



City of La Quinta

CITY / SA / HA / FA MEETING DATE: January 21, 2014

ITEM TITLE: APPROVE A REQUEST TO WAIVE UNDERGROUND WIRING REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS AT THE MARSHALL SUBSTATION

AGENDA CATEGORY:

BUSINESS SESSION:

CONSENT CALENDAR: 18

STUDY SESSION:

PUBLIC HEARING:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve Waiver to Underground Wiring No. 2013-004, waiving the underground wiring requirements of La Quinta Municipal Code Section 8.03.030 for overhead line improvements established by Imperial Irrigation District at the Marshall substation, subject to the findings in Exhibit A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The City received a complaint from a resident in the area regarding installation of overhead power lines at the Marshall substation.
- The La Quinta Municipal Code (LQMC) requires such facilities to be placed underground, but also provides a waiver request procedure where a hardship or other inability to comply can be shown.
- Imperial Irrigation District (IID) contends that pre-existing in-ground water and electrical utilities prevent undergrounding of the subject installation, and that the property owner concern has been addressed by changing the pole location.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The subject electrical utility improvement consists of two, 45-foot tall poles that suspend electrical wiring along the east side of the Marshall substation (Attachment 1). IID installed these improvements in December 2013; a complaint received from a nearby resident prompted staff to contact IID and inform them of the undergrounding requirements. Subsequently, IID submitted a request to waive those requirements (Attachment 2). They have also relocated the southernmost pole farther north on the substation site (Attachment 3) in response to the aforementioned resident complaint. IID represents that the property owner is in agreement with that solution.

Staff has reviewed the request against Section 8.03.030 of the LQMC, pertaining to underground wiring and the waiver request criteria. No City permits were needed as the improvement is not in any City right-of-way. While the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) did issue an encroachment permit, it required that IID install the wiring above ground in order to meet necessary safety clearance requirements for existing CVWD improvements.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may deny the waiver request, impose conditions or continue consideration according to LQMC Section 8.03.030, which allows City Council up to thirty additional days to make its decision once the application has been brought before them. Denial of the request would require the service be provided underground via a route that avoids existing CVWD improvements, which has been identified by IID as being infeasible.

Report prepared by: Wally Nesbit, Principal Planner

Report approved for submission by: Les Johnson,
Community Development Director

- Attachments:
1. Location Map
 2. IID Waiver Request Letter
 3. Relocated Pole Photo

EXHIBIT A

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL
WAIVER FROM UNDERGROUND WIRING 2013-004
IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT
JANUARY 21, 2014

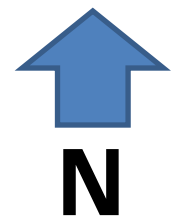
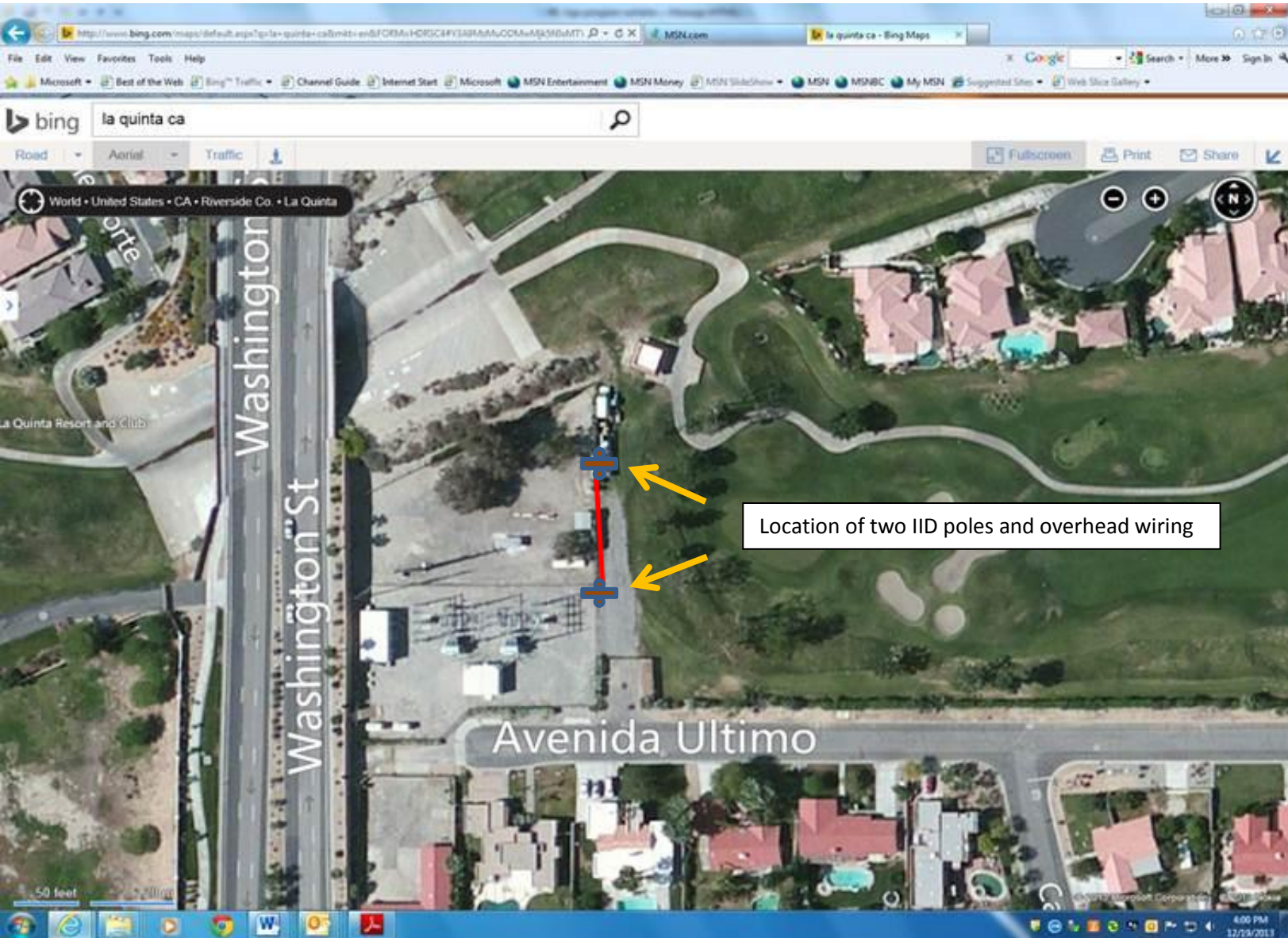
CITY COUNCIL FINDINGS

