



MEMO

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council
THRU: Bert Lumbreras, City Manager
Joe Pantalion, P.E., Assistant City Manager
FROM: Laurie Moyer, P.E., Director of Engineering & CIP
Jacquelyn Thomas, P.E., Sr. Engineer, Engineering & CIP
DATE: October 6, 2020
RE: Blanco Gardens CDBG-DR Drainage Improvements and Underground Electric Conversion Projects

This purpose of this memo is to provide current information on the City's Blanco Gardens Drainage Improvement and Underground Electric Conversion (UEC) Projects. The drainage improvements include construction of concrete channels within alleyways which requires relocation of approximately 60 power poles. In lieu of replacing poles in an area planned for underground conversion, it is in the best interest of the City and residents to complete the conversion in the alleys at this time. The conversion will reduce electric outages in storm events and by completing it now will avoid demolition of the alleyway drainage infrastructure in the future.

The Project will install underground conduit for electric and telecommunication services for the neighborhood within the public easements in and adjacent to the alleys and within River Road between Animal Shelter Road and the City's electric substation. The first phase of the Project includes moving neighborhood overhead electric and telecommunications lines into underground conduit within the alleys. These underground lines will replace the overhead service lines presently connecting to properties in the neighborhood. Adjacent to the alley, Public Utility Easements (PUE) will be used to convey service to individual properties via transformers and connections. A small portion of the PUE will also be used during construction of the alley drainage improvements.

Current Project status includes:

- Blanco Gardens Drainage Project, CDBG-DR funded, at 90% Design complete
- Blanco Gardens UEC Project, Electric CIP funded, Final Design with construction start Oct. 2020
- Above 2 projects are currently being designed and built separately with a significant amount of coordination between departments (ENG/SMEU)

In an effort to "clear" the PUE of obstructions prior to construction, the City sent a letter out to 189 property owners/residents in the Blanco Gardens Neighborhood on Sept. 2, 2020. The summary result of that communication is as follows:

- Staff sent out 189 letters to residents on Sept. 2 and we received overwhelming response from the neighborhood over the Labor Day Holiday weekend.
- Staff was not in the office to respond until Tuesday (Sept. 8) which made the response time longer.
- Our goal has been to respond within the next business day of receiving an email/phone call.

- We have responded to property owners on an individual basis as they have reached out via email and phone call in response to initial letters. When responding, staff is assessing each property for specific encroachments.
- Construction in the alleys and neighborhood will include coordination of temporary solutions to maintain access to existing infrastructure/resources during construction. Post-construction, all current public services will be restored to as same or improved.
- Staff is working on additional communications avenues as design progresses. Much has been learned from community feedback on this initial letter response.

A follow-up letter to residents/owners in the Blanco Gardens Neighborhood was sent last Friday, Oct. 2 with a request for Temporary Right of Entry (TROE). The letter includes the following:

- Contractors hired by the City will be completing survey work, at no cost to the residents
- Fence removal and temporary fence installation for construction with final replacement at the end of construction, at no cost to residents
- Relocation of overhead utilities to underground service connections, at no cost to residents
- Work on property will include trenching with reseeding, at no cost to residents
- Work will occur within the existing PUE and adjacent alleyways
- Survey and conversion of utilities work has to be completed before construction of the concrete drainage channels can begin
- TROE is included in this communication to allow for survey and conversion to underground
- Letters are specific to individual properties;
 - 8 properties will receive a letter indicating they have an obstruction to construction that the City will work with them to relocate, at no cost to resident
 - 167 properties will receive a letter indicating they have no obstruction, but will require TROE for survey and construction of improvements, at no cost to resident
 - Residents will also receive a letter indicating if no action is required
- Staff is also working on making direct calls to residents and/or door-to-door contact, as necessary

Beginning Tuesday, Oct. 6, City staff will begin contacting residents by telephone and door to door to communicate the information to the neighborhood. Communications has assisted in developing both the letters and scripts for staff to use for a clear consistent message. The Blanco Gardens Neighborhood includes a significant number of elderly residents that do not communicate via social media or websites. City staff is working on inventive ways to push information out as we move forward with design and construction of the Project.