

The MPO One Percent Utility Plan for Underground Utilities

0.0 Executive Summary

One percent of the gross revenues of utility providers should be set aside for the underground placement of existing and future utilities. New roadway construction along major arterials and new subdivisions should be required to place all utilities underground.

1.0 Proposals

The MPO One Percent Utility Plan for Underground Utilities is recommended by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) and approved by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) on July 11, 2005, the Council of Governments (COG) Executive Committee on September 30, 2005, and the Lafayette City-Parish Planning Commission on November 28, 2005

These recommendations are listed below:

- 1) No new above ground utilities shall be allowed within 150 feet of any major or minor arterial or collector roadways identified in the Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan (CTP).
- 2) An “Underground Utilities Citizen Oversight Committee” shall be established within each jurisdiction to coordinate plans and priorities for utility conversion implementation among local governments.
- 3) Overhead utility companies in the Lafayette Metropolitan Study Area shall be required to set aside 1% of gross revenues for local utility conversion through their franchise agreements in accounts established for each local jurisdiction.
- 4) When construction of street, road or highways occur and above-ground utilities are in conflict with the project the differential cost of the relocation of said underground utilities will be incorporated into and made part of the Capital Transportation Improvement Project on these roadways.
- 5) The local planning commission or governmental jurisdictions within the MPO Area shall apply requirements for underground utility installations in new subdivision development (such as currently required in City of Lafayette Subdivision Regulations).
- 6) Federal and State grant opportunities shall be sought to help defer utility conversion cost on existing overhead utility installations as a hazard mitigation program.

2.0 Incremental Cost

According to the Louisiana Public Service Commission¹, franchise fees equal to five percent or less of gross utility revenues paid to the jurisdiction may be paid directly by rate payers. However, franchise fees greater than 5% of gross revenues are paid by the utility provider.

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¹ Phone conversation with a staff member of the Public Service Commission, Lawrence St. Blanc, (1-800-256-2397).