

Issue / Commissioner	Discussion Notes	Issue status
<p>1. The City’s overall approach to undergrounding utility distribution and service lines should be reviewed.</p> <p>(Chandorkar)</p>	<p><u>Staff Comment/Recommendation:</u></p> <p>5/30/12:</p> <p>Staff concurs with the Commission’s observations in response to testimony from Sammamish Rowing Association, and is working to ensure that SRA representatives are in touch with the appropriate Development Services staff.</p> <p>5/23/12:</p> <p>Commissioner comments speak to a broader discussion of utility undergrounding, however these points extend beyond the scope of the Planning Commission’s 2011 discussion and City Council’s ultimate direction, as well as the scope of the proposed Zoning Code Amendment. In 2011 the Planning Commission discussed alternatives for relieving single family residential development from high cost burdens associated with undergrounding utility distribution lines. The Planning Commission recommended an exemption-based approach as a solution to relieving single family residential development from high cost burdens; City Council confirmed the recommendation and directed staff to develop corresponding Zoning Code Amendments in 2012.</p> <p>Staff thereby recommends this discussion be included in the Planning Commission’s Report as items for City Council to consider in the future.</p>	<p><u>Opened</u></p> <p>5/23/12</p> <p><u>Closed</u></p> <p>5/30/12</p>

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	<p><u>Public Comment:</u></p> <p>5/30/12</p> <p>Representatives from the Sammamish Rowing Association (SRA) provided oral and written testimony requesting their development project be granted relief from utility undergrounding requirements.</p> <p><u>PC Comments:</u></p> <p>5/30/12</p> <p>The Commission acknowledged that the basis for the request by the rowing association is consistent with the intent of the proposed amendment, as the club is requesting relief from undergrounding costs that have become a significant portion of the overall project budget. However, because the scope of the proposed amendment is limited to single family residential development, and because a mechanism to request relief for undergrounding requirements already exists in the Zoning Code, a change to the proposed amendment is not recommended in light of SRA’s comments.</p> <p>Nor would such action provide a direct remedy for the club. The approval conditions requiring the club to perform utility undergrounding as part of its development project were established by the City’s Hearings Examiner, therefore it is outside the purview of the Planning Commission to consider such a request. In addition, any modification to the proposed Zoning Code change would not retroactively aid the club in its goals to seek relief from undergrounding, because the Hearings Examiner’s decision has</p>	

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	<p>already been made.</p> <p>The Commission encourages SRA representatives to direct their request to appropriate staff in the City’s Development Services Center, who may be able to assist in re-examining their initial proposal. Lastly, the Commission requests that comments by SRA be included in the Final Report, to reinforce the Commission’s previous comments relating to future review of the City’s overall approach to undergrounding utility distribution and service lines.</p> <p>5/23/12</p> <p>The overall approach to utility undergrounding should be reviewed for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal applicability. It is unfair that property location relative to distribution lines determines whether an applicant will need to perform undergrounding, for example those that are adjacent to distribution lines versus those across the street from such lines. • Because utility undergrounding yields a public benefit, the applicant should not be solely responsible for covering development-related costs. • The current incremental approach to undergrounding results in a patchwork of above and below-ground electrical and telecommunications utilities. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirement to underground service lines on-site suffers from similar inequities as its distribution line counterpart. 	
<p>2. By eliminating the requirement for single family residential development to underground utility distribution lines, the proposal limits instances in which undergrounding would occur, and the overall timeline for completing desired undergrounding.</p> <p><i>(Biethan; Gregory)</i></p>	<p><u>Staff Comment/Recommendation:</u> 5/23/12</p> <p>In response to the first point, staff does recognize that one drawback to the proposal is that it would extend the overall timeline for completing utility undergrounding. However, this may be offset by relieving high cost burdens for minor residential development. That could help facilitate minor residential projects that add a greater diversity of housing types and/or beautify Redmond’s built environment.</p> <p>In response to the second point, the proposed Zoning Code Amendment does not change undergrounding requirements for other land use types. In other words, more significant private development projects would still be required to perform undergrounding. Land use actions in residential areas still required to perform undergrounding would include subdivisions, short plats, local improvement districts, multifamily residential development, building complexes, and “other projects that are of a size to warrant undergrounding.”</p> <p>[Note: Commercial and industrial development and binding site plans also still require undergrounding; this response is speaking directly to the question of impact to <u>residential</u> areas].</p>	<p><u>Opened</u> 5/23/12</p> <p><u>Closed</u> 5/30/12</p>

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	<p data-bbox="632 302 1612 753">Lastly, and to address the Commission’s follow up questions, the City would still perform undergrounding in residential and commercial areas alike, as part of future capital projects. The City’s Capital Improvement Program currently has an undergrounding program to contribute toward public projects that trigger the undergrounding requirement. In addition, the City and Puget Sound Energy share costs for undergrounding associated with public projects. Public involvement for City-initiated undergrounding currently occurs via the biennial Budgeting-by-Priorities process, whereby the public is invited to comment on proposed capital projects and related allocations to the undergrounding program.</p> <p data-bbox="632 821 1598 1062">Redmond has not conducted a citywide study targeting key corridors for undergrounding. Were that to occur, it could provide additional opportunities for public involvement. If the Planning Commission is suggesting this action, staff recommends it be included in the Planning Commission’s Report for City Council to consider in the future.</p> <p data-bbox="632 1130 877 1166"><u>Public Comment:</u></p> <p data-bbox="632 1247 852 1282"><u>PC Comments:</u></p> <p data-bbox="632 1305 1446 1341">Follow-up questions to the overall initial comment include:</p> <ul data-bbox="632 1380 1541 1416" style="list-style-type: none">• Were the proposal to be enacted, how would undergrounding	

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	<p>occur, especially in residential areas, other than through City-initiated efforts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At what point is the public involved in corridor, or citywide approaches to undergrounding? 	
<p>3. Please explain why criteria for short plats were not included in the proposed Zoning Code Amendment. Consider re-examining this option as part of future undergrounding follow-up. <i>(Hinman)</i></p>	<p><u>Staff Comment/Recommendation:</u> 5/23/12</p> <p>The Technical Committee did consider developing criteria for determining whether short plats be required to underground utility distribution lines, consistent with Planning Commission recommendation and City Council direction from 2011. However, upon considering criteria such as existing and proposed configuration of utilities, streets, and new lots, the Committee does not recommend adding such criteria due to the wide range of complexity and scale inherent to short plat development. A single set of criteria identifying conditions under which utility undergrounding is required would not apply equally across all anticipated short plat proposals, based on the range of circumstances experienced with short plats previously reviewed by the City.</p> <p>The Technical Committee acknowledged that provisions to petition the decision maker for relief from undergrounding requirements could be improved by relocating that text to the end of Zoning Code Chapter 21.54, giving the provision a prominent heading in the chapter and</p>	<p><u>Opened</u> 5/23/12</p> <p><u>Closed</u> 5/30/12</p>

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	reinforcing that that option is available to any development type. <u>Public Comment:</u> <u>PC Comments:</u>	