

Residents' Additional Questions

Undergrounding Project Initiative

Question: Does this cost include everything that needs to be done?

Answer: This includes everything including hooking up the individual homes to the new service. There may be some incremental landscaping costs that the Town will absorb.

Question: How deep in the ground will the cable be?

Answer: The cables will be between 3-6 feet underground in order to avoid other underground pipes such as the street lights.

Question: How many holes will be in the ground?

Answer: The directional bore will require one hole at each end of each approximately 400' run.

Question: What if your lines and cable lines are already buried?

Answer: If they are serviceable from the new underground cables, then we will hook them into the new system. If not, we will provide new service.

Question: Will the lines be under the road?

Answer: The lines will be buried beside the road except when they need to cross a road.

Question: How many houses does a transformer serve? Will they be on both sides of the street? Where will they be located?

Answer: 4-6 houses depending on the required load. They will likely be on one side of the street. Transformers will be on the public easement by the street. They will be on the property lines between homes or on public property.

Question: Where will the service feed be?

Answer: The service feed will be moved from behind the houses to along the street.

Question: How is FPL's contribution calculated?

Answer: FPL gives us a credit for the amount they calculate they would spend hardening the lines in our Town. In addition, they will give us a credit for the \$30,000 we pay them to develop the plan and an additional 25% credit on the final project implementation price.

Question: If the Town votes no, when will they start hardening?

Answer: Immediately. In fact, they have already begun the process and we are holding them back until we receive the straw poll results.

Question: How long will the undergrounding project take?

Answer: It will take 3-4 years to complete. The first year will be planning, bidding out the work and obtaining the financing. The second year will be burying the conduit and hooking up the electrical system. The last year or so will be when the cable companies move their wires underground and the poles get removed.

Question: Will the poles be removed from the north side of Town, between Bamboo and Beach roads?

Answer: It is our intention and we will do our best to have those poles removed as well. It will require negotiation with Riviera Beach, the affected homeowners and FPL.

Question: Have other communities experienced an increase in property values because they placed their lines underground?

Answer: There is no reliable study on this question.

Question: What is the potential for upgrades in the future after undergrounding?

Answer: Other alternative power sources such, as solar or wind, could be connected to the underground system.

Question: Will Comcast and AT&T participate?

Answer: Yes, part of the cost of the project is the fee we pay them to bury their lines.

Question: Who pays in a multi-family complex?

Answer: Each homeowner will pay through their utility bills. Apartment owners have the option of requiring their renters to pay their own utility bill. Time share owners will pay through the company.

Question: Has the Town made plans for financing?

Answer: We have had multiple conversations with financing and banking experts so we have a general idea of the type and cost of the loan. The actual loan will be obtained through a bidding process to get us the best terms.

Question: Have there been many actual outages in the past 5 years?

Answer: According to FPL, over the last 5 years there have been 10 outages of over 60 seconds and 84 “flickers” or outages of under 1 minute.

Question: If we don't go underground, will the Town trim the trees away from the elevated wires and transformers behind the houses?

Answer: No. That is the responsibility of FPL and the homeowner. The Town does not keep the trees trimmed away from the wires. FPL has a tree trimming schedule every few years. In between, a homeowner should call FPL if they see a dangerous situation where foliage is threatening our electrical service.

Question: Is there information on the aesthetic impact on property values of hardening the poles vs going underground?

Answer: We have not seen a study on the effect of Undergrounding Utilities on property values. If you have seen the hardened poles that they've put in town, the aesthetic value would be apparent even if not quantified.

Question: Since hardening the poles meets the State's requirements, is the decision based solely on the aesthetic benefit?

Answer: While the hardened poles would improve our resistance to outages, we would still be more at risk than with an underground system. If we keep our poles, even if they are hardened, the transformers will have problems caused by palm fronds banging against them in any kind of wind. Keeping the trees away from the lines and transformers is almost impossible. That is why we bump off almost weekly and hardened poles and wires won't solve that problem completely like putting the wires underground, away from the trees.

Also, if a line goes down, it can cause fires and hinder rescue efforts. That problem effectively goes away if our lines are underground.

Question: Since we live in a flood prone area, is there increased risk of losing power or longer times for restoration of power?

Answer: The underground system is designed to resist water and salt intrusion. Many flood prone areas have such a system which functions well. If a transformer goes down, the power company can route around it, restoring power to the homes, while it is being repaired.