



# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL** **DATE: JUNE 6, 2023**

**FROM: COUNCILWOMAN PLASCENCIA** **WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: RIVERSIDE TRANSMISSION RELIABILITY PROJECT WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

## **ISSUE:**

Hear an update from the Riverside Transmission Reliability Project (RTRP) Working Group and discuss whether to cease the Working Group immediately or allow the Working Group to continue to October 2023.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Receive an update from RTRP Working Group members Councilmembers Conder and Hemenway;
2. Approve the immediate discontinuation of the RTRP Working Group;
3. Support the Riverside Transmission Reliability Project as approved by the CPUC in March, 2020 and move forward to meet established Project benchmarks and construction schedule; and
4. Reaffirm the City's partnership with Southern California Edison and the City's desire to move the Project forward without further delay.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Working Group**

On January 17, 2023, the City Council voted to 1) form a working group consisting of federal, state, and local leaders to identify and secure funding sources for further undergrounding of Riverside Transmission Reliability Project and provide an update in May or June 2023, and the final report to City Council no later than October 24, 2023; and 2) request the City to take the lead with Councilmember Conder and Hemenway serving as members.

### **Riverside Transmission Reliability Project Historical Timeline Highlights**

- June 2006 – the California Independent System Operation (CAISO), which is the independent organization responsible for planning the statewide transmission grid, conducted studies concluding a need for the project.

- February 2013 – City Council certified Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
- April 2015 – Southern California Edison (SCE) filed a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) application with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for approval to construct the project.
- January 2017 – application deemed complete by the CPUC.
- 2018 - Supplemental EIR published by the CPUC for public review and subsequently approved in March 2020.
- March 2020 - the CPUC granted SCE a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for RTRP, authorizing SCE to construct RTRP as currently designed. Funding for the RTRP project was also approved for the portion of the project from Miraloma Substation (outside the City) to the new Wildlife Substation (in the City) in the amount of \$521 million (City's portion is 1.7% of this total). In addition, it is anticipated that the City will incur \$200 million to redesign and upgrade the City's electrical distribution system citywide.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Per my inquiry, the following information was relayed to me by the City Manager's Office and Riverside Public Utilities as follow-up to Riverside Transmission Reliability Project Working Group meetings:

The RTRP Working Group met on March 6 and 21, April 3 and 24, and May 8, 2023. Attendees included either the elected officials or their representatives from the offices of Congressman Calvert, Congressman Takano, Assemblymember Cervantes, Assemblymember Essayli, Senator Seyarto, and Senator Roth, Riverside City Councilmembers Conder and Hemenway and Riverside staff, and two Norco City Councilmembers, Norco staff, and Norco consultant Steve Larson of California Strategies. Discussions by the Working Group appear to have focused on how best to pursue funding assistance and the CPUC petition for modification process to underground the remaining portion of the RTRP.

Concurrently, the Norco City Council approved an agreement in March with California Strategies to collaborate with Riverside and elected representatives to pursue funding assistance and regulatory approvals to underground RTRP. California Strategies representative and former Executive Director of the CPUC Steve Larson is the lead consultant for Norco. California Strategies is the same consultant used by the City of Riverside to complete an analysis that was presented to City Council on November 15, 2022. It was also disclosed during Working Group meetings that in April the City of Norco employed Downey Brand LLP for legal services to advocate for undergrounding of RTRP powerlines.

City staff has confirmed that SCE has not started any construction work on the project. The expected delay is anticipated to move the date of completion from 2026, per the approved project terms, to 2028-2029 (if construction starts soon in 2023).

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving this report.

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Plascencia', written over a horizontal line.

Gaby Plascencia

City Councilmember, Ward 5

Attachment:            January 17, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes