

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - LAND USE  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 1**

**SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM:  
SECOND CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE:  
ADOPT A RESOLUTION AND ORDINANCE FOR THE FORMATION OF THE  
UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT (UUD) FOR BONITA ROAD PHASE 4  
IN THE COMMUNITY OF SWEETWATER AND RELATED CEQA FINDING  
(5/7/25 - FIRST READING; 05/21/25 - SECOND READING AND ADOPTION)  
(DISTRICT: 1)**

**OVERVIEW**

On May 7, 2025 (05), the Board of Supervisors set a Hearing and took action to further consider and adopt the Ordinance on May 21, 2025

The County of San Diego's (County) Department of Public Works (DPW) has worked with utility companies, including San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E), for over 50 years to enhance community aesthetics, improve public safety, and increase utility reliability through utility undergrounding. In 1967, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) established the Electric Tariff Rule 20A Program (20A Program), which requires investor-owned utilities to set aside funds in the form of credits to underground their utility lines in areas that meet specific public interest criteria, such as major thoroughfares, scenic corridors, and locations with significant public benefit. In response to the 20A Program, the Board of Supervisors (Board) established Board Policy J-17 (J-17) Undergrounding of Existing Overhead Utility Facilities in 1970. The policy outlines the process for managing undergrounding projects and establishing an Underground Utilities Advisory Committee (UUAC). The UUAC includes DPW staff and representatives from SDG&E, AT&T, and other telecommunication companies. The UUAC reviews projects that meet the criteria for undergrounding, coordinates plans and construction of these projects and develops a long-range plan for undergrounding in the unincorporated area.

After the UUAC has recommended a project, the next step is to form an Underground Utility District (UUD). A UUD is a designated area created by ordinance that requires all current and future utility facilities to be located underground. Undergrounding offers numerous benefits to the local community by significantly improving neighborhood aesthetics by removing visible power lines and poles from the landscape, creating a cleaner, more visually appealing environment with unobstructed views. Vegetation management and community beautification projects are easier to implement with fewer utility wires to work around. Another benefit provided to the community is the enhancement of wildlife and habitat conservation in the adjacent open space area by removing utility lines that can obstruct flight paths and be an electrical hazard to birds. Undergrounding utility lines reduces fire hazards, accidents, safety risks, and power outages due to downed lines. Following emergencies, communities can also recover more quickly if key infrastructure remains intact. The Board established the County's first UUD in 1968, and since then, it has created over one hundred UUDs across the unincorporated area including one currently in design on Cole Grade Road in Valley Center.

In the early 2000s, the County identified a corridor along Bonita Road that qualified for the 20A Program extending from Bonita Christian Center Drive at the Chula Vista City Limit to the intersection of Bonita Road and San Miguel Road. This project was divided into four phases due to its size and available 20A Program credits. Construction on the first three phases, extending from Bonita Christian Center Drive at the Chula Vista City Limit to 400 feet southwest of Frisbie Street, were all completed by mid-2011. The fourth phase was never completed which left a gap on Bonita Road where utility poles and overhead lines are still present.

DPW recommends forming a UUD in Sweetwater on Bonita Road between 400 feet southwest of Frisbie Street and San Miguel Road to complete the fourth and final phase of undergrounding on Bonita Road which will create a continuous stretch of underground utilities along Bonita Road. This UUD represents a collaborative effort supported by the UUAC and Sweetwater Community Planning Group. Creating the UUD before June 8, 2025 will make this an active 20A Program project which allows the project to utilize available 20A Program credits paid by SDG&E. SDG&E has confirmed that they are prepared to add this project to their list of active 20A Program projects and will initiate the work when directed by DPW staff, following the UUD creation.

Today's request is for the Board of Supervisors to adopt a resolution of intention to set a public hearing date for forming the UUD, and to adopt an ordinance creating the Bonita Road Phase 4 UUD at a second hearing scheduled for May 21, 2025. After creating a UUD, County Code section 89.103 requires a resolution setting the time within which such removal and underground installation shall be accomplished. DPW will return to the Board at a later date to request Board action to set a deadline for the utility companies to relocate their equipment underground.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

Adopt the following Ordinance (second reading): AN ORDINANCE ADDING SECTION 89.319 TO THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY CODE OF REGULATORY ORDINANCES TO FORM AN UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT ON BONITA ROAD UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 118. (Attachment C).

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed Underground Utility District (UUD) falls within an underserved community within the Southeastern San Diego Live Well Community. The Live Well San Diego program has identified long-standing inequities and disparities in social indicators of health, safety, and the ability to thrive. The project will remove utility poles and overhead wires, thereby creating a more scenic and aesthetic roadway for all residents, businesses, and visitors to the area.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed action will have social and environmental sustainability benefits. The proposed action to form an Underground Utility District (UUD) will support the County of San Diego's sustainability goal to transition to a green, carbon-free economy by: providing space for large trees and reducing exposure for wildlife; increasing reliability during most extreme weather events including high winds and storms, as undergrounding eliminates nearly all the risk of wildfire ignition from a power line; and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the need for vegetation management and overhead cable management.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 CAO Recommended Operational Plan in the Department of Public Works (DPW) General Fund. If approved, this request will result in costs and revenue of \$50,000 in Fiscal Year 2025-26 for DPW staff time to establish the Underground Utility District (UUD), conduct outreach, and coordinate with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). The funding source is existing General Purpose Revenue (GPR) in DPW.

Future fiscal years' cost for staff time to coordinate and oversee the utility work and to return to the Board of Supervisors to set a deadline are estimated to be up to \$50,000 annually. The funding source for future years' cost is existing GPR in DPW. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

## **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

Utility undergrounding can have a positive impact on local businesses by significantly reducing power outages caused by weather events, leading to less lost revenue during disruptions, improving aesthetics which can attract more customers, and potentially increasing property values in the area. By creating a more attractive and reliable business environment, undergrounding can stimulate economic growth and attract new businesses to the area. The initial construction phase may cause temporary disruptions to business operations. However, the long-term benefits of utility undergrounding for local businesses are expected to outweigh the short-term challenges.

## **ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Lawson-Remer, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent, and adopted Ordinance No. 10942 (N.S.) entitled: AN ORDINANCE ADDING SECTION 89.319 TO THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY CODE OF REGULATORY ORDINANCES TO FORM AN UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT ON BONITA ROAD UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 118.

AYES: Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

ABSENT: (District 1 Seat Vacant)

State of California)  
County of San Diego)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed  
by Andrew Potter

