



Utility Undergrounding — How to Get Started

CITY OF DANA POINT · PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT · (949) 248-3554

COUNCIL APPROVED
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Property owners can initiate a utility undergrounding project by forming an **Underground Utility Assessment District**. Due to City staffing constraints, a **City Consultant is required** and must be funded by interested property owners via an upfront deposit. Two formation paths are available — choose the one that fits your neighborhood's readiness.

OPTION A — FAST TRACK (7 STEPS)

- 1 Submit interest letter** to Public Works with proposed boundary description. Pay consultant deposit.
A property owner leads outreach to neighbors.
- 2 Boundary map prepared** by City Consultant; utility companies review and issue a preliminary cost estimate.
- 3 Petition circulated** to all affected owners showing estimated cost per parcel.
60% support required to proceed (nonbinding).
- 4 Engineer's Report prepared** using preliminary cost estimates; City Council approves moving forward.
City advances formation costs — recovered if district forms.
- 5 Engineer's Report & Resolution of Intention** submitted to City Council; public hearing scheduled.
- 6 Ballots mailed** to all property owners within district. Votes are weighted by assessment amount.
- 7 District passes at >50% approval.**
All owners pay assessment regardless of personal vote.

Key difference: Design begins after district vote using preliminary costs.

OPTION B — TRADITIONAL METHOD (9 STEPS)

- 1 Submit interest letter** to Public Works with proposed boundary description.
A property owner leads outreach to neighbors.
- 2 Boundary map prepared** by City Consultant; utility companies review and issue a preliminary cost estimate.
- 3 Petition circulated** — 60% support required.
Nonbinding show of support.
- 4 City Council approves design funds** advanced from General Fund.
Recovered if district forms; lost if it fails.
- 5 Full design begins** (base mapping → electrical → telecom/cable).
Property owners fund design fees upfront.
- 6 Utility companies issue guaranteed construction cost.**
Engineer's Report generated from final figures.
- 7 City Council review & public hearing** scheduled.
Informal owner meeting held beforehand.
- 8 Ballots mailed** — votes weighted by assessment amount.
- 9 District passes at >50% approval.**
All owners pay assessment regardless of personal vote.

Key difference: Full design & guaranteed costs secured before the vote.

PAYING YOUR ASSESSMENT

- **Cash (30 days):** Pay within 30 days of public hearing close — saves ~8% by avoiding bond fees.
- **Bond financing:** Assessment added to property tax bill over 20–25 years. A lien is placed on the property until fully paid.

PRIVATE CONVERSION (YOUR COST)

After public infrastructure is complete, **each owner must hire a licensed electrician** to connect their property to the underground system. This cost is *not* included in the assessment. All owners must complete conversions before overhead poles can be removed.

TIMELINE & CONTACT

From initial letter to final conversion: **~7 years** on average, depending on district size. Design phase alone can exceed 2 years.

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