



# City of Santa Barbara California

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**REPORT DATE:** June 29, 2006  
**AGENDA DATE:** July 6, 2006  
**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 520 and 525 E Yanonali Street (MST2006-00290/CDP2006-00010)  
 Charles Meyer Desalination Plant Transmission Undergrounding  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Planning Division, (805) 564-5470  
 Jan Hubbell, AICP, Senior Planner *JH*  
 Michael Berman, Project Planner/Environmental Analyst *MB*

### **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

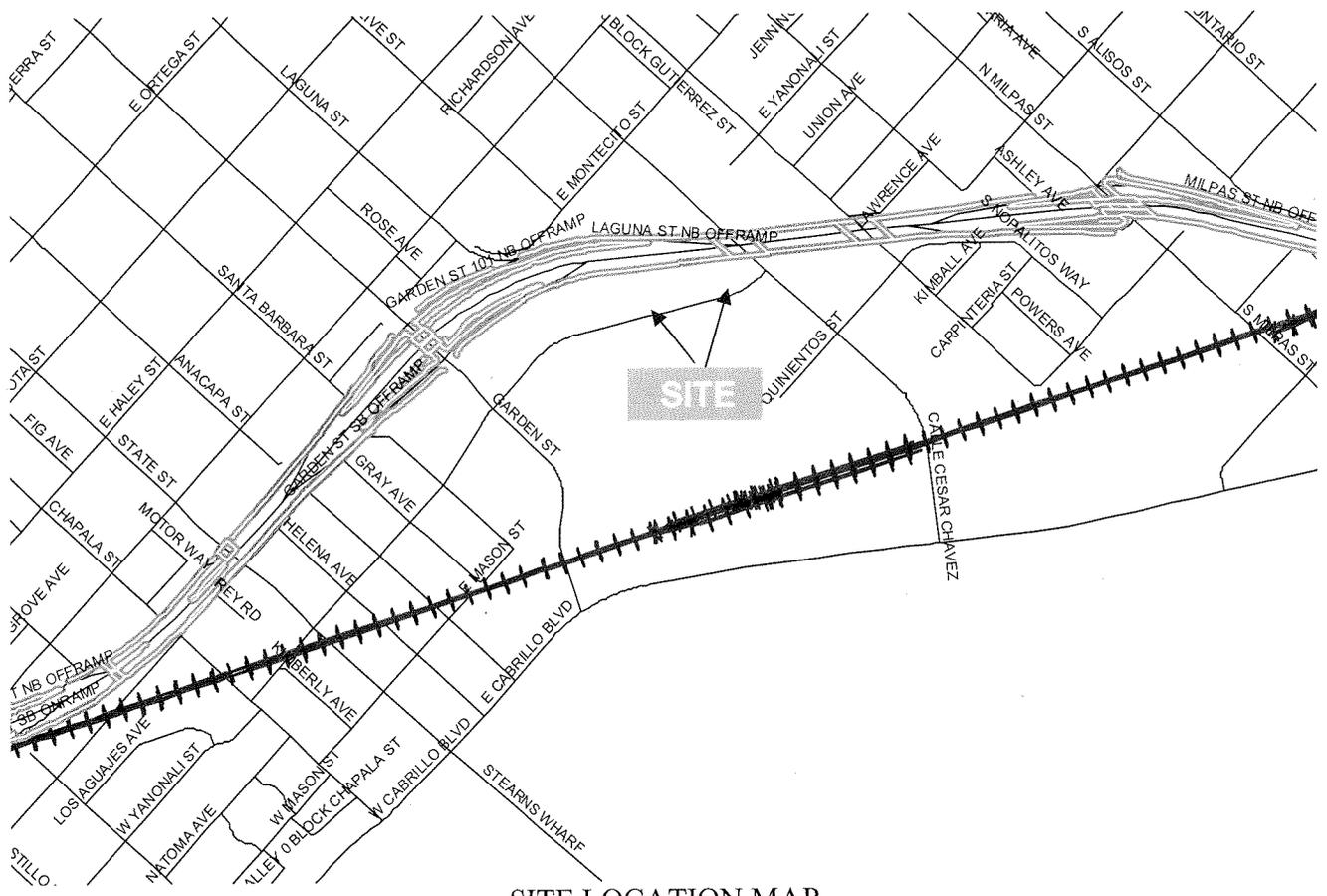
The project consists of amending the approved Coastal Development Permit to revise the project description and remove requirement F from Resolution No. 069-95, which requires undergrounding of two utility poles and associated transmission lines and instead, provide the remaining funding (not less than \$375,000) that would have been used to underground the poles and lines to the City's Underground Utility Fund, to be used for undergrounding utilities at other locations where there would be a greater benefit.

