

## **Information points from Jim Richardson's Meeting with ML&P Staff to Discuss Undergrounding of Utilities in Rogers Park Under Title 21**

Assembly Chair Elvi Gray-Jackson and Assemblyman Dick Traini attended the meeting, along with Mark Johnson, ML&P General Manager and several of his staff.

ML&P clarified that their undergrounding program this summer was limited to the area along Bannister Street between Latouche and Galewood. Other areas of Rogers Park are neither included either this year nor in the current 5-year plan covering 2016 through 2020.

It could be many, many years before the rest of Rogers Park has utilities buried under this program. ML&P Staff estimates that it will take 180 years to completely underground all of the utilities in the ML&P area based on the annual rate of funding and the amount of work to be completed.

The fact that Rogers Park has alleys that allow ML&P easy access to the utility lines diminished the likelihood that they will select an undergrounding program in the main portions of Rogers Park without a large push by the community residents.

The 2 percent of billings collected by ML&P for undergrounding provides about \$2 million to \$2.5 million per year. This allows them to do about two Bannister-sized projects per year throughout the ML&P service area.

The Bannister project was selected by ML&P because it was a discrete component within the budget amount available and the current situation there has caused a lot of maintenance issues for ML&P over the years.

The decisions on project selection are made by ML&P. They base their decisions upon several criteria, specifically

- (a) system betterment – in terms of dealing with system constraints
- (b) electric safety
- (c) age of facilities

These 3 factors make up 70% of the decision.

The other 30 percent is based upon (a) visibility improvement and (b) customer requests

### **What can Rogers Park residents do to get our utilities undergrounded?**

We can send letters to our legislators, assembly representatives and the regulatory commission to ask them to make our undergrounding a priority. One logical reason to pursue this program on an expedited basis is that Rogers Park wants to have our alleys paved, and it makes no sense to pave the alleys before the alleys are excavated to place

the utilities underground.

### **Ways to get Rogers Park utilities underground quicker than 180 years**

The ML&P program could be changed to increase the increased to collected percentage to more than 2 percent of billing, thus allowing more projects each year. Based on the political situation between ML&P and ratepayers in Anchorage, increasing the surcharge for the undergrounding program is probably not viable.

It would be possible to speed up the process by sharing costs. One possibility would be to establish a Local Improvement District with and specific assessment of homeowners to work with ML&P.

Jake Moe with ML&P completed the following calculations for the cost of undergrounding utilities in all of Rogers Park:

- I did a quick analysis and estimate for what it would take to underground the rest of Rogers Park. I did not include the lines that run along Northern Lights in this analysis. Here is what I discovered:
- There is approximately 22,000 feet of high voltage distribution lines that are overhead.
- There is approximately 25,000 feet of secondary and street light lines that are overhead.
- I estimate that it would take \$16 to \$17 million to underground all of these lines. (in today's dollars)
- It appears the Rogers Park Neighborhood could be separated into about 10 to 12 normal size projects.

Looking more specifically at one of these 10 to 12 projects, Jake Moe estimated the cost to be about \$1 million. It appears there would be a benefit to approximately 40 properties so equally dividing the costs would lead to \$25,000 per property. If this were to be funded through a Local Improvement District, the cost over 20 years would be somewhere around \$125/month per household (roughly estimated).

In Summary, the choices for undergrounding Rogers Park Utilities are:

1. Wait up to 180 years for the entire neighborhood to be included in the Title 21 program, or
2. Establish a Local Improvement District whereby homeowners would assess themselves to have this program completed in an expedited schedule

ML&P is currently working with part of Bootlegger Cove on a local improvement district plan. ML&P can answer questions on this program at the May meeting.