


675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562
(707) 764-3532



For Meeting of: March 4, 2025
☐ Consent Item; ☒ Public Hearing Item

To: City Council

From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director 

Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

Date: February 26, 2025

Subject: Consideration and Possible Adoption of Resolution No. 1629-2025
Approving Expanding Underground District No. 2; and Authorize the City
Manager to Execute a Rule 20A General Conditions Agreement with
PG&E

Recommendation:

That the City Council:

1. Allow staff to briefly discuss the item, open the public hearing, receive comments and deliberate; and
2. Adopt Resolution No. 1629-2025 approving expanding Underground District No. 2; and Authorize the City Manager to execute a Rule 20A General Conditions Agreement with PG&E.

Discussion:

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) authorized electric and telecommunication utilities to convert overhead utility lines and facilities to underground pursuant to Electric Rule 20 and Telecommunication Rule 32.

PG&E recently reached out to the City and in order to avoid potentially losing our allocated work credit of approximately \$504,000, they recommended that the City

expand Underground District No. 2. Underground District No. 2 currently includes six parcels. The recommended expanded District will include an additional 34 parcels. A map is included in Attachment 2.

Under Electric Tariff Rule 20A, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) requires the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) to allocate a certain amount of work credits each year to cities and unincorporated counties for conversion projects. Since ratepayers contribute the bulk of the costs of Rule 20A programs through utility rates, the projects must be in the public interest by meeting one or more of the following public interest criteria: eliminate an unusually heavy concentration of overhead lines; involve a street or road with a high volume of public traffic; benefit a civic or public recreation area or area of unusual scenic interest; or be listed as an arterial street major or major collector as defined in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) guidelines. The proposed expanded district meets the criteria established by the rules of the CPUC, to wit,

- The undergrounding will eliminate an unusually heavy concentration of overhead electric facilities; and
- Wildwood Avenue is the main thoroughfare through town and is extensively used by the general public and carries a heavy volume of pedestrian or vehicular traffic; and
- The northern end of this section passes through and adjacent to Triangle Park, a public recreation area; and
- Wildwood Avenue has been enhanced over the years with landscaped medians and offers incredible scenic views of the surrounding countryside; and
- This section of Wildwood Avenue is the only section where the overhead utilities have not been placed underground and they significantly detract the visual setting of the downtown and surrounding areas.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no cost to expanding the Underground Utility District at this time. However, this action will improve the City's likelihood of preserving and utilizing its balance of \$504,000+/- PG&E work credits from being withdrawn due to future "wind-downs" of the program. Furthermore, a preliminary estimate of the cost of this proposed undergrounding project has not been developed but will be pursued in coordination with PG&E, AT&T and Optimum over the coming months, which will allow for a more informed discussion with the Council in the fall regarding next steps and the overall fiscal impact.

CEQA:

The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3 ("Guidelines for Implementation of the CEQA"), Section 15302 (d) Conversion of overhead electric utility distribution system facilities to underground including connection to existing overhead electric utility distribution lines where the surface is restored to the condition existing prior to the undergrounding.

Attachment 1: Resolution No. 1629-2025 approving expanding Underground District No. 2

Attachment 2: Public Notice and Map of the District

RESOLUTION NO. 1629-2025



RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIO DELL EXPANDING UNDERGROUND DISTRICT NO. 2 TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL LANDS ALONG WILDWOOD AVENUE

WHEREAS, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has authorized electric and telecommunication utilities to convert overhead utility lines and facilities to underground pursuant to Electric Rule 20 and Telecommunication Rule 32; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to certain criteria, CPUC rules allow participating cities and counties to establish legislation authorizing the creation and expansion of underground utility districts within which existing overhead electric distribution and telecommunication distribution and service facilities will be converted to underground; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rio Dell, has adopted an ordinance authorizing the City Council to designate areas within which all existing overhead poles, overhead wires and overhead equipment associated with the distribution of electric power, telecommunication services and cable television should be removed and replaced with underground wires and facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Public Works for the City of Rio Dell has consulted with the affected public utilities and such utilities have agreed that the expanded underground conversion district, designated the Utility Undergrounding District No. 2 as shown in **Exhibit 1** attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, meets the criteria established by the rules of the CPUC, to wit,

- The undergrounding will eliminate an unusually heavy concentration of overhead electric facilities; and
- Wildwood Avenue is the main thoroughfare through town and is extensively used by the general public and carries a heavy volume of pedestrian or vehicular traffic; and

- The northern end of this section passes through and adjacent to Triangle Park, a civic and public recreation area; and
- Wildwood Avenue has been enhanced over the years with landscaped medians and offers incredible scenic views of the surrounding countryside; and
- This section of Wildwood Avenue is the only section where the overhead utilities have not been placed underground and they significantly detract the visual setting of the downtown and surrounding areas.