### **II. REQUIRED APPLICATIONS**

The discretionary application required for this project is a Coastal Development Permit (CDP2005-00010) to allow the proposed development in the Appealable Jurisdiction of the City's Coastal Zone (SBMC §28.45.009);

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed project conforms to the City's Zoning and Building Ordinances and policies of the General Plan/Local Coastal Plan. Therefore, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the project, making the findings outlined in Section VII of this report, and subject to the new condition of approval and the revised conditions of approval previously approved for this project.



SITE LOCATION MAP

**APPLICATION DEEMED COMPLETE:**  
**DATE ACTION REQUIRED:**

June 6, 2006  
August 7, 2006

**IV. SITE INFORMATION AND PROJECT STATISTICS**

**A. SITE INFORMATION**

Applicant: Bill Ferguson, Public Works Department	Property Owner: City of Santa Barbara
Parcel Number: 017-540-007	Lot Area: 1.47 acres
General Plan: Industrial/Major Public Institutional/Buffer Stream/Open Space	Zoning: OM-1
Existing Use: Desalination Plant	Topography: Generally Level
Adjacent Land Uses: North – Highway 101 South – El Estero Treatment Plant East – Rescue Mission West – City Corporate Yard	

**V. ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY**

The proposed project would meet the requirements of the M-1 Zone. The project would no longer include undergrounding of two utility poles and no change in the approved use is proposed.

**VI. ISSUES**

**A. CITY COUNCIL REVIEW**

During a public hearing on December 13, 2005, the City Council directed Staff to request that the Planning Commission reconsider the Condition of Approval to transfer the funds proposed for use for undergrounding of the transmission lines to areas of the City other than Yanonali and Mason Streets.

**B. COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN/LOCAL COASTAL PLAN**

The project is appropriately located within an area designated as Industrial/Major Public Institutional in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The area has been developed with some large industrial buildings and some older smaller buildings used for industrial uses and the adjacent Rescue Mission that is the only non-industrial use in the area. Utilities are allowed in the right-of-way of an industrial area. A large overhead transmission line and poles exists along Calle Caesar Chavez.

Applicable Coastal Act visual quality provisions (Coastal Act §30251) seek to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas and to restore and enhance visually degraded areas. Additionally, Local Coastal Plan (LCP) Visual Resources Policy 9.3 requires utilities to be underground as part of new project approval. Only glimpses of the top portions of the poles and some of the line are visible from the freeway. The proposed project would use the remaining project funds to underground utilities elsewhere in the Coastal Zone, where more benefit would be derived than if the undergrounding were to occur as originally proposed. The undergrounding as originally proposed would not appreciably improve views from the City to the ocean. The ocean itself is not visible from the Freeway (the most public vantage point of

the site) in the vicinity of the project since it is screened by buildings and vegetation. The screening of the poles and lines will increase as the vegetation required for project mitigation matures. Finally, the undergrounding would occur in another Coastal Zone area that would derive more benefit from the undergrounding. Therefore, the project would be consistent with visual quality provisions of the Coastal Act.

The project is consistent with the LCP Visual Resources policy (9.3) requiring undergrounding of utilities. Because the desalination plant was originally approved as an emergency project, new transmission lines providing electricity to the plant were not undergrounded. Desalination plants require significant amounts of electricity. Transmission lines to a new electrical substation were constructed for the project. The distribution lines from the substation to the plant were placed underground. It was agreed, however, that the transmission lines would be put underground later. Cost of undergrounding the transmission line at this location would be substantial and make little visual difference. Using the funds for undergrounding existing electrical distribution lines elsewhere in the Coastal Zone will have a more beneficial effect.

