

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego, SDG&E and Community Members Celebrate Completion of Undergrounding Project in Bay Park

MORE THAN THREE MILES OF UTILITIES PLACED UNDERGROUND TO IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD AESTHETICS, SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

SAN DIEGO — A community celebration in Bay Park today marked the removal of more than three miles of overhead power lines in the neighborhood. During the community gathering at the corner of Brandywine and Princeton streets, residents – along with representatives from the City of San Diego and SDG&E -- watched as one of the last standing utility poles in the area was safely removed.

Over the past several months, approximately 203 utility poles with overhead lines have been removed from the surrounding blocks. With the completion of this undergrounding project, new and reliable electrical, telephone and broadband service were brought underground, serving 418 properties on more than three miles of City streets.

Streets in Bay Park where utilities undergrounding work took place will be repaved along with the installation with 56 ADA-compliant curb ramps and 34 new streetlights.

"These undergrounding projects not only make our communities safer by reducing fire risks, and make our neighborhoods more resilient to extreme weather events, but they also enhance our community infrastructure," said Councilmember Jennifer Campbell, who represents District 2. "This specific project includes many great neighborhood improvements that better the quality of life of our residents."

While the celebration marked a milestone in Bay Park, the City and SDG&E continue to make progress in other neighborhoods through the [Utilities Undergrounding Program](#), which is made possible through an agreement between the two agencies. This agreement allows SDG&E and its contractors to perform undergrounding activities on behalf of the City. When the previous Franchise Agreement expired in 2020 after 50 years, the Utilities Undergrounding Program underwent major changes, leading to a substantial pause in undergrounding activity. The new agreements went into effect in 2022 and work has since restarted on undergrounding projects. Each year, City and SDG&E collaborate to move miles of overhead wire underground.

Removing overhead utility lines is no small task. It requires extensive coordination and planning with multiple entities, residents and homeowners. In some cases, a utility pole must be left up to provide other services such as cable/internet, even though power lines may have been removed and placed underground.

The primary objective is to safely underground utilities to improve community aesthetics and mitigate interruption of service for residents and businesses. Other considerations, such as the location of electric substations, water pipes, trees and other street improvements, often need to be addressed before utilities can be placed underground.

“Putting electrical and telecommunications lines underground makes these services safer, more reliable, and beautifies the neighborhood,” said City Transportation Department Assistant Director Naomi Chavez. “We are proud to complete this project here in Bay Park as we get one step closer to our goal of undergrounding every residential overhead utility line in San Diego.”

Approximately \$54 million is spent annually to convert overhead power and communication lines. These funds are dedicated exclusively to undergrounding and may not be used by the City for other purposes.

San Diego residents pay a surcharge on their SDG&E bill, approved in 2002, to support accelerated undergrounding. Those funds are passed on to the City, and the City then reimburses SDG&E for design and construction costs to underground utility lines in accordance with the prioritization schedule, as approved by the City Council.

Undergrounding utilities eliminates the hazards of downed power lines, greatly reduces fire risk, and improves climate change resiliency by protecting power infrastructure from extreme weather events.

The City of San Diego’s Utilities Undergrounding Program keeps residents informed about the progress of projects through regular updates to the Undergrounding Info Map, available by visiting sandiego.gov/undergrounding.



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