



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 19, 2008

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: AT&T ABOVE-GROUND UTILITY CABINETS

DATE: AUGUST 7, 2008

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT, ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: PETER NAGHAVI, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: PETER NAGHAVI AT (714) 754-5343

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file, or provide further direction to staff.

BACKGROUND:

In 2006, the State of California passed State Legislation AB2987 which allows utility companies to provide video service to their customers. At the February 20, 2007 meeting, the City Council considered AT&T's request for the installation of above-ground V-RAD cabinets to provide such service to their customers in Costa Mesa. The Council approved the Conditions of Approval (Attachment 1) regarding the size and quantity of large utility cabinets in the public right-of-way to address public notification, aesthetics, and maintenance, including graffiti abatement, of the anticipated new utility boxes.

In addition to screening and landscaping around the cabinets, the council discussed and provided direction for the consolidation of two cabinets into a single cabinet assembly (Attachment 2), and combining V-RAD cabinets so that one single V-RAD cabinet can provide service for two areas.

At the March 4, 2008 Council meeting, staff presented a status report on the progress of AT&T above-ground utility cabinet installations. The City Council directed staff to work with AT&T to better screen the utility boxes to reduce visual impacts on the community. Some of the more significant items include the following:

1. Landscaping is the preferred method of screening, using mature plants, and overriding the landscaping standards to allow planting over the 18-inch landscape material.
2. Amend the Streetscape and Median Development Standards to allow shrubbery over 18 inches where sight lines are not impeded.
3. Utilize different methods of screening, such as lattices with vines, where mature landscaping is not feasible.

4. Contact property owners who would be impacted, in order to work with them relative to the cabinet locations and suggestions for screening (Attachment 3).
5. Locate cabinets in discrete areas so that the cabinets are not highly visible.
6. Paint other AT&T cabinets that are adjacent to the new installations with the Council approved "beige" color.
7. Reduce the height of the cabinets where possible.

ANALYSIS:

Over the past few months, the City has worked closely with AT&T staff to implement City Council directive to use mature landscape as the preferred screening method for the V-RAD cabinets.

Out of ninety-nine (99) proposed V-RAD cabinet locations, fifty-four (54) locations have been identified as suitable to receive mature landscaping with a total of two hundred (200), fifteen (15)-gallon bushes. A majority of these locations have already been completed and mature plantings are within their establishment period. The balance of the proposed locations will also be treated accordingly as AT&T completes their V-RAD cabinet installations. In addition to closely coordinating the consolidation, combining of the cabinets, contact with residents, selection of appropriate locations, and reduction in the size of the labels on the cabinets, staff is monitoring to assure that proper bordering and other critical items are properly installed. Attachment 4 depicts a few locations where mature landscaping has been installed to screen the AT&T cabinets.

Staff will continue to work with AT&T to complete this project in accordance with Council direction to install improvements to reduce the visual impact to our residents.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

The City Council could reject AT&T's current improvement plans and recommend/condition further changes.

FISCAL REVIEW:

Per the agreement made between AT&T and the City, AT&T will install all mature landscaping, border lines, and all other supporting items, and the City's Maintenance Division will be responsible for watering and ordinary maintenance of the landscaping. The City, at this time, has absorbed the maintenance costs, but will require a revision to its budget to identify other sources to continue this maintenance service.

LEGAL REVIEW:

No legal review is required on this item at this time.

CONCLUSION:

Per Council directive of March 2008, the installation of mature landscaping as the preferred alternative to screen the AT&T V-RAD cabinets is now being implemented. The completion of the AT&T project is expected by the end of December 2008.

PETER NAGHAVI, Director
Department of Public Services

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Assistant City Manager
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ATTACHMENTS: 1 - [Conditions of Approval for Large Cabinets](#)
2 - [Myers Separate Cabinet & VRAD with Side-Mounted Service Meter Panel](#)
3 - [Mesa Verde Community, Inc., Homeowners Association Correspondence](#)
4 - [Mature Landscape Screening](#)

ATT Above-Ground Cabinet Report

8/6/08

9:00 a.m.