There are no biological and recreational resources in the area of the transmission lines. No access to and along the coast would be affected by the transmission lines. The project would have no effect on recreation or access to the ocean and is therefore consistent with Local Coastal Plan policies

### **C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The desalination facility was analyzed in the City's Long Term Water Supply Program (LTWSP) EIR, which was certified on May 24, 1994. The EIR analyzed the project assuming that the two power poles would be placed underground as proposed. The undergrounding of the transmission line was required as a condition of approval in resolution # 069-95. Subsequently, the request to use the funds to underground the poles at another location was received. An Addendum to the City's Long Term Water Supply Program EIR was prepared to document the change in the project description and conditions of approval. The Addendum concludes that the project and conditions of approval changes would not have a significant impact on visual resources.

## **VII. FINDINGS**

The Planning Commission finds the following:

### **A. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA GUIDELINES § 15612)**

1. The Commission has reviewed the Addendum and no Subsequent Environmental Impact Report is required for the current project, because new information and changes in circumstances, project description, impacts and mitigations are not substantial and do not involve new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts.

2. The addendum, together with Final Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse #91121020), constitute adequate environmental documentation in compliance with CEQA for the current project.

**B. COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT (SBMC §28.45.009)**

1. The project is consistent with the policies of the California Coastal Act.
2. The project is consistent with all applicable policies of the City's Local Coastal Plan, all applicable implementing guidelines, and all applicable provisions of the Code.
3. The project is consistent with the Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) Policies of the Coastal Act regarding public access, views, protection of biological resources, and public recreation.

Exhibits:

- A. Conditions of Approval
- B. Site Plan
- C. Applicant's letter, dated May 9, 2006
- D. CAR December 13, 2005
- E. City Council Action Email
- F. Addendum to the Final EIR
- G. Applicable General Plan/Local Coastal Plan Policies



PLANNING COMMISSION CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

520 AND 525. E YANONALI STREET  
COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AMENDMENT  
JULY 6, 2006

The project consists of amending the approved Coastal Development Permit to revise the project description..

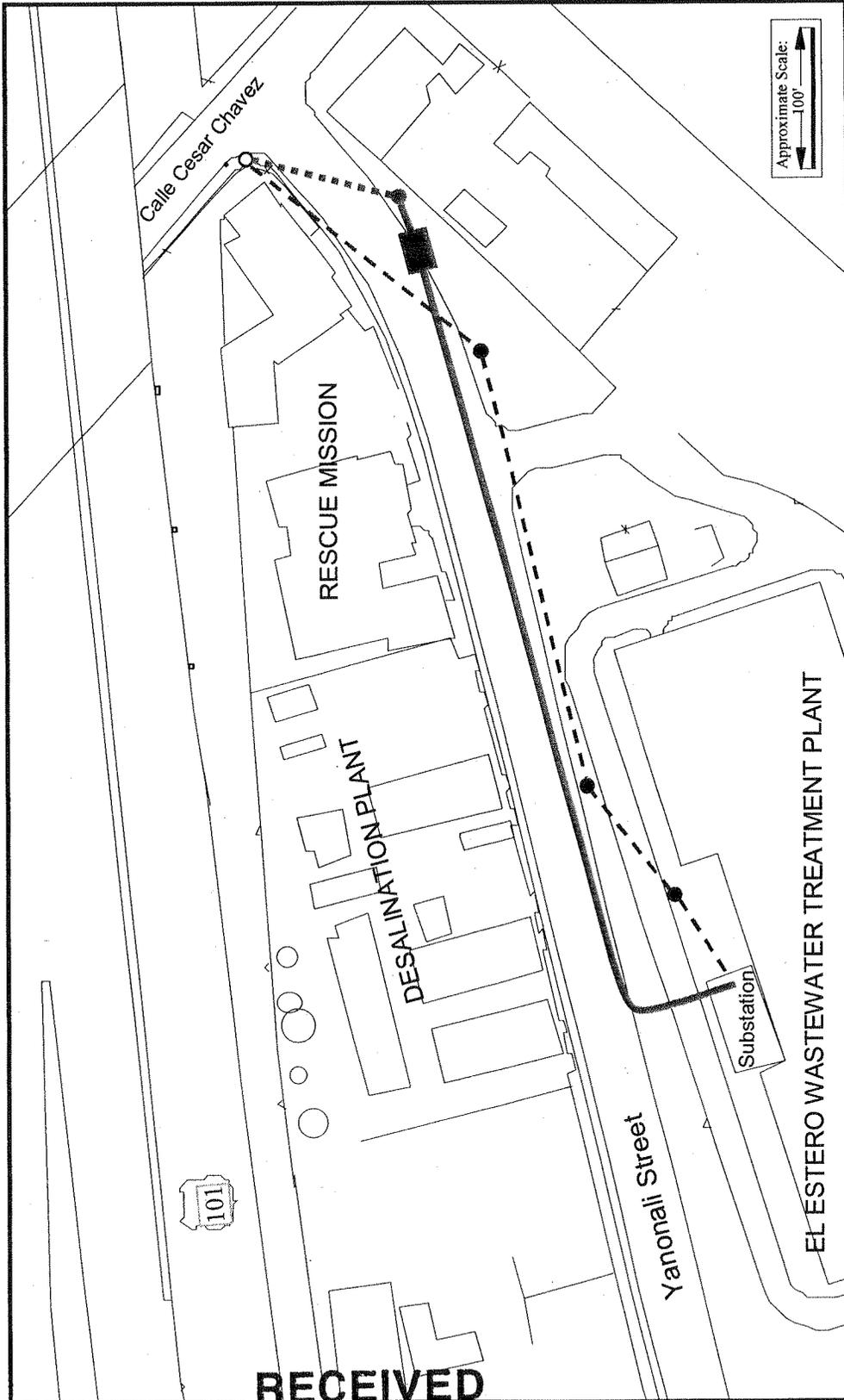
The project would be subject to the following condition of approval:

