

Item	4
Manager's Report No.	17
Council Meeting	97/06/16

TO: CITY MANAGER

1997 June 11

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: **UNDERGROUND WIRING PROJECT
HASTINGS STREET LANE SOUTH OF 4000 BLOCK**

PURPOSE: To inform Council of the current status of the underground wiring project in the lane south of the 4000 block Hastings Street.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** copies of this report be forwarded to the Heights Merchants Association and to the B.C. Hydro & Power Authority.

REPORT

In 1995 the City of Burnaby was successful in obtaining cost-sharing approval under the 1995/96 B.C. Hydro Beautification Program for a pilot project to underground overhead wiring in the lane south of the 4000 block Hastings Street (between MacDonald and Gilmore). Under the program, BC Hydro and BC Tel contribute one-third of their respective costs, with the City contributing the remaining two-thirds. The project was planned in conjunction with the Hastings Street Revitalization to enhance area lanes as a pedestrian friendly environment for shoppers, customers, and residents.

Staff have worked closely with the Heights Merchants Association and property owners to explain project requirements and promote their cooperation and support. This included discussion at regular Heights Merchants Association meetings, information packages sent to all property owners explaining the project, a special meeting with owners and BC Hydro to discuss detailed project plans, and correspondence and direct contact with individual owners to request easements required for the project. Throughout this process the Heights Merchants Association has been very supportive of the project and has assisted in communications with owners, merchants, BC Hydro, and City staff.

Staff have also worked extensively with BC Hydro to achieve a practical design solution for the underground wiring that would minimize the number and size of easements required on private property, and would allow flexibility in the timing for individual property owners to underground their private service connections to minimize the necessity for placing or retention of interim poles.

Despite considerable efforts over an extended period of time, we regret to advise that it has not been possible to obtain agreement from property owners to grant the three (3) easement areas required by B.C. Hydro. Under the terms of the BC Hydro Beautification Program, projects must be completed within two years and since the necessary easements required to start construction have not been secured, B.C. Hydro has advised that the cost shared funds are no longer available from BC Hydro to proceed with this project.

Recognizing the benefits and desirability of removing overhead utility lines in the Hastings Street lanes, staff will continue to plan for achieving underground wiring at these locations over time in conjunction with ongoing redevelopment in the Hastings Street Revitalization Area.

However, considering the difficulties in obtaining easements, and the long time frame expected for private service connections to be undergrounded and interim poles /overhead wires removed, it is suggested that future initiatives for the Hastings Street lane project should involve preliminary commitment from affected property owners prior to an application being submitted to B.C. Hydro for future Beautification funding.

It is recommended that a copy of this report be sent to the Heights Merchants Association at #102 - 4011 Hastings Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 2J1, and to B.C. Hydro & Power Authority at 6900 Southpoint Drive, Podium C01, Burnaby, B.C. V3N 4X8.



D. G. Stenson
Director Planning and Building

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cc: Director Engineering
Director Finance

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