



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager

FROM: Bob Kahn, Austin Energy General Manager *BK*

DATE: February 7, 2025

SUBJECT: **Staff Update to Resolution 20230323-084 Underground Feasibility and Planning**

Background

This memorandum provides an update on Council [Resolution 20230323-084](#) directing the City Manager to conduct a feasibility study and subsequently develop a long-term capital improvement plan for converting overhead electric utility distribution lines to underground electric utility distribution lines for high-priority uses and areas without new construction opportunities. To complete this study, Austin Energy retained a third-party consulting firm, 1898 & Co., to conduct two scopes of work – an Undergrounding Feasibility Study and an Overhead Hardening Study. Both of these studies are nearing completion and will serve as useful inputs into the development of an overarching plan to enhance the overall resiliency of Austin Energy’s distribution system.

Study Results

The Undergrounding Feasibility Study will provide a framework for evaluating resiliency and assessing the feasibility as well as costs and benefits of converting distribution infrastructure from overhead to underground. Austin Energy anticipates briefing Council on the results of the Undergrounding Feasibility Study at the March 2025 Austin Energy Utility Oversight Committee (AEUOC) meeting.

The Overhead Hardening Study will provide another layer to the framework for evaluating resiliency and provide alternatives to burying distribution infrastructure. Such alternatives include enhancements to existing infrastructure that make outages less likely in the first place or provide the ability for quicker response when outages do occur. These alternatives are important to consider for scope, schedule and economic reasons. Austin Energy anticipates briefing Council on the results of the Overhead Hardening Study at the May 2025 AEUOC meeting.

Austin Energy Distribution Resiliency Plan

Study results by themselves will not provide the necessary strategic approach and implementation steps to achieving the resiliency results desired. As such, over the coming months, Austin Energy intends to use the study results and its ongoing distribution resiliency experience to develop a multi-year Distribution Resiliency Plan with near- and long-term priorities. Austin Energy anticipates briefing Council on the Distribution Resiliency Plan at AEUOC meetings in the second half of calendar year 2025.

If you have any questions regarding information in this memorandum, please contact Bob Kahn, Austin Energy General Manager, at bob.kahn@austinenergy.com.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Myrna Rios, City Clerk
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Judge Sherry Statman, Presiding Judge
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