



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Town of Paradise Takes Next Steps in Undergrounding Utilities

PARADISE, CA: As the Town of Paradise experiences another tense fire season, progress is being made towards undergrounding utilities and the removal of above-ground utility poles. During the Camp Fire, utility poles caught fire and fell into roadways, blocking evacuation routes. Immediate utility restoration efforts by PG&E included the installation of temporary overhead power infrastructure. The undergrounding of utilities was identified as a priority in the Long Term Recovery Plan created after the Camp Fire, and is an important step forward in recovery.

In response to the Town's Long Term Recovery Plan, PG&E is undergrounding all electric infrastructure with over thirty miles completed to date. However, telecommunication infrastructure remains above ground and has not participated in any of the joint-trench opportunities provided by PG&E. In order to explore all existing legal options and programs which would compel telecommunications companies such as Comcast and AT&T to also underground their infrastructure, the Paradise Town Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. to consider forming an Underground Utility District on arterials and collectors (most major roadways) in Town.

Approval of the District would require the removal of utility poles and overhead infrastructure within designated areas of Town and require those facilities to be installed underground. The attached public notice was mailed to all residents and businesses located along the identified roadways being considered for the Underground District. This District would be formed using the Rule 20A Program through PG&E. There is no cost to property owners within the proposed district area.

In addition to proposing an Underground District, the Town has also filed a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) complaint against Comcast and AT&T. The complaint notes that during the Camp Fire, one of the primary obstacles in evacuation efforts was burning utility poles and wires falling into roadways.. To prevent this from happening in the future, utility infrastructure needs to be installed underground. The CPUC complaint process is another tool the Town is utilizing to assure the safety of our residents as we rebuild our community.

The ultimate goal of the Town Council in pursuing the CPUC complaint and the potential formation of an Underground Utility District is to create a safer community for our residents and visitors, as

envisioned in the Long Term Recovery Plan. You can view the Long Term Recovery Plan, and its many important projects online at www.makeitparadise.org.