1. All conditions contained in Planning Commission Resolution No. 069-95, shall remain in effect except condition F.
2. The applicant shall, after payment of project costs to date, contribute remaining funds, but in no case less than \$375,000 to the City's Underground Utility Fund. These funds shall be utilized for undergrounding utilities in the City's Coastal Zone. The funds shall be utilized for this purpose within three years of project approval.

H:\Group Folders\PLANP C\Conditions\2006 PC Conditions\2006-07-06\_Item\_520\_and\_525\_E\_Yanonali\_Street\_Conditions.doc



# Project Amendment - Yanonali Street Undergrounding



--- Existing overhead transmission lines to remain under amended project; in lieu contribution to be made to City's Utility Undergrounding Fund 148

— Undergrounding project as originally proposed

RECEIVED

MAY 12 2006

EXHIBIT B





# City of Santa Barbara

Public Works Department

www.ci.santa-barbara.ca.us

Main Offices  
630 Garden Street  
P.O. Box 1990  
Santa Barbara, CA  
93102-1990

Administration  
Tel.: 805.564.5377  
Fax: 805.897.2613

Engineering  
Tel.: 805.564.5363  
Fax: 805.564.5467

Building Maintenance/  
Street Lights  
Tel.: 805.564.5416  
Fax: 805.897.2577

Permit Counter  
Tel.: 805.564.5388  
Fax: 805.897.1927

Transportation Operations  
Transportation Planning  
Tel.: 805.564.5385  
Fax: 805.564.5467

Water Maintenance  
Street Maintenance  
Tel.: 805.564.5413  
Fax: 805.564.2613

Water Supply Management  
Water Conservation  
Tel.: 805.564.5460  
Fax: 805.897.2613

Downtown Parking  
1115 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA  
93101  
Tel.: 805.963.1581  
Fax: 805.963.1542

May 9, 2006

Planning Commission  
City of Santa Barbara  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RECEIVED**

**MAY 12 2006**

**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
PLANNING DIVISION**

**SUBJECT: CHARLES MEYER DESALINATION FACILITY--APPLICATION TO  
AMEND PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND CONDITION OF APPROVAL  
FOR COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT CDP95-0045 (MST95-00425)**

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Pursuant to City Council direction, the City of Santa Barbara (City) Public Works Department is submitting the enclosed application to amend the Planning Commission's 1995 approval of the conversion of the City's desalination facility to permanent status. The requested amendment involves a change in the project description such that the City would contribute the available project funding in the amount of \$375,000, to the City's Undergrounding Fund (Fund #148), in lieu of undergrounding approximately 600 feet of electrical transmission lines along a portion of the 500 Block of East Yanonali Street, as contained in the original project description.

