

33. Re: Cost Sharing Underground Power Distribution - Developed Areas

An inquiry at the October 9, 1973 meeting of Council pertained to the installation of underground wiring in developed areas of the Municipality, and more specifically, the possibility of obtaining financial assistance from B.C. Hydro & Power Authority for execution of this work. Following is a report from the Engineer regarding this matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the Municipality not embark at this time on the placement of underground wiring generally throughout the Municipality on existing streets, owing to the very heavy demands for improvements having priority over limited available financing; and
THAT the Municipality recognize in its long term physical and financial planning the desirability of ultimately replacing poles and overhead distribution lines with underground works on existing streets.

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
FROM: MUNICIPAL ENGINEER
RE: COST SHARING UNDERGROUND POWER DISTRIBUTION--DEVELOPED AREAS

DECEMBER 14, 1973

As a result of the Municipal Clerk's letter 15 October, 1973, we have again written to the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority to confirm information provided at a meeting held in November, 1972, with officials of the Power Authority regarding the application of Bill 21 "Power and Telephone Line Beautification Fund Act".

It has been confirmed that Bill 21 provided for the establishment of a fund of \$10,000,000 to be used to encourage underground installation of power, telephone and other overhead transmission lines in municipal areas. Payments are made from the fund where a Municipality, a Utility, and the Provincial Government agree to share equally in the cost of an underground installation which comes within the scope of the Act.

The Act applies to the placement of existing or proposed overhead transmission or distribution lines underground with the following exceptions:

- (a) Underground to new residential subdivisions,
- (b) Ornamental Street Lighting,
- (c) In situations where Hydro normally places lines underground; for example, distribution feeders from substations to the overhead distribution system, or certain transmission circuits in congested urban areas,
- (d) Relocation of overhead lines to locations which are aesthetically more desirable.

We were advised at our meeting with the Hydro officials that if an attempt were made to implement Bill 21 for placement of power and telephone lines underground in developed areas after the application of the 3-part, cost-sharing as provided in the Act, the resultant cost to the property owners would be between \$800 and \$1,000 per lot and, in addition to this, we were advised that the owner's cost of changing his own overhead line to underground inside his property ranged from \$200 to \$400. Such a scheme was presented in the City of Vancouver to property owners in the Point Grey Area and the property owners completely rejected the proposal as it was considered that the cost was exorbitant.

The Engineering Department has, just in the past few days, developed a long-range look at future demands which are likely to come from a local improvement type of financial base. We have found, on a very rough estimate, that total demands to upgrade our street "plant" could reach \$109 million to \$141 million for street curbing, sidewalks, power pole elimination, ornamental lighting, and trees and boulevards; the financial requirement for power pole elimination alone could reach \$30 million to \$35 million as the municipal share. Inherent in this massive

requirement for funds is the necessity to assign relative priorities to the various items; it appears to us that upgrading our street inventory must come first and the cost of that portion alone would be some \$50 million, without provision of sidewalks.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Municipality not embark at this time on the placement of underground wiring generally throughout the Municipality on existing streets, owing to the very heavy demands for improvements having priority over limited available financing, but,

THAT the Municipality recognize in its long term physical and financial planning the desirability of ultimately replacing poles and overhead distribution lines with underground works on existing streets.

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c.c. () Planning Director


E. E. OLSON
MUNICIPAL ENGINEER