Kensington-Talmadge Planning Group

P.O. Box 16391, San Diego, CA 92176

www.ktpg.org

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS BETWEEN KTPG AND COX COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING PROPOSED UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING IN KENSINGTON

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BACKGROUND

The following list of questions is being submitted by a group of Kensington residents at the request of Bob Coffin, chairperson for the Transportation & Safety Subcommittee of the Kensington Talmadge Planning Group. These questions/requests have been prepared to help our community better understand the undergrounding process and the policies of the various utility companies that will be tasked with that project. We would like to thank you in advance for considering our requests and responding to our inquiries.

Q & A

1. Q. There are three-foot tall units (approximate) installed in our neighboring Talmadge community. What is the proper identifying term for that equipment? For the purposes of this questionnaire, we will refer to that equipment as a Riser(s).

   A. *The term for the Cox above ground equipment enclosure is "pedestal".*

2. Q. Are the above noted three foot Risers the only above ground equipment Cox will install? If not, what are the other above ground elements, approximately how many will be required for our area and where would they be installed?

   A. *Our basic pedestal is 32" by 14" square. Other pedestals of a slightly larger footprint but not as tall will have to be installed in fewer locations to house our amplifiers and fiber nodes. The number and location of these pedestals cannot be determined without completing final engineering of the conversion. A larger installation for a power supply will be needed to power our equipment. Only a couple of these should be required but this also cannot be determined until the final engineering is complete. These installations are carefully placed so they are as inconspicuous as possible.*

3. Q. To better understand your current underground installation process in San Diego, we are requesting a copy of your policies/procedures for placing Risers above ground in the residential public right-of-way.

   A. *We do not have a policy, per se, for placing pedestals in the public right of way. The engineering of the project dictates the placement of pedestals. For a conversion where we share a joint trench with the other utilities, we place our pedestals where the other utilities do in locations that satisfy our engineering requirements. We try to place our pedestals as inconspicuously as possible.*

4. Q. Several residents have noticed that apparently there is not a uniform policy for installing all Cox equipment above ground as some are in below-ground vaults. We are requesting a copy of your policies/procedures for selecting below-ground vaults instead of Risers, including that process of determination.

   A. *Placement of equipment in flush mounted underground vaults is not desirable from an engineering and reliability standpoint. The decision to place equipment in vaults is made on a case-by-case basis.*

5. Q. To better understand the above-ground to below-ground vault decision, what is the cost differential between an above ground Riser and a below-ground vault installation?

A. *There is not a significant cost differential between a small vault installation and a pedestal installation. Large vault installations are substantially more expensive than pedestal installations.*

6. Q. To lessen the visual impact, can equipment from different utilities be combined in the same box/container? (i.e., Can the SDG&E Transformer Box accommodate the Cox and AT&T above ground equipment?

   A. *Equipment from different utilities cannot be placed in the same enclosures for engineering, safety, and legal reasons.*

7. Q. To better understand the number of Risers proposed for our community, what is the ratio of Risers to residential units (i.e., 1 for every 4 homes? 1 for every 8 homes?).

   A. *The number of pedestals per home cannot be determined until the engineering is complete because every community is unique. Generally, one tap location can service between two to eight homes depending on the design.*

8. Q. Is the ratio of Risers to residential units dictated by the performance of the equipment, or is it possible to reduce the number of Risers required without a negative impact on performance?

   A. *The number of pedestals that are needed is determined by several factors including the size and locations of the residential lots and the distance of the homes to our equipment. Placing too few pedestals is poor engineering and would inhibit the performance and reliability of our equipment. For cost reasons, we place no more pedestals than are necessary to support the proper performance of our equipment.*

9. Q. To better understand placement of proposed Risers, is there a required spacing (i.e., not to exceed 150 feet between Risers)? Is that distance set by equipment performance or policy? If set by policy, we are requesting a copy of that policy.

