Questions Regarding Proposed Utility Undergrounding in Kensington

The following list of questions is being submitted by a group of Kensington residents at the request of Bob Coffin, chairperson for the Transportation & Safety Subcommittee of the Kensington Talmadge Planning Group. These questions/requests have been prepared to help our community better understand the undergrounding process and the policies of the various utility companies that will be tasked with that project. We would like to thank you in advance for considering our requests and responding to our inquiries.

1. Q. Are the three foot square (approximate) units installed in our neighboring Talmadge Community identified as Transformer boxes? If so, is there a move specific identifier? If not, what is the proper term for that equipment? For the purpose of this questionnaire, I will refer to that equipment as Transformer (s).

   A. The 3'x3' above ground boxes most commonly installed are single phase transformers, which are required to provide service to residential neighborhoods.

2. Q. Are the above noted three foot transformers the only above ground equipment SDG&E will install? If not, what are the other above ground elements, approximately how many will be required for our area; and where would they be installed?

   A. SDG&E may install other equipment as required to serve each community. The type of equipment depends upon the electric load being served and the infrastructure required to support the surrounding neighborhoods. Until design of a project is complete, this question cannot be answered. SDG&E's standards for installation are available in the Technical Documents section of the City of San Diego's undergrounding website: www.sandiego.gov/undergrounding.

3. Q. To better understand you current underground installation process in San Diego, I am requesting a copy of your policies/procedures for placing transformers above ground in the residential public right-of-way.

   A. SDG&E's practice is to place equipment within the city franchise area (right-of-way) whenever possible using best engineering practices. A copy of the Franchise Agreement is available at the City of San Diego's undergrounding website.

4. Q. Several residents have noticed that apparently there is not a uniform policy for installing all transformers above ground as some are in below ground vaults. I am requesting a copy of your policies/procedures for placing transformers above ground in the residential public right-of-way.

   A. SDG&E does not place equipment such as transformers in underground vaults. The only exceptions to this are installations in buildings downtown. In such cases the customer owns and maintains a room on their premise which is dedicated to the installation of SDG&E's

equipment. Cable termination/junction equipment may be placed in underground vaults. Please reference the Subsurface versus Pad mounted Equipment Fact Sheet attached.

5. Q. To better understand the above-ground transformer to below-ground vault decision, what is the cost differential between an above –ground transformer and a below-ground vault installation?

   A. This question does not apply.

6. Q. If transformer boxes are installed in below-ground vaults, are there requirements for vent pipes? If so, what are the specifications for the vent pipes? If you have a policy/procedure regarding vent pipes, we are requesting a copy of the policy.

   A. As stated in the response to question 4, equipment is not placed in underground vaults. Cable termination/junction vaults do not require venting.

7. Q. To lessen the visual impact, can equipment from different utilities be combined in the same box/container? (i.e. Can the SDG&E transformer box accommodate the Cox and AT&T above ground equipment?)

   A. Maintenance and safety requirements do not allow the co-location of equipment from different entities within an SDG&E cabinet. Please contact the communications companies for their requirements.

8. Q. To better understand the design process, do SDG&E, AT&T, and Cox have a joint policy for coordinationg the location of above-ground and below-ground equipment? Does that policy attempt to limit the number of transformers or risers per homeowner parcel? If there is a joint policy, we request a copy of that policy.

   A. SDG&E does the preliminary engineering design for City of San Diego Surcharge projects. Installations by other companies are their responsibility, but these companies attempt to minimize cost by locating facilities in areas where a minimal amount of additional trenching will be required.

9. Q. To better understand the number of transformers proposed for our community, what is the ratio of transformers to residential units (i.e. 1 for every 4 homes? 1 for every 8 homes?0

   A. This varies by neighborhood, but ratios of between 8:1 and 15:1 are common.

10. Q. Is the ratio of transformers to residential units dictated by the performance of the equipment, or is it possible to reduce the number of transformers required without a negative impact on performance?

    A. The number of transformers installed is site-specific, and varies with factors such as the distance between customers and the load per customer. Very large transformers which

serve many homes require larger low-voltage cables, and may not be cost-effective. SDG&E's goal is to provide the most cost-effective solution for the City's ratepayers.

11. Q. To better understand placement of proposed transformers, is there a required spacing (i.e., not to exceed 150 feet between transformers)? Is that distance set by equipment performance or policy? If set by policy I am requesting a coy of that policy.

    A. There is no set spacing requirement, as the installations are engineered as site-specific depending on factors such as those mentioned above. Transformers less than 250' apart are rare in residential neighborhoods.

12. Q. To lessen the visual impact of the proposed installation, are the transformer boxes standardized or are there optional sizes, shapes or colors that would help reduce the noted visual impact? If options are available can our community select the size, shape or color?

    A. SDG&E specifies transformer sizes (capacities) and that they fit on the appropriate pad. In residential neighborhoods, the pads are 4'x4'. All transformers are painted green, and SDG&E will maintain them. If a community wishes to assume responsibility for painting and maintaining a different color for SDG&E's facilities, this request should be processed through the City of San Diego.

