

City of Bellevue
Electrical Undergrounding Requirements and Variance Request Procedure

Updated: November 27, 2023

Purpose:

This procedure provides guidance on the application of Comprehensive Plan Policy UT-58, which requires the undergrounding of all new electrical distribution lines where there is a change in use or an intensification of the existing use occurs; UT-62 supporting neighborhood efforts to underground existing transmission and distribution lines; and compliance with the PSE Franchise Agreement regarding undergrounding of all new distribution and service lines of 34.5 kV or less.

Procedures:

1. Where there is a change in existing use or intensification in use of electrical services to a development, regardless of Land Use designation, the electrical distribution and service line utility shall be underground. This SOP may apply to City projects and or third party work and shall also be in accordance with applicable Tariff and rates.
2. Per Ordinance 6424, all new distribution and service line facilities of 34.5 kV or less shall be underground. This applies except when replacing distribution lines damaged by falling trees, branches, or other natural causes.
3. Where there is a change in use or intensification regarding redevelopment of residential development the following guidance applies:
 - A. Undergrounding is not required when:
 - i. The electrical service panel is being upgraded only; example converting from 110 amps to 200 amps with additions that involve relocation of meter hub or service mast and there is no pulling or installing a "new service" line.
 - ii. The overhead service mast is being relocated for the purposes of residential structural safety and there is no relocation of meter hub or having to pull a "new service" line to the relocated mast/meter.
 - iii. Rebuilding portions of the home to a previous exiting foundation layout addressing structural damage caused by fire or flood or other natural disaster.
 - iv. Raising a roof section for cathedral ceilings or enclosing a deck area.
 - v. Replacing a faulty or degraded overhead service line or replacing and overhead service line damaged by falling trees, branches, or other natural causes.
 - vi. Conversion of garage living space that can be served by an existing service panel and does not involve intensification of the service line electrical capacities from the primary PSE point of connection to an existing meter.
 - vii. Replacement and upgrade of an electrical meter only.
 - viii. Is for interim temporary power only and will be replaced by permanent power that will be underground.

- B. Undergrounding is required when, but is not limited to:
 - i. The demolition and rebuilding of an existing residential or commercial use.
 - ii. When pulling a new service line from a transformer to a meter or removing a triplex connection to a new meter that requires:
 - i. A new service line to be connected at both ends (PSE primary point of connection and meter/meter hub).
 - ii. When changing from a single phase service to a greater two or three phase service requiring a larger diameter service line.
 - iii. Adding an additional separate garage or residential structure or accessory dwelling structure that requires its own separate meter.
 - iv. Conversion of apartments to condominiums or outbuilding or conversion of any structure to living quarters or spaces that require a new separate meter or meters.
 - iii. Any new service lines required to be removed and replaced to address overhead clearance requirements within the right of way and roadway/shoulder area mitigating below minimum height requirements that present a safety issue.
- 4. A variance to the above undergrounding requirements may be requested. Such requests shall be reviewed by Right of Way for final consideration and recommendations submitted to the Right of Way Manager for approval.
 - A. Waiver considerations include:
 - i. Mitigation of potential underground conflicts with undergrounding exceeding \$10,000 (requires PSE estimates for review); and,
 - ii. Maintains a single set of overhead crossing of service lines in a common single location, e.g. where power and data/communications would cross at a single common location sharing the same poles.