



Staff Report

File #: 23-0742

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 09/20/2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: City Manager's Office

SUBJECT:

CITY OF NORCO'S REQUEST FOR THE CITY OF CORONA TO SUPPORT THE UNDERGROUNDING OF THE RIVERSIDE TRANSMISSION RELIABILITY PROJECT (RTRP)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council provide feedback and direction regarding the City of Norco's request to provide a letter of support to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the undergrounding of transmission lines within the City of Riverside's Transmission Reliability Project (RTRP).

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council provide direction to staff regarding the City of Norco's request to provide a letter of support to the CPUC in support of fully undergrounding the Riverside Transmission Reliability Project (RTRP).

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

Currently, all of Riverside Public Utilities' imported energy comes through a single power connection from Southern California Edison's (SCE) Vista Substation, located in the City of Grand Terrace. The RTRP will provide the City of Riverside with a second power connection to California's electric grid. The City of Riverside is working with its partner, Southern California Edison, to establish the second power connection to the statewide power grid to meet the needs of additional power capacity and to serve existing and projected electrical demand in the city and surrounding areas. The goal of this project is to ensure the community will have reliable energy should there be any type of natural disaster, accident, or any other unanticipated event.

The CPUC has been planning the implementation of the RTRP project for the past two decades and

officially approved the project in 2020. Preparation for the project and the construction of 230kV underground transmission lines started in early 2022. The installation of overhead transmission lines started in early 2023. RTRP is anticipated to be fully completed by the end of 2026.

ANALYSIS:

The RTRP involves the construction of overhead transmission lines, which has led to concerns from the the City of Norco. The City of Norco is asking that the CPUC consider undergrounding power lines for this project with the belief that it will help mitigate the risk of wildfires threats to the City of Riverside, its underserved areas, and surrounding communities like Norco and Corona. Therefore, the City of Norco has asked the City of Corona to provide a letter of support for the undergrounding of the power lines.

The City Council annually adopts a Legislative Platform that signifies the City’s stance on various legislative issues, such as housing, economic development, public safety, and transportation. Section 7, item j, of the Corona Legislative Platforms states:

- 7(j) - “the City supports wildland fire fighting enhancements, as well as wildland fire prevention and mitigation endeavors.”

Staff believes that the request from the City of Norco is supported by the City’s Legislative Platform section referenced above and providing a letter of support would demonstrate the City’s concern for wildfire safety in the region. However, the City Council may choose to maintain the status quo as it pertains to this project and not submit a letter. Therefore, staff is seeking direction from the City Council regarding the City of Norco’s request.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action seeks direction from Council regarding the letter of support request from the City of Norco and the is no possibility that the direction provided will have a significant impact on the environment.

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