



Q&A from Community Meeting

Utility Underground District in the area around The El Monte Fire Station

February 9, 2021, 6:00 PM

1) Q: Are there plans to underground further up Elena Rd in the future?

A: We currently have two ongoing projects; this project, the Underground Utility District in the area around the El Monte Fire Station, and the Underground Utility Feasibility Study for Town-wide undergrounding. It is possible we will underground Elena Rd further up in the future, but the priority and feasibility will be assessed as part of the Town-wide study.

2) Q: Please explain where any new PG&E pad mounted transformers will be located.

A: The project is currently in the preliminary design phase. Bellecci and Associates will be coordinating with PG&E's electrical design team for the locations of any new pad mounted transformers. Bellecci's intent drawings, which will be sent to PG&E, will reflect the most preferred locations for any new pad mounted transformers. In general, Bellecci will look to locate them away from pathways, stormwater runoff areas, and out of flood zones. Bellecci will be mindful of property frontages and work with property owners where possible.

3) Q: In the Town's prior pilot underground projects in 2007, did PG&E install the wires and equipment, or did we use a contractor?

A: Town staff present at the meeting did not know who installed the wires and equipment in the 2007 underground projects. However, both the Town and Bellecci concurred that PG&E typically installs their own electrical equipment.

4) Q: I see both underground vaults and pad mounted transformers in the photos. How do you decide between underground vaults or pad mounted transformers?

A: PG&E's preferred standard for underground equipment is pad mounted transformers. Subsurface transformers are not typically recommended in areas not graded to prevent storm water runoff, where groundwater is within 3 feet, flood zones, or if there is potential for erosion. Bellecci has a geotechnical engineer performing borings in the

project area, which will give us more information on groundwater depth and soil types present.

5) Q: When you construct this project, will you add a conduit for future and new fiber optic communications line?

A: The Town will review the option of adding conduit for future communication lines. Now is a good time to assess this possibility and determine which utilities will be in the joint trench.

6) Q: For an underground vault, what is the mechanism to keep it water-tight?

A: Mechanisms for keeping the underground vault water-tight include adding a waterproofing membrane on the exterior of the vaults, sealing conduits (terminators) entering the vault, and potentially adding sump pumps for drainage.

7) Q: Why was El Monte Fire Station chosen as the area for the project?

A: The El Monte Fire Station and the surrounding area were chosen because it is a critical evacuation route and emergency response route.

8) Q: Who is paying for this project? Won't this increase taxes since it is very expensive?

A: Cost will be discussed at a different time. Some things to keep in mind are we currently have Rule 20A credits and the utility companies will cover the cost of wiring their facilities and some equipment installation.

9) Q: Are you planning on undergrounding utilities in the rest of Los Altos Hills?

A: The Town and Bellecci will assess the potential for undergrounding utilities in the rest of Los Altos Hills in the Underground Utility Feasibility Study.

10) Q: How long and how much noise and traffic disruption will there be?

A: The best way to regulate the noise and traffic disruption is by including specific rules and restrictions in the construction plans and specifications, which Bellecci will be preparing. For example, embedded plates will be required to restore lanes at the end of the construction day. One lane of traffic will be closed during active construction hours, but two lanes will be open outside of construction hours. Access to driveways will be provided to property owners throughout construction. As for noise impacts, Bellecci will

consider how far the trench is from properties and normal construction hours will be followed.

11) Q: I can understand why this project will help Moody Road and evacuation routes, but I do not see the reason for planning this relatively small section of LAH unless there is a larger plan looking at cost vs. benefits for all of LAH.

A: The Town and Bellecci are currently working on the Underground Utility Feasibility Study for Town-wide undergrounding. This study will help prioritize locations and costs vs. benefits.

12) Q: If you trench through an existing driveway, will you repave it with asphalt or concrete or reset pavers if those are in use?

A: Any trenching on private property will be restored to the previous condition. Bellecci is considering using horizontal boring for driveways with pavers.

13) Q: Are residents expected to pay for trenching on their premises to reach the home?

A: The Town will pay for trenching within 100 ft of the property line.

14) Q: Can we add a gas pipe in the design so to increase occupancy? Sewer as well?

A: The Town and Bellecci can invite PG&E gas to be part of the trench. We will reach out and follow up. The joint trench will only include dry utilities.

15) Q: How long do you expect traffic on Moody Rd to be disrupted?

A: Once construction begins on the trenches, which will require a lane closure with flaggers and one-way traffic control on Moody Rd, it will likely take about four months for them to complete. After the trenches in the road are finished, the contractor will be working on the service lines to each property, which will impact the individual properties, but have much less impact on the roads. Another significant impact to Moody Rd will be when PG&E and the other utilities pull their wires through the conduits. This will likely take about eight months for all the utility companies to complete. Lastly, some impacts may occur when PG&E removes the poles.

16) Q: Would the town and/or PG&E accept underground horizontal boring (i.e. trenchless) for secondary service lines?

A: Yes, the Town and PG&E may accept horizontal boring as an option. PG&E has a standard for horizontal boring, which would be followed if this option is chosen. Bellecci will coordinate with each property owner to determine what is ideal and feasible for each property.