (310) 802-5001 TDD (310) 546-3501

July 2, 2007

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
Underground Utility Assessment District 6**

«Owner_Spouse_FirstMiddle» «M__Filler» «Owner_First_Name» «Owner_Last» **APN:** «APN»
«Mail_Address_Street» **Parcel Address:** «Situs_Address» «Situs_Street»
«Mail_City_State_ZIP»

Dear «Owner_Spouse_FirstMiddle» «M__Filler» «Owner_First_Name» «Owner_Last»,

This additional notice is to advise you that per the current construction design plans, above ground facilities will be installed in the public right-of way adjacent to your property as part of the District 6 undergrounding project. **This includes «Adjacent_Vent».** If you would like more information on their exact placement, please attend the District 6 public meeting being held later this month. At the meeting, the draft construction plans for Edison, Verizon and Time Warner will be posted showing the planned location of all infrastructure specific to your property.

Meeting Date, Time and Location:

Tuesday, July 24, 2007
6:30 p.m.

MB Police/Fire Conference Rm.
400/420 15th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Please note that due to the narrow width of the alleyways and physical limitations associated with garage and parking pad access only minor adjustments to the planned vent pipe locations are possible (if requested).

If you are unable to attend the meeting, the draft construction plans will be available for review by appointment only for the 10 days following the meeting (July 25 – August 3, 2007). In the meantime, if you have any questions, you may contact me at (310) 802-5368 or via email to skatsouleas@citymb.info.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Katsouleas
Senior Civil Engineer



**Example of an
Above Ground Vent Pipe**

65,
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 \$925,
 \$939,
 \$940,
 \$1,000,
 \$1,100,
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Sold F
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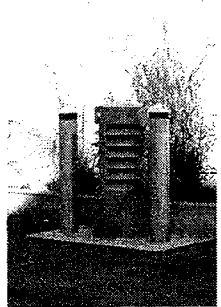
***** NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING *****
UNDERGROUND UTILITY ASSESSMENT DISTRICT 6
The Strand to Highland Ave from 15th Street to
Marine Avenue

Meeting Date and Time:

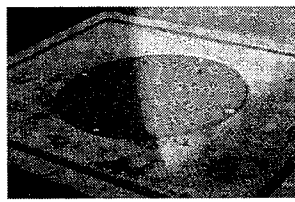
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July 6, 2007

Utility Undergrounding: Map Legend, Terms and Definitions

Map Legend	Term	Definition
	Guy Wires	Guy wires are used to counter the tension of overhead lines and are anchored from the pole to the ground.
	Hand Holes (Pull Boxes)	Hand holes serve as junction points for underground conduit and wires. Conduit from several properties can join in one hand hole, which is then connected to the main underground system via a single conduit.
	Marbelite Street Lights	A marbelite street light will be installed in all locations where there is currently a street light on a wood pole. In a majority of cases the marbelite pole will be placed in the same location as the existing light, but in some cases it will not be possible to install in the same location. The light will then be relocated to the next closest available location. The new street lights will be 25 ft high and have a 4 ft arm extender.
	Mid-span Wires	Mid span wires serve homes which do not have direct access to utility poles by branching off other wires mid-way between two poles.
	Riser Poles	Riser poles are used to transfer underground utility wires back to an overhead system. It is where wires “rise” back out of the ground.
	Transformers	Transformers reduce high voltage electricity for final delivery to customers. They can be located inside underground vaults or on overhead utility poles.
	Underground Conduit	Underground conduit is placed in the public right-of-way and contains the primary/secondary utility wires needed to serve each house from underground facilities.
	Underground Vaults (Man Holes)	Vaults contain the equipment necessary to provide electricity and telecommunications services (e.g., transformers, switching gear).
	Vent Pipes	Above ground vent pipes come in pairs. They provide a pathway for air circulation through vaults and allow hot air created by transformers to escape.