

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

May 20, 2025

FROM

NOEL CASTILLO, Director, Department of Public Works – Transportation

SUBJECT

Public Hearing to Consider Formation of Underground Utility Districts for Mission Boulevard, Valley Boulevard, and Beech Avenue, in the Montclair, Rialto, and Fontana Areas

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Conduct a public hearing to consider the formation of the following proposed Underground Utilities Districts to find and determine whether removing overhead utility structures and installing underground facilities is required for the public interest, necessity, health, safety, or welfare within designated areas of the County:
 - a. Mission Boulevard Underground Utilities District,
 - b. Valley Boulevard Underground Utilities District, and
 - c. Beech Avenue Underground Utilities District.
2. Find that the Mission Boulevard Underground Utilities District, Valley Boulevard Underground Utilities District, and Beech Avenue Underground Utilities District projects are exempt under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15303(d), Class 3.
3. Adopt **Resolution No. 2025-96** forming the Mission Boulevard Underground Utilities District on Mission Boulevard, from Central Avenue to Benson Avenue, in the Montclair area.
4. Adopt **Resolution No. 2025-97** forming the Valley Boulevard Underground Utilities District on Valley Boulevard, from Cedar Avenue to Spruce Avenue, in the Rialto area.
5. Adopt **Resolution No. 2025-98** forming the Beech Avenue Underground Utilities District on Beech Avenue, from Fontana Avenue to Merrill Avenue, in the Fontana area.
6. Authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works to request Southern California Edison to allocate funds, which have been set aside by Southern California Edison, to the Mission Boulevard Underground Utilities District, Valley Boulevard Underground Utilities District, and Beech Avenue Underground Utilities District for the purpose of underground utilities.
7. Approve the allocation of \$14,604,183 in Electric Tariff Rule 20A Program funds for undergrounding overhead electric facilities as follows:
 - a. Allocate approximately \$4,200,000 Electric Tariff Rule 20A Program funds to complete the Mission Boulevard Project, from Central Avenue to Benson Avenue, for its entire project length of 0.5 miles; and
 - b. Allocate approximately \$3,800,000 Electric Tariff Rule 20A Program funds to complete the Valley Boulevard Project, from Cedar Avenue to Spruce Avenue, for the project length of 0.5 miles; and
 - c. Allocate approximately \$6,604,183 Electric Tariff Rule 20A Program funds to complete a portion of the Beech Avenue Project, from Merrill Avenue to Fontana Avenue, approximately 1.0 mile in length.
8. Direct the Clerk of the Board to:

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- a. Mail a copy of the Resolutions to each affected utility within 10 days;
 - b. Mail a notice of the actions taken to all property owners within the Mission Boulevard Underground Utilities District, Valley Boulevard Underground Utilities District and Beech Avenue Underground Utilities District within 30 days;
 - c. Certify to the passage of the Resolutions and transmit a copy of same to the County Surveyor, together with all appended exhibits.
9. Direct the Department of Public Works to file and post the Notice of Exemption in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.
(Presenter: Noel Castillo, Director, 387-7906)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Promote the Countywide Vision

Ensure Development of a Well-Planned, Balanced, and Sustainable County.

Provide for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Approval of this item will not result in the use of Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). The Mission Boulevard Underground Utilities District, Valley Boulevard Underground Utilities District, and Beech Avenue Underground Utilities District (Districts) Projects are funded by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Rule 20A Program and managed and constructed by Southern California Edison (SCE). There is no financial impact to the County and no cost to the affected property owners.

Rule 20A of the CPUC requires investor-owned electric utilities, including SCE, to set aside funds for undergrounding overhead utility lines. Each city and county in the SCE service area receives an annual allocation of work credits in the Rule 20A fund. SCE has estimated that the proposed undergrounding projects, which include service laterals and service connections, will cost approximately \$14.6 million and has verified that the County has a Rule 20A credit balance of \$14.6 million.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On April 29, 2025 (Item No. 57), the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted resolutions of intent to form the following Underground Utilities Districts pursuant to CPUC Rule 20A:

- Mission Boulevard, from Central Avenue to Benson Avenue, in the Montclair area (Mission Boulevard Improvement Project);
- Valley Boulevard, from Cedar Avenue to Spruce Avenue (Valley Boulevard Improvement Project); and
- Beech Avenue, from Fontana Avenue to Merrill Avenue, in the Fontana area (Beech Avenue Widening Project).