13. Q. To lessen the visual impact of the proposed installation, are there optional sizes and shapes for the pads and bollards, which are required for the transformers?

    A. The pads are sized according to the facility to be installed, and the equipment specifications require that it fit on the pad. Transformers are purchased from various manufacturers, and sizes may vary slightly. Bollards or barrier post are standard installations where equipment is within 5 feet of vehicular traffic.

14. Q. The northern parts of Kensington, on the streets of Palisades, East Palisades, Ridgeway, and the 5300 blocks of Marlborough and Canterbury currently have below-ground vaults. Does your installation plan require moving that equipment above ground to conform to the rest of the undergrounding project? If so, what is the policy or reasoning for making that change? If the change from below-ground vaults to above ground Transformers is done will it be done "all at once" or on some other schedule? [If on a gradual schedule, please specify]

    A. SDG&E has no plans to relocate the existing subsurface facilities on the streets of Palisades, East Palisades, Ridgeway or the 5300 block of Marlborough and Canterbury. Existing subsurface transformers are converted to pad mount when replacement is required.

15. Q. Several residents have asked if the placement of the Transformer in their property's frontage will have any relationship to the current placement of transformers on telephone poles. Is there the likelihood that a resident with a transformer on their property's telephone pole will be the residence selected for a Transformer in their parcel's public right-of-way?

A. *The existing overhead lines do not dictate where the new underground system will be placed. When determining the location of the transformers and hand holes several criteria are used including: electric load to be served, conflicts with existing facilities (possible conflicts with water, sewer etc.), distance between the SDG&E facility providing service and the customer's metering equipment, size of conductors required to maintain service within specifications (voltage, flicker, ampacity), cable pulling tension, and projected load growth.*

16. Q. In an effort to limit visual impact on a specific property or neighborhood block, what is the policy for working with homeowners regarding the placement of a Transformer on their property's public right-of-way or, at their request, outside the public right-of-way within their own private property boundary?

A. *Typically transformers located on private property only serve that premise. Facilities placed on private property used as a distribution point require easements and is not a preferred method.*

17. Q. Understandably there is homeowner concern regarding the process of connecting the new underground service to the home's electrical panel. To better understand that process, will SDG&E trench past the public right-of-way to the residential electrical panel, regardless of its current location on the home? If not, will SDG&E install the connecting lines in a trench provided by the homeowner? I am requesting copies of those related policies to better inform homeowners of that process, including the specifications for any trenching (i.e., depth, width) which would fall to the homeowner.

A. *SDG&E determines the point of service when modifying overhead panels to accept an underground system. SDG&E applies its service delivery point policy when determining the point of service. Under this policy, SDG&E will terminate in a pull can or meter adaptor as close to the distribution system as practicable. Existing conditions such as elevation, landscape, hard scape features, brick work and building foundations are taken into consideration. If a customer chooses not to have SDG&E perform the work then the customer will need to make modifications at their expense.*

18. Q. If the connecting service is not placed in a trench from the public right-of-way to the home's electrical panel, and if the conduit must be run along the side of a home, does the resident determine the path of the conduit or is it at the sole discretion of SDG&E? (i.e., Could the conduit be run low to the ground, rather than high up under the eaves?)

A. *When a pull can is placed at the front of the building with a galvanized conduit running to the back to connect to the existing electric riser the electrician will determine the best route (high or low). Where there are eaves it is the preferred installation, as they tend to conceal the conduit. SDG&E's electricians' leave door hangers 1-2 weeks prior to the installation with a contact name and phone number. The resident can contact the electrician to discuss the installation at the premise.*

19. Q. Does the homeowner have an option to move the existing electrical panel to another location on the house that will allow for less intrusive trenching and if so will SDG&E do the work and will the homeowner incur those costs?

    A. Service panel upgrades or relocations are always an option to the customer. All costs including permit fees and coordination associated with the upgrade/relocations will be incurred by the customer.

20. Q. To better understand the maintenance of any above ground installation, what is your policy for repair of damaged equipment or defacement of their containers? I request a copy of that policy.

    A. Equipment is maintained in compliance with all applicable regulations and company practices which are more stringent than those specified in California General Order 165.

21. Q. If a resident has a conflict with SDG&E, what is the current process and policy for resolving the conflict? I am requesting a copy of that policy/procedure.

    A. All projects are assigned to an SDG&E planner. The planner is the point of contact during all phases of construction. Any comments or concerns should be brought to the planner's attention. Typically, any conflict that arises during construction is resolved thru the planner.

22. Q. If the City Council approves the Underground Utility District for Kensington, is there a fixed timeline for each phase? If not, can the phases be adjusted based on local conditions such as resurfacing the streets, or water/sewer work.

    A. The conversion schedule is determined by the City of San Diego in coordination with their Capital Improvement Projects (sewer & water jobs, street resurfacing etc.)