WHEREAS, each year the City of Rio Dell is notified by PG&E regarding the allocation of work credits for conversion of overhead electric distribution lines and facilities to underground, known as Rule 20A allocations; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Public Works for City of Rio Dell has consulted with PG&E and determined that the City has accumulated Rule 20A work credits or PG&E has agreed that the City may borrow against future credits sufficient to complete the proposed overhead to underground conversion project; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rio Dell and the affected utilities have agreed by letter that each utility shall complete the engineering of their respective portion of the Utility Undergrounding District No. 2 Overhead to Underground Utility Conversion Project; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rio Dell and the affected utilities have agreed by letter that PG&E shall be responsible for preparation of the trench profile and composite drawings and that PG&E shall be designated as “trench lead” to manage trenching, installation of substructures, and pavement restoration and such other work; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Public Works of the City of Rio Dell and the affected utilities have agreed on a work schedule which meets their respective capabilities and further agreed to waive any administrative fees, costs or special street restoration requirements for purposes of this project; and

WHEREAS, to the extent required, the City of Rio Dell has agreed to provide easements or rights of way on private property as may be necessary for installation of utility facilities in a form satisfactory to the affected utilities; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Rio Dell has now received the report from the Director of Public Works recommending that the area identified in **Exhibit 1** should be designated as an underground utility district within which all existing overhead poles, overhead wires and overhead equipment associated with the distribution of electric power, telecommunication services and cable television should be removed and replaced with underground wires and facilities; and

WHEREAS, upon the recommendation of the Director of Public Works, the City Council of the City of Rio Dell has determined that the expanded Utility Undergrounding District No. 2 is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rio Dell has notified all affected property owners within the proposed expanded Utility Undergrounding District No. 2 and inviting same to attend a public hearing to discuss formation of the proposed district; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Rio Dell held public hearings at which time the Council did receive and consider the recommendation of the Director of Public Works and did hear any and all objections or protests that were raised by the owners of property within the above described district pertaining to designating this area an underground utility district.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Rio Dell that:

Section 1. The public interest requires the removal of all existing utility poles [excepting those poles supporting streetlights, traffic signals or trolley lines], overhead wires and associated overhead structures and installation of underground wires and facilities for supplying electric power, communication, or similar associated services within the areas as shown in **Exhibit 1**, attached hereto, with such area being designated as the Utility Undergrounding District No. 2; and

Section 2, That the utility companies, cable television services and other affected services shall commence work on installation of underground facility installation in Utility Undergrounding District No. 2 and that as each phase of the project is complete and ready for conversion from overhead to underground utility facilities, all fronting property owners shall be notified by first class letter, postage pre-paid, of the schedule for conversion of all utility service lines; and

Section 3, The electric utility shall use the underground conversion allocation computed pursuant to decisions of the California Public Utilities Commission for the purpose of providing to each premises requiring it in Utility Undergrounding District No. 2 District a maximum of one hundred feet of individual electric service trenching and conductor (as well as backfill, paving and conduit, if required) and each other serving utility shall provide service trenching and conductor in accordance with its rules and tariffs on file with the California Public Utilities Commission or as required by its Franchise Agreement with the City of Rio Dell; and

Section 4. The electric utility shall use said underground conversion allowance allocation, up to a maximum amount of \$1500 per service entrance excluding permit fees, for the conversion of electric service panels to accept underground service in the Utility Undergrounding District No. 2, and the City of Rio Dell shall be financially responsible for

any and all costs not covered by the electric utility for the installation and maintenance of the conduit and termination box located on, under or within any structure on the premises served; and

Section 5. That upon notification as specified in Section 2, all property owners in Utility Undergrounding District No. 2 shall have underground electrical entrance facilities installed and inspected pursuant to the City of Rio Dell Electrical Code within sixty (60) days and that should any property owner fail to install satisfactory underground electrical entrance facilities by the date specified in the notice, the electric utility shall notify the Director of Public Works who shall, within thirty (30) days direct the electric utility in writing to discontinue electrical service to the property, without recourse, pursuant to Rule 11 until electrical entrance facilities are ready to accept underground electrical conductors and have passed the necessary inspection requirements; and

Section 6. That once all services have been converted from overhead to underground, the utility companies, cable television services and other affected services shall remove all poles (except as specified above) and associated overhead facilities within Utility Undergrounding District No. 2, within 120 days of all services being converted from overhead to underground.

The foregoing resolution was **PASSED and ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Rio Dell on March 4, 2025 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Mayor Garnes

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

City of Rio Dell

ATTEST:

I, Karen Dunham, City Clerk for the City of Rio Dell, State of California, hereby certify the above and foregoing to be a full, true and correct copy of Resolution No. 1629-2025 adopted by the City Council of the City of Rio Dell on March 4, 2025.