**Background**

During the severe drought of 1991, the City contracted with Ionics, Inc. to construct a temporary emergency desalination facility at 525 East Yanonali Street. The plant required a new electrical substation, constructed by Southern California Edison (Edison). The substation was fed with overhead 66,000 volt transmission lines running along East Yanonali Street. When the plant was converted to a permanent part of the City water supply in 1995, the Planning Commission required that approximately 600 feet of the transmission lines along Yanonali Street be relocated underground, as proposed in the project description. Since that time, staff has been working with Edison on the design of the undergrounding project, preparation of easement documents, and resolution of a number of issues related to legal interpretations of the franchise agreement, indemnification, project cost, and easement requirements. Franchise negotiations also contributed to the delay. An agreement was finally ready for execution in December 2005, and was presented to the City Council with a recommendation to execute the documents and proceed with the undergrounding.

When the Council considered the recommendation, there was discussion that the utility lines in question are located in an industrial zone, suggesting less aesthetic improvement as a result of undergrounding. It was also noted that these are *transmission* lines, which are not included in the City underground utility ordinance, as opposed to *distribution* lines, which are included. There was recognition of the importance of the desalination plant as a part of the City's water supply and maintaining

the approval status of the facility as a part of the Long-Term Water Supply Program. There was also concern about the financial impact of the project on the Water Fund. In the end, the Council declined to approve execution of the agreement and directed staff to return to the Planning Commission to seek approval of an amended project description to identify a "more bang for the buck" undergrounding alternative, while preserving the existing permit for the desalination facility and attempting to minimize cost impacts to the Water Fund.

### Amended Project Description

The Public Works and Community Development Departments are currently implementing a new utility undergrounding fund (Fund 148). Its purpose is to coordinate and optimize the allocation of a new stream of utility user tax revenue for use on undergrounding projects. The Planning Commission has been briefed on the development of guidelines for the fund. To implement City Council direction on the desalination plant undergrounding condition, we are applying to amend the project description to include contributing the \$375,000 of available project funding to Fund 148 in lieu of undergrounding approximately 600 feet of transmission lines along Yanonali Street. The following are examples of undergrounding projects currently being considered for funding:

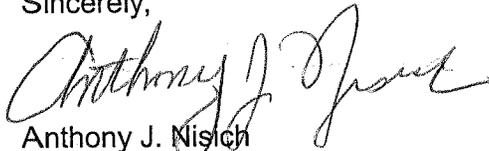
- Cliff Drive, from Flora Vista Drive to Loma Alta Drive
- Mission Street, from U.S. Highway 101 to De la Vina Street
- De la Vina Street, from Mission Street to State Street
- Micheltorena Street at San Andres Street

Rather than developing a separate process for the review, design, and construction of an undergrounding project to respond to City Council direction, it is appropriate to use the process already being developed to assess undergrounding opportunities on a City-wide basis.

Thank you for your consideration of this project amendment. We will be happy to supply any further information necessary to complete your review. Any questions regarding this project should be directed to Bill Ferguson, Water Resources Supervisor, at 564-5571.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Planning Commission to implement undergrounding projects wherever feasible.

Sincerely,



Anthony J. Nisich  
Public Works Director

BF/dm

Enclosures: Planning Commission Staff Report, December 7, 1995  
Planning Commission Resolution No. 069-95  
Map



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** December 13, 2005  
**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers  
**FROM:** Water Resources Division, Public Works Department  
**SUBJECT:** Yanonali Street Undergrounding Project

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- A. Authorize the Public Works Director to execute an Agreement for Relocation and Replacement of Overhead Transmission and Distribution Facilities with Underground Electrical Facilities, for relocation of Southern California Edison facilities in the 500 block of East Yanonali Street in the net amount of \$420,402;
- B. Find it is in the best interest of the City to waive formal bid procedure as provided by Municipal Code Section 4.52.080(k), and authorize the General Services Manager to issue purchase orders in an additional aggregate amount of up to \$72,000, for relocation of telephone lines, installation of City communication conduits, change orders for this work and other work required to complete the balance of the project; and
- C. Introduce, and subsequently adopt, by reading of title only, an Ordinance of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Approving a Joint Use Agreement with Southern California Edison Company Pertaining to the Use of Certain Portions of the 500 Block of East Yanonali Street and East Mason Street and Granting an Easement Southerly of and Adjacent to the 500 Block of East Yanonali Street.