At that meeting, the Board also scheduled May 20, 2025, as the date of the public hearing to consider the Districts' formations. The Clerk of the Board was also directed to provide appropriate notice of the public hearing to all affected property owners and to all utility companies concerned, as required by law.

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Formation of the Underground Utility Districts is required under both CPUC Rule 20A and Section 67.0205 of the San Bernardino County Code to allow for the use of Rule 20A funds for project implementation. Once formed, the Districts will remain in effect indefinitely. Any future utility installation or replacement within the boundaries of these Districts must be constructed underground.

In order for an undergrounding project to qualify for Rule 20A funds, the local agency must determine that the undergrounding project is in the public's interest for one or more of the following reasons:

- (1) Undergrounding will eliminate an unusually heavy concentration of overhead lines;
- (2) Involves a street or road with a high volume of public traffic with a minimum of 5,000 average trips per day;
- (3) Wheelchair access is limited or impeded by existing above ground electric and/or telecommunications infrastructure;
- (4) Benefit a civic or public recreation area or area of unusual scenic interest; and/or
- (5) Be listed as an arterial street or major collector as defined in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidelines.

As required by County Code section 67.0204, the Department of Public Works (Department) consulted with all affected utilities and prepared a report for the public hearing. The report includes the extent of utility participation and estimated costs for undergrounding overhead facilities:

- Mission Boulevard Improvement Project: Estimated cost is \$4.2 million for 0.5 miles.
- Valley Boulevard Improvement Project: Estimated cost is \$3.8 million for 0.5 miles.
- Beech Avenue Widening Project: Estimated cost is \$6.6 million for one mile.

The affected utility, SCE, will have a significant level of participation as they will be fully responsible for managing, coordinating, performing, and paying for all the work. There will be no cost to the County or property owners. All overhead facilities are expected to be removed and underground utilities installed by December 31, 2033, and all affected properties must be ready to receive underground service by that date.

The Mission Boulevard Improvement Project, Valley Boulevard Improvement Project, and Beech Avenue Widening Project (collectively Projects) will serve the public interest and qualify for Rule 20A allocation because sub-transmission lines are substantial and create a visual impact in the midst of both commercial and residential properties that experience high levels of vehicular traffic and pedestrian use. Undergrounding substantial sub-transmission electric lines along these corridors will significantly enhance visual aesthetics, improve safety and access for pedestrians, and contribute to long-term community resilience. Therefore, the proposed undergrounding Projects will serve the public interest and qualify for the use of Rule 20A funds.

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The Department reviewed the Projects and determined that a categorical exemption exists in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 15303(d), Class 3. The Class 3 exemption allows for construction or conversion of small structures, includes electrical services. When the Board considers the environmental finding, the filing and posting of a Notice of Exemption in accordance CEQA is recommended.

PROCUREMENT

No procurement by the County is required. SCE, which is required to pay for the undergrounding project in advance, will contract to have the work done. The Projects will be entirely coordinated by SCE.

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Aaron Gest, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on May 5, 2025; Finance (Kathleen Gonzalez, Administrative Analyst, 387-5412) on May 1, 2025; and County Finance and Administration (Paloma Hernandez-Barker, Deputy Executive Officer, 387-5423) on May 4, 2025.

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Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County

Hearing Opened
Public Comment: Claudia Moreno
Hearing Closed

APPROVED

Moved: Curt Hagman Seconded: Joe Baca, Jr.
Ayes: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), Dawn Rowe, Curt Hagman, Joe Baca, Jr.
Absent: Jesse Armendarez

Lynna Monell, CLERK OF THE BOARD

BY 
DATED: May 20, 2025



cc: File - Transportation w/ attachments
JLL 05/21/2025