The La Quinta City Council has reviewed the waiver request, as submitted by Imperial Irrigation District (IID) on December 30, 2013, in regard to certain utility improvements installed at the IID Marshall substation. In accordance with Title 8 of the La Quinta Municipal Code, Section 8.030.30, Article 120.6, the La Quinta City Council hereby makes the following findings of fact:

1. The Imperial Irrigation District did submit a request (WUW 2014-004) under Section 8.03.030 of the La Quinta Municipal Code, requesting a waiver to the utility undergrounding requirements of said Section pursuant to the provisions of Article 120.6 of said Section.
2. The request was accepted by the Community Development Department, and a review of the facts and circumstances was conducted with the assistance of the La Quinta Public Works Department.
3. Subsequent to conducting the review, both the Community Development and Public Works Departments have recommended that the waiver request be granted.
4. Based on the recommendation of the Community Development and Public Works Departments, the La Quinta City Council finds that the underground wiring requirements of La Quinta Municipal Code Section 8.03.030 are unreasonable, impractical and cause undue hardship to the Applicant in this case, due to certain pre-existing underground utility improvements of the Coachella Valley Water District and the Imperial Irrigation District, which preclude the underground installation of the utility facilities in question.

ATTACHMENT 1 LOCATION MAP

WUW 2013-004



RECEIVED

DEC 30 2013



IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT

CITY OF LA QUINTA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

81-600 AVENUE 58 • LA QUINTA, CA 92253 • www.iid.com

December 30, 2013

ATTACHMENT 2

Les Johnson, Director
City of La Quinta Community Development
78-495 Calle Tampico
La Quinta, CA 92253

Re: Article 120 Waiver for Marshall Substation

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Following my conversation of December 23, 2013 with city planning officials, I am submitting this letter at their direction. In addition, I am providing you with information regarding the project and nature of our request.

The main purpose for this project is to improve system reliability, operational flexibility, and balance feeder loading for the circuits in the surrounding area. This new circuit will serve as a strong backup and create ties for load transference capabilities between Marshall and La Quinta Substations. This project will also balance the existing summer loading conditions between La Quinta and Marshall Substation banks, a benefit to all La Quinta customers.

The overhead construction associated with this project involves the installation of two new power distribution poles. One new 45 foot power pole on the N/E corner inside our IID existing Marshall substation, the second new 45 foot power pole that is placed away for pedestrian traffic and the public inside La Quinta Fairways Country Club. Permitting for this work was granted by La Quinta Fairways HOA, KSL owner of golf course, and CVWD. CVWD required a permanent encroachment permit for this work in order to meet their safety clearance of 18 feet from their existing facilities. In order to meet legal requirements set by CVWD to keep safe working clearances, the encroachment permit was deeded in favor of IID installing two power poles that meet and/or exceed overhead construction standards.

With respect to compliance with Article 120, the poles and wires which are constructed, placed or installed above ground are NOT a hazard to the safety and health of operators of motor

Les Johnson
December 30, 2013
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vehicles and passengers since they do not reduce and obstruct the vision of such operators. They further do not preclude a reasonable response time by an operator to an emergency situation, nor are they a danger to fire suppression and prevention personnel. These poles are not located on a street, but in fact, are located within the District's Marshal Substation, where access to the public is strictly prohibited or within private property.

While it may be easy to conclude that undergrounding these poles is the solution, it is not. The original plan was to underground this portion following the only route available. However IID encountered underground water facilities with regulatory restrictions that prevented us from installing our facilities via underground on this part of the circuit. In addition, the cost of breaching the massive existing energized conduit, concrete encased system and the substation grid is not only expensive but would require extensive construction, removal of the cables feeding the La Quinta Cove and extended outages. The nature of the utilities already in the ground beyond and inside the substation makes this risky and cost prohibitive.

In addition, IID has been sensitive to a customer's comment. Recognizing that the existence of poles, wires and associated structures may interfere with the tranquility and pleasure in viewing the natural landscape of the City, IID personally worked with a property owner on Calle Ultimo to relocate the pole to a furthest corner of the substation. The property owner was agreeable to this solution.

Therefore, in accordance with Section 6 of the Article, IID seeks a waiver from the provisions of Article 120 and asks the City to grant said waiver as the undergrounding of the wires and structures would create a hardship to IID and its ratepayers.

Sincerely,


Guillermo Barraza
Superintendent
Customer Operations & Planning

cc:
Angela Evans, IID
Patrick Swarthout, IID
David Sawyer, City of La Quinta