### DISCUSSION:

During the severe drought of 1991, the City contracted with Ionics, Inc., to construct a temporary emergency desalination facility at 525 East Yanonali Street. The plant required a new electrical substation, constructed by Southern California Edison (Edison). The substation is fed with overhead 66,000 volt transmission lines running along East Yanonali Street and East Mason Street. When the plant was converted to a permanent part of the City water supply in 1996, the Planning Commission required the power lines along

REVIEWED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ Finance \_\_\_\_\_ Attorney

Agenda Item No. 22

Yanonali and Mason Streets to be relocated underground. Since that time, staff has been working with Edison on the design of the undergrounding project, preparation of easement documents, and resolution of a number of issues related to legal interpretations of the franchise agreement, indemnification, project cost, and easement requirements. Each change in the terms of the agreement required a reprocessing of the agreement through each party's organization, as well as an updated cost estimate. Franchise negotiations also contributed to the delay. An agreement is finally ready to be executed.

The City's net cost of \$420,402 for the Edison undergrounding (i.e. "relocation") is the total cost of \$425,402, less a previously paid engineering deposit of \$5,000. The relocation agreement provides that Edison will handle all work associated with undergrounding approximately 650 feet of 66,000 volt transmission lines from the intersection of East Yanonali Street and East Mason Street, west of Calle Cesar Chavez, to the substation located across the street from the desalination facility (see attachment). The Edison work includes construction of one subsurface vault, removal of two existing power poles, relocation of a third power pole, and undergrounding distribution lines (lower voltage) that currently hang on the pole to be relocated. Funding in the amount of \$145,000, for new circuit breakers required as a part of the project, has been contributed by Edison as a part of the development of the City's desalination facility. This amount is in addition to the City's cost under the relocation agreement.

In addition to the undergrounding of Edison facilities, we anticipate separate costs of up to \$72,000 for undergrounding Verizon's telephone lines that also hang on the pole to be relocated and for other miscellaneous project expenses. Either Verizon or Edison would have to underground the lines, as sole providers, and it is in the best interest of the City to contract directly with them.

The City's total project cost is estimated at \$492,402. Funding for the project has been appropriated in the Water Fund Capital Budget. While not expected, there is the potential for a reduction in cost to the City if construction costs are less than the estimate upon which the relocation agreement was based. The project will be administered by Edison, but staff will pursue any opportunities to assist in reducing project costs. The result of the project will be a reduction in the overhead utility lines in the vicinity and resolution of an outstanding permit requirement for the desalination facility.

The recommended ordinance authorizes a Joint Use Agreement to relocate an existing Edison easement to within the public right of way along Yanonali Street and East Mason Street, and allows Edison to underground its power lines below those streets. The ordinance also authorizes a Grant of Easement, which grants Edison easement rights on new portions of the El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plant property where the realigned underground lines and facilities will enter the existing substation.

This matter was reviewed by the Water Commission on September 11, 2000, at which time the Commission voted unanimously to recommend proceeding with the undergrounding work. The Commission was updated on the matter again on September

12, 2005, at which time the Commission voted 4-1-0 to reaffirm the earlier recommendation to proceed. Staff recognizes that this is an expensive project, but also that the undergrounding work was a commitment that was made when the temporary project was approved and a requirement of the Planning Commission based on Local Coastal Plan policies and aesthetic findings in the environmental document for the permanent project.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Map of Project Area

