



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

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

SAN DIEGO—Today City of San Diego leaders and representatives from SDG&E joined community members in Rolando to celebrate the removal of overhead power lines in the neighborhood. During the gathering at the 6200 block of Estelle Street, attendees watched as one of the last standing utility poles in the area was safely removed.

Over the past several months, approximately 47 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 307 properties on almost three miles of City streets.

“The undergrounding in Rolando will improve public safety and aesthetics as well as the overall reliability and resilience of our critical utility systems,” said Councilmember Elo-Rivera, San Diego City Council, District 9. “I appreciate the partnership between City staff and SDG&E to make this happen in our community.”

Streets in Rolando where utilities undergrounding work took place will be resurfaced with fresh asphalt overlay and the installation of 38 ADA-compliant curb ramps, 48 new streetlights and approximately 35 new trees.

While the celebration marked a milestone in Rolando, 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 approximately 15 miles of overhead wire underground.

“We are proud to partner with the City to accelerate the undergrounding of our utilities, benefitting families and businesses we serve,” SDG&E Vice President of External Affairs and Communications Brittany Syz said. “We have more work to do and look forward to our continued partnership with the city.”

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.

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.

Utilities undergrounding eliminates the hazards of downed power lines, greatly reduces fire risk, and improves climate change resiliency by protecting power infrastructure from extreme weather events. About 60% of SDG&E's distribution system is underground. Some parts of the region, due to topography or other issues, create design challenges which make undergrounding expensive and infeasible.

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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