Karen Dunham, City Clerk, City of Rio Dell



Community Development Department
675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562
(707) 764-3532

Public Notice
City of Rio Dell City Council
Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

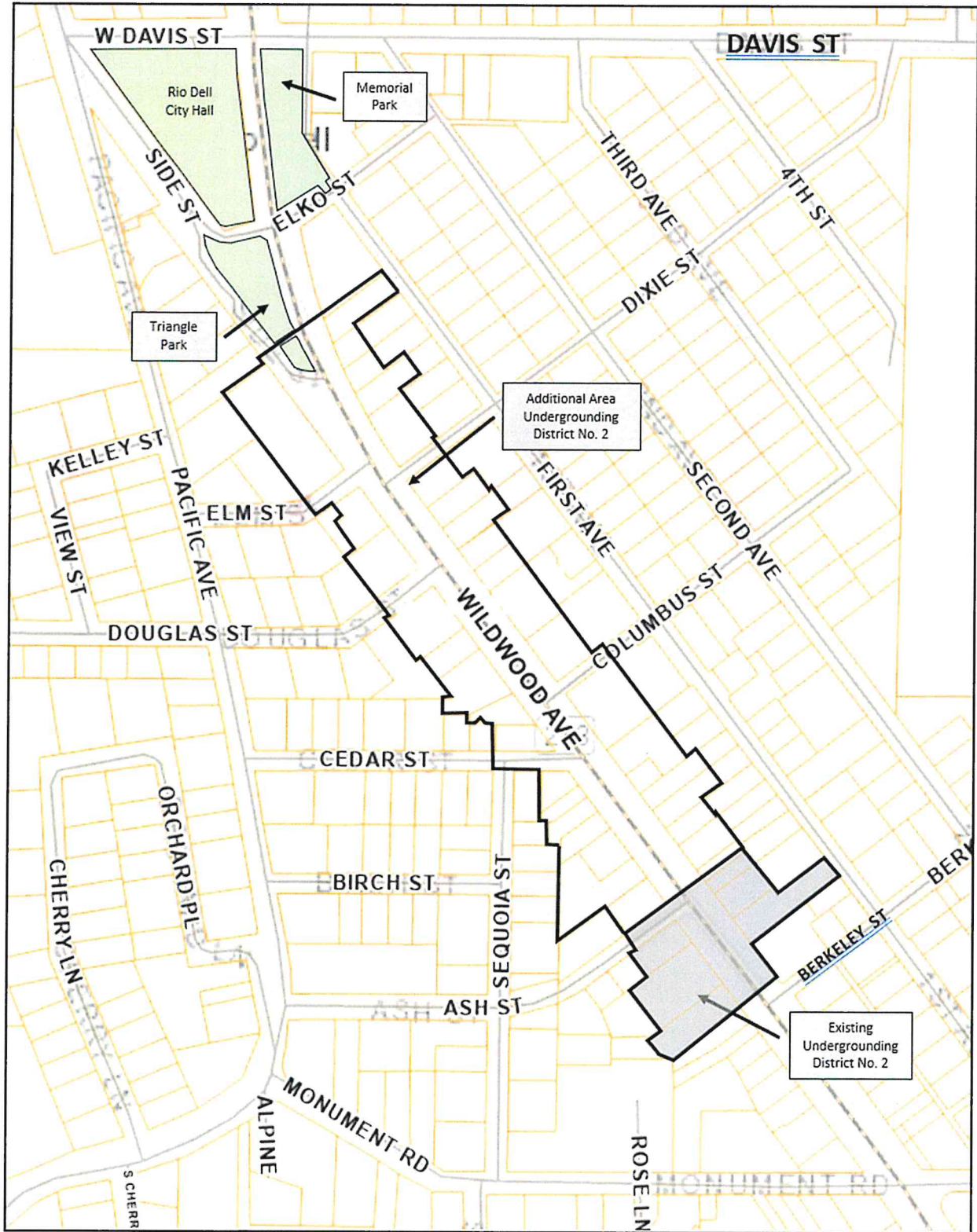
On **Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.** or as soon thereafter as the matters can be heard, the City Council will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** to consider adopting a Resolution expanding Underground District No. 2 – along Wildwood Avenue from Ash Street to Side Street. A copy of the map of the expanded district is below and can be found on the City’s website at <https://www.cityofriodell.ca.gov/>. The expanded district’s electrical and communication lines are hung on wooden poles which may be relocated to underground in the future.

Adoption of the Resolution and boundary map will allow the City to retain its ‘active’ status for the purpose of using its PG&E Rule 20A funds. No fees will be levied on any property owners as a result of establishing this District.

Residents and all interested parties are invited to attend the meeting to speak or present written communication either for or against this matter.

Public Comment by Email: Public comments on agenda items can be submitted via email at publiccomment@cityofriodell.ca.gov. Please note the agenda item the comment is directed to (example: Public Comments for items not on the agenda) and email no later than one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Your comments will be read out loud, for up to three minutes.

If you are unable to attend the public hearing, you may direct written comments to the **City at 675 Wildwood Avenue, Rio Dell, CA. 95562, or you may contact Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director at (707) 764-3532.** In addition, information is available for review at the above address between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday - Friday.



Rule 20A Utility Underground District No. 2 Expansion Map