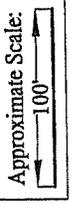
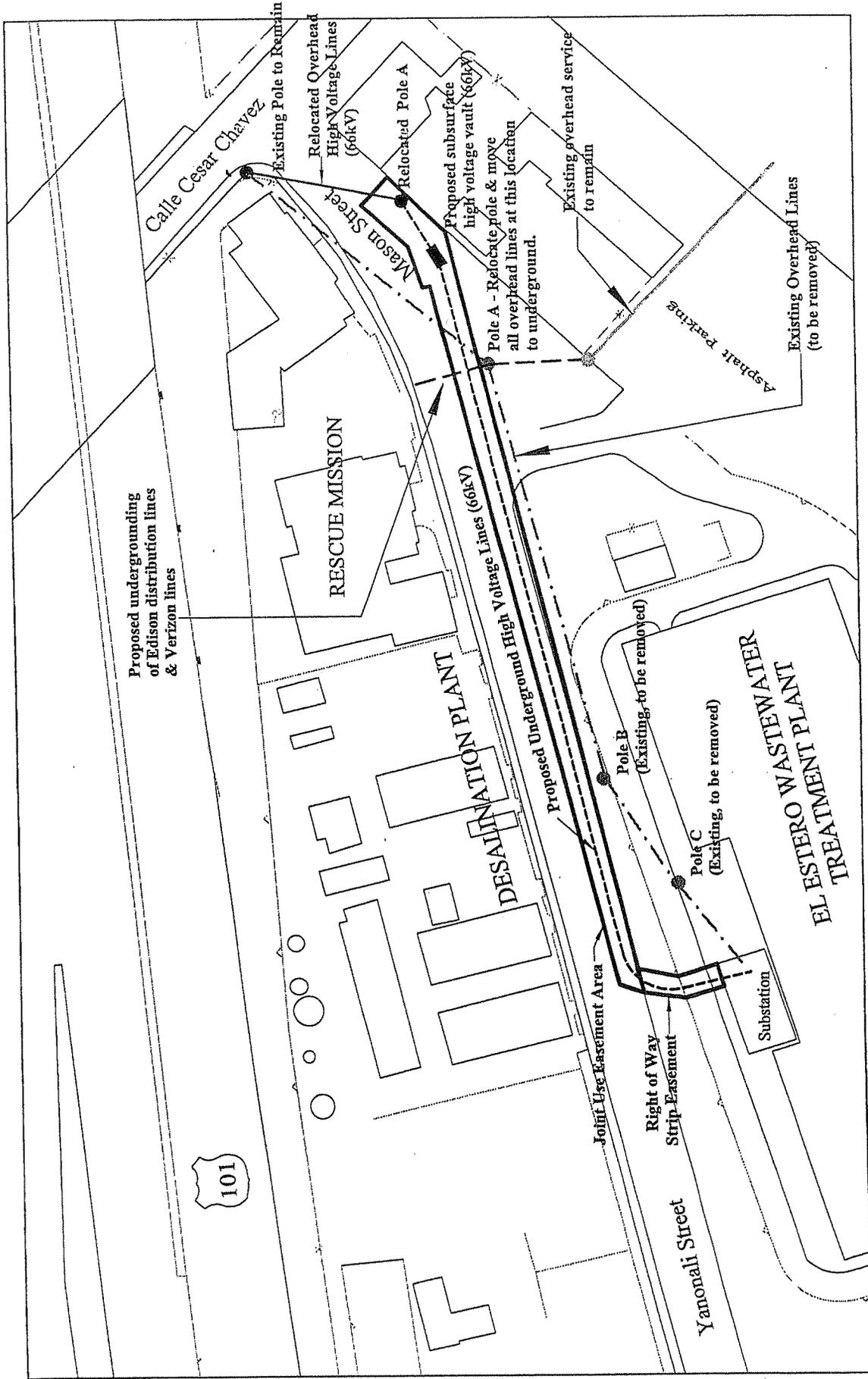
**PREPARED BY:** Steve Mack, Water Resources Manager/BF/dm

**SUBMITTED BY:** Anthony J. Nisich, Public Works Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office

# Attachment

## Yanonali Street Undergrounding Project



City of Santa Barbara  
Public Works Department

## Ferguson, Bill

---

**From:** Tschech, Susan  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2006 8:07 AM  
**To:** Ferguson, Bill  
**Subject:** RE: Council Agenda - Dec 13, 2005, Item 22

Hi Bill,

This action was as follows:

Action: Directed Planning Commission to reconsider the condition of approval for the desalination plant's permanent permit that resulted in this project, for possible amendment consistent with the Coastal Act; directed the Commission to limit its discussion to potential sites for the undergrounding of utilities other than Yanonali and Mason Streets.

Susan

---

**From:** Ferguson, Bill  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 26, 2006 10:03 AM  
**To:** Tschech, Susan  
**Subject:** Council Agenda - Dec 13, 2005, Item 22

Hi Susan-

Could you send me a copy of the official Council action on Item 22 of the 12-13-2005 Council meeting? Thanks.

