

Guidelines for Overhead to Underground Conversion

1. An interested neighborhood selects a neighborhood representative and outlines the project limits for a prospective overhead (OH) to underground (UG) utility conversion project. The neighborhood representative contacts JEA to review the project boundary from a system feasibility standpoint. JEA contacts other utilities (AT&T, Comcast or other) to advise them of the preliminary project request.
2. JEA will provide a “preliminary study” and cost estimate and define preliminary project boundaries considering elements of system design and installation. There will be estimated costs per unit (typically per lot or parcel) for all conversion costs including electric, telephone, cable television or other communication services where applicable. A project boundary defines the neighborhood where all impacted customers are located. The boundaries and preliminary costs will be provided to the neighborhood representative.
3. The neighborhood representative will be responsible for pursuing further interest in the project. At least 75% of the benefited properties must agree by petition to participate in the special assessment project. If the requisite 75% agree to participate by signing a preliminary petition and the neighborhood submits a check for \$100 per parcel of record within the neighborhood (minimum of \$1,500 and maximum of \$5,000), then JEA and the other utilities will prepare a certified cost estimate including all anticipated costs of a conversion project.
4. The certified estimate will include costs to convert the basic utilities located within the right of way for each property or lot of record. The costs typically include conversion of individual services for telephone and cable utilities (where they are overhead) all the way to the structure. The costs do not include the costs to convert individual overhead services for electric service (see also FAQ 7). The certified costs for the basic utility conversion (lines in the public right of way) will be divided by the total number of benefiting properties to arrive at a cost per unit. The property owners then have another opportunity to review and agree with the certified costs and confirm their willingness to participate by signing a petition form for the certified costs per unit.
5. The certified cost estimate will include the City’s standard street lighting option unless the neighborhood elects street light upgrades. The street lighting upgrade costs can be built in to the assessment cost. City Public Works and traffic engineering personnel must approve any lighting upgrades. All lighting must be selected from the City/JEA’s existing approved street lighting standards. The basic lighting standard is Low Profile 70 Watt High Pressure Sodium.
6. Equipment locations for transformers, switch cabinets, junction boxes, manholes and other equipment may be required from property owners. Generally, transformers will be placed in the right of way where possible at the dividing line between two properties. Where not possible or practical, easements for such equipment will be required for the project to go forward. These projects anticipate that easements will be donated for use by JEA or other existing utility providers necessary for the project conversion. In the event any easements must be purchased, the costs of such land rights acquisition will become a part of the overall project cost to be divided on a per unit basis. Easements will need to be sufficient to provide for all existing utility services – electric, cable, telephone or other as they relate to project conversion. Please note that conversions to UG do require above ground equipment such as transformers, switch cabinets, junction boxes, equipment boxes so there

- equipment such as transformers, switch cabinets, junction boxes, equipment boxes so there will continue to be some visible equipment elements.
7. The City and JEA will not require customers to convert their service drops to their individual structures (these are the lines running from the street to individual homes or structures). However, where service conversions to UG are elected by property owners, each owner will have the option to include financing of individual conversion costs as a separate part of their assessment. A separate budget amount to cover financing of individual service conversions will be provided with the certified estimate. Financing is not available for structures that require internal service upgrades to accommodate a conversion. Where individual service conversions are required for telephone or cable, those costs will be included in the overall project cost estimates from those utilities.
 8. Cost estimates and actual work for individual electric service conversions are the responsibility of individual property owners. The neighborhood representative may work with other neighborhood property owners to obtain cost estimates from private electricians to price and actually convert services. Various property owners may choose to use one or more electricians perform this work, with the decision and work directed by individual property owners.
 9. Individual OH services that are not converted by the property owner will be served by a secondary (service) riser pole. JEA will provide a service box in the right of way at the property corner for future service conversion.
 10. In order to reduce overall cost and when feasible, all customer owned 3-phase equipment must be converted to single phase equipment as part of the undergrounding project, where practical.
 11. JEA will coordinate with AT&T, Comcast or other communication providers to obtain preliminary and certified cost estimate numbers. These other utility estimates will usually include costs to convert all the way to individual structures.
 12. Once a neighborhood collects the required 75% participation based on the certified cost estimates, the petition requesting a special assessment will be filed as a formal ordinance with the City of Jacksonville's legislative services. Notices are required to be mailed and published as part of the petition process. The City Council will hear the request for a special assessment and either approve or reject the special assessment request. If approved, 100% of the benefited properties will be assessed a pro rata share of the total cost to convert the basic utility services including design, construction, and administrative costs. The costs will also include financing costs associated with the loan via special assessment.
 13. The assessment will be billed as an annual amount on the property tax bill and carry an annual financing charge. Property owners have the option to pre-pay their pro rata portion at any time before the assessment roll is prepared or they may pay off the then current balance in any future year without penalty.
 14. Each neighborhood project will have a different cost per parcel or lot of record depending on the actual total project cost which is impacted by the number of properties included, the density or size of lots, number of utilities present (cable, telephone, electric), type of streetlights selected, amount of restoration required after project construction, etc. Contact JEA Project Outreach for more information about the program:
 - [\(904\) 665-7500](tel:9046657500)
 - projectoutreach@jea.com

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