   A. *Our policy for placing pedestals is determined by good engineering practice and local conditions*

10. Q. To lessen the visual impact of the proposed installation, are the Risers standardized or are there optional sizes, shapes or colors that would help reduce the noted visual impact? If options are available can our community select the size, shape or color?

    A. *Cox uses a standardized set of pedestals that are determined by engineering need, functionality, and cost. Custom pedestals are not av*ailable due to maintenance and replacement considerations.

11. Q. The northern parts of Kensington, primarily on the streets of Palisades, East Palisades, Ridgeway, and the 5300 blocks of Marlborough and Canterbury currently have below-ground vaults. Does your installation plan

require moving that equipment above ground to conform to the rest of the undergrounding project? If so, what is the policy or reasoning for making that change? If the change from below-ground vault to above ground is done, will it be done “all at once” or on some other schedule? [If on a gradual schedule, please specify]

A. *Generally, current facilities in below ground installations would not be changed to above ground installations unless the engineering of the project required it.*

12. Q. Several residents have asked if the placement of the Risers in their property’s frontage will have any relationship to the current placement of telephone poles. Is there the likelihood that a resident with a telephone pole on their property will be the residence selected for a Riser in their parcel’s public right-of-way?

    A. *The placement of the pedestals is independent of the current location of the poles.*

13. Q. In an effort to limit visual impact on a specific property or neighborhood block, what is the policy for working with homeowners regarding the placement of a Riser on their property’s public right-of-way or, at their request, outside the public right-of-way within their own private property boundary?

    A. *The locations for pedestals are chosen dependent on the design which is based on SDG&E’s trench route. If it is more practical and less intrusive to place a pedestal on private property, an easement would be required from the property owner. Some costs might also have to be bourn by the beneficiary of the move.*

14. Q. There is understandably homeowner concern regarding the process of connecting the new underground service to the home. To better understand that process, will Cox trench past their property’s public right-of-way to the residence? If not, will Cox install the connecting lines in a trench provided by the homeowner? We are requesting copies of those related policies to better inform homeowners of that process, including the specifications for any trenching (i.e., depth, width) which would fall to the homeowner.

    A. *Generally, the customer “drop” wire will be placed in a conduit to the customer’s home in a joint service trench provided by SDG&E. Cox does not provide a separate trench.*

15. Q. If the connecting service is not placed in a trench from the public right-of-way to the home, and if the conduit must be run along the side of a home, does the resident determine the path of the conduit or is it at the sole discretion of Cox? (i.e., Can the conduit be run low to the ground, rather than high up under the eaves?)

A. *The new underground drop wire will be reconnected to the existing home cable wiring in a way which is least intrusive. Wire run close to the ground must be protected from damage so a conduit or other protection must be provided. Cox will work with the homeowner to reach the best solution. Any extra cost may have to be bourn by the homeowner.*

16. Q. To better understand the maintenance of any above ground installation, what is your policy for repair of damaged equipment or defacement of their containers? We request a copy of that policy.

    A. *Cox will always maintain its facilities to look and operate properly. If Cox receives a report of a damaged or defaced pedestal, it will be repaired or replaced promptly.*

17. Q. If a resident has conflict with a Cox, what is the current process and policy for resolving the conflict? We are requesting a copy of that policy/procedure.
    A. *Any resident that wants to resolve a conflict with Cox can call our customer service line. The complaint will be promptly forwarded to the responsible department. Cox will make its best effort to resolve the conflict promptly in a manner agreeable to all parties involved.*

18. Q. If the City Council approves the Underground Utility District for Kensington, is there a fixed timeline for each phase? If not, can the phases be adjusted based on local conditions such as resurfacing the streets or water/sewer work.

    A. *The phasing of undergrounding projects is negotiated between the City, SDG&E, and the other utilities based on many factors unique to the project including street resurfacing and other underground utility work planned for the area. Once settled, Cox will do its best to meet all timelines and finish the project on time.*