Bill

**Bill Ferguson, Water Resources Supervisor**  
City of Santa Barbara Public Works Department  
P.O. Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102  
Street Address: 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
Phone: (805) 564-5571  
FAX: (805) 897-2613  
E-mail: [BFerguson@SantaBarbaraCa.gov](mailto:BFerguson@SantaBarbaraCa.gov)





# City of Santa Barbara California

## **ADDENDUM TO THE FINAL CERTIFIED LONG TERM WATER SUPPLY PROGRAM EIR**

**FOR 525 E. YANONALI STREET, DESALINATION PLANT (MST2006-  
00290/ CDP2006-00010)**

*(June 16, 2006)*

This Addendum is prepared in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, which provides that an Addendum to a previous Environmental Impact Report (EIR) may be prepared if only minor changes or additions are necessary to make the prior document adequate for the current project.

### **PRIOR ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT**

The prior EIR (*State Clearinghouse #91121020*) was prepared for the Long Term Water Supply Program and certified on May 24, 1994. Mitigation measures associated with Water Quality, Noise, and Aesthetics/Visuals impacts were incorporated into the permanent approval of the City desalination plant as conditions of approval. The document concluded that significant mitigable effects on the environment would result from the project. The project has been implemented, but is not currently operational.

### **CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENTAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

There have been no changes in environmental circumstances that would affect the project.

### **CURRENT PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is the same as described in the Certified Final EIR except that, instead of including undergrounding of the utility transmission line, the funds that were to be used for the undergrounding would instead be used for undergrounding elsewhere in the City. The condition of approval that requires the project to underground the utilities would be replaced with a new condition of approval that specifies that the remaining funds would be provided to the City's Undergrounding Utilities Fund and earmarked for use elsewhere in the Coastal Zone.

### **PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS**

The Final EIR indicated that desalination plant facilities would remain visible from off-site vantage points. Mitigation required included requirements to irrigate and maintain landscape screening, assess proposed landscaping and augment it if necessary, and screen

the electrical substation with landscaping. The proposed project would leave approximately 600 feet of transmission line and two poles as they are now and underground utilities elsewhere in the City's Coastal Zone. The originally proposed under-grounding would occur in an area of the City that is mostly industrial in character. The area is already visually degraded by overhead utilities that would not be undergrounded. These other utilities have nothing to do with the proposed project. Since there are areas of the City with overhead power lines that are the most prominent feature degrading the views of the area, undergrounding in these areas would have a more beneficial impact than would the originally proposed undergrounding on Yanonali Street. Since the proposed undergrounding would have occurred in the City's Coastal Zone, to address visual impacts at the project site area, the under-grounding should occur in the City's Coastal Zone. Requiring as a condition of approval that the project contribute the in-lieu funds to the City's Undergrounding Utilities Fund earmarked for use elsewhere in the Coastal Zone, would adequately deal with this requirement.

### **CEQA FINDING**

Based on the above review of the project, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15612, no Subsequent Environmental Impact Report is required for the current project, because new information and changes in circumstances, project description, impacts and mitigations are not substantial and do not involve new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts.

This Addendum identifies the current project changes and minor changes to project impacts. With application of identified mitigation measures, project impacts will be significant and avoidable. This addendum, together with the Final Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse #91121020), constitute adequate environmental documentation in compliance with CEQA for the current project.

Prepared by:  Date: June 19/2006  
**Michael Berman, Environmental Analyst**

# **General Plan and Coastal Plan Policy for the Desalinization Plant**

## **Local Coastal Plan**

### **Policy 9.1**

The existing views to, from, and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas shall be protected, preserved, and enhanced. This may be accomplished by:

- (1) Acquisition of land for parks and open space;
- (2) Requiring view easements or corridors in new development;
- (3) Specific development restrictions such as additional height limits, building orientation, and setback requirements for new development;
- (4) Developing a system to evaluate view impairment of new development in the review process.

### **Policy 9.3**

All new development in the coastal zone shall provide underground utilities and the undergrounding of existing overhead utilities shall be considered high priority.

#### **Action**

The City will work with the utility companies to hasten the undergrounding of utilities in the coastal zone.

### **Policy 9.8**

The City shall seek to preserve the unique scenic and aesthetic quality of Highway 101.

### **Policy 9.9**

The City shall seek to protect views of the mountains and ocean from Highway 101 by minimizing view interruption by highway structures. The City shall also seek to minimize view interruption or blockage by the highway from surrounding public areas including roads, parks, and other open spaces.

