



Staff Report

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE: March 23, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Courtney Sladek, Administration

ITEM TYPE: Agenda Item

AGENDA SECTION: CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON

SUBJECT: Discussion of Underground Electric Utilities

BACKGROUND: Councilmember John Hancock has requested that an item be placed on the agenda to allow for discussion regarding underground electric utilities within the City of El Campo.

This discussion item will provide Council the opportunity to consider the feasibility and implications associated with the undergrounding of overhead electric distribution lines. While underground utilities can offer aesthetic benefits and may reduce certain weather-related disruptions, these systems involve substantially higher installation and repair costs compared to overhead infrastructure.

Electric infrastructure within the city is owned and operated by external utility providers, including AEP Texas and Wharton County Electric Cooperative (WCEC). As such, decisions regarding system design, placement, and conversion from overhead to underground are outside the direct authority of the City and would require coordination with the respective utility provider.

Additionally, the City's current franchise agreements with both providers remain in effect—WCEC through 2031 and AEP Texas through 2033. Opportunities to incorporate additional requirements, such as undergrounding provisions, are typically addressed during franchise agreement negotiations or renewals and would require mutual agreement. Any such provisions may involve significant cost considerations and coordination with affected property owners and developers.

SUGGESTED ACTION: This item is presented for discussion purposes only. No formal action is requested at this time. Staff will be available to provide general information and respond to Council inquiries as needed.

ATTACHMENTS:
[Ord 2013-22 AEP Franchise.pdf](#)

