

# **CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH FLORIDA**

## **Gulf Boulevard Phase 3 Utility Undergrounding Funding Request**





# CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FLORIDA

## Gulf Boulevard Phase 3 - Utility Undergrounding - Funding Request

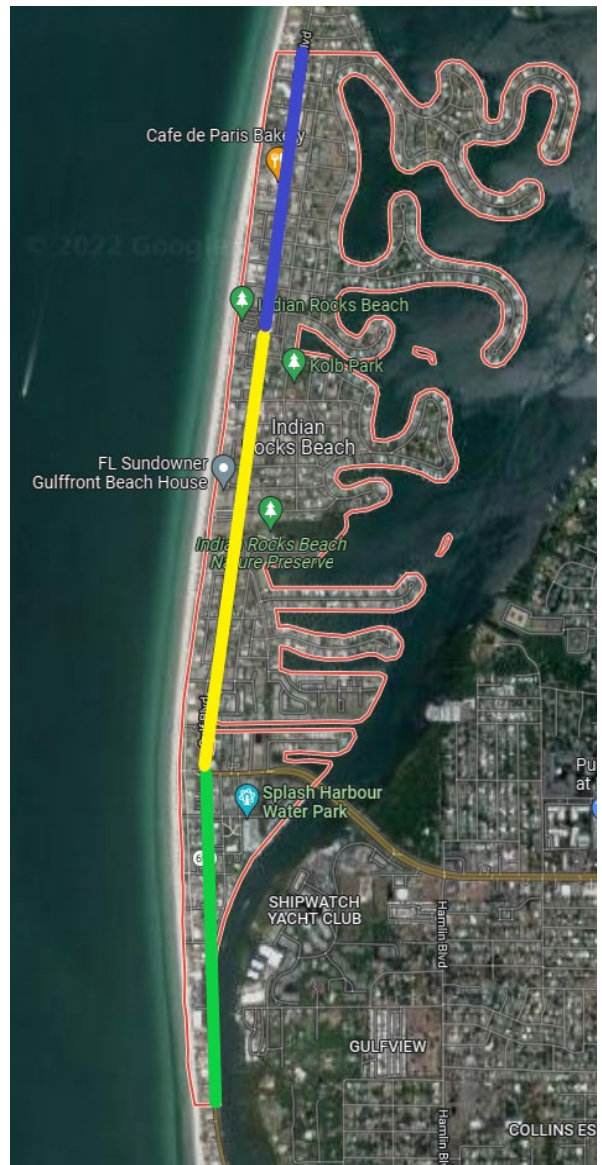
### Executive Summary

Geographically, the City of Indian Rocks Beach is a narrow barrier island approximately 2.7 miles in length that is located within Pinellas County. Gulf Boulevard (also known as County Road 699) is the main road that connects the City's barrier island to the Town of Indian Shores Beach to the South and the City of Belleair Beach to the North. Gulf Boulevard provides vehicular access to all residential and commercial properties located within the City's limits and is therefore the primary route for ingress and egress to the City.

Notably, Florida has relatively active hurricanes and seasonal storms. Unfortunately, Florida has suffered widespread damage and destruction to private homes and buildings, roads, bridges, and other public infrastructure in the aftermath of these types of storms. In the aftermath of each storm, widespread outages of electric service were experienced throughout the state. Outage durations ranged from relatively short periods of time to extended periods of up to two weeks or more. Some homes and businesses were without power for even longer periods of time because structural damage had to be repaired before restoration of electric power could take place. For a large part during these unfortunate events, overhead electric service facilities were particularly hard hit.

Power outages over extended periods present major health and safety concerns and economic losses. In the aftermath of these storms, there is invariably an outcry from the public, the government and the media to place overhead utilities underground. Concerns about the reliability of overhead lines, increases in their maintenance and operating costs, and issues of public safety and quality-of-life are leading more and more utilities and municipalities to the realization that converting overhead distribution lines to underground is the best way to provide high-quality service to their customers.

Based on this need, the City has initiated some underground conversions. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase was recently completed in June of 2020 (reference exhibit – green highlight). The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase is currently in design and planned for construction to start later this year (reference exhibit – yellow highlight). The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase is our request to the State of Florida for funding to extend the project to the full extent of the City limits (reference exhibit – blue highlight).





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## Underground Benefits

It is necessary to identify the special benefits as a result of undergrounding overhead utilities. Advantages of underground lines include aesthetics, higher public acceptance, perceived benefits of protection against electromagnetic field radiation, fewer interruptions, and lower maintenance costs. Failure rates of overhead lines and underground cables vary widely, but typically underground cable outage rates are about half of their equivalent overhead line types.

Potentially far fewer momentary interruptions occur from lightning, animals and tree branches falling on wires which de-energize a circuit and then re-energize it a moment later. The primary special benefits that will be provided include the following: improved safety, improved reliability and improved aesthetics. Each of these benefits is summarized below.

### Improved Safety

The removal of utility poles and overhead lines provides an improved safety benefit by reducing the potential of hazardous conditions in the event of natural disasters. Downed electric lines pose a potential threat of fire and potential injury due to electric shock and can restrict ingress and egress to and from all residential and commercial properties located within the City's corporate limits by impairing residents and emergency responders' access within the Project Area.

### Improved Reliability

The undergrounding of the overhead facilities will also improve the reliability of utility services received by assessed properties. The undergrounding of overhead utilities substantially reduces the frequency of outages and provides a higher level of reliability of utility services and reduces exposure to the elements that could cause potential damage and speed deterioration to facilities resulting in service interruptions.

### Improved Aesthetics

In addition to the safety and reliability benefits provided by undergrounding utilities, removing the overhead facilities and utility poles that run along the corridor will eliminate a heavy concentration of electric lines and communication facilities. This will create an inviting, visually pleasing and scenic gateway for ingress and egress to all parcels within the city.

## Conclusion

The result of the undergrounding of the aerial facilities provides less impacts and closures to businesses and other community activities that support taxes. It also increases the ability for people to access the city for shopping and dining throughout the city post disaster. After decades of discussion, municipalities and electric utilities are discovering that the many real and societal advantages to undergrounding power lines go far beyond just avoiding infrastructure damage from storm events such as hurricanes and seasonal storms. In fact, cost benefits accrue from reducing day-to-day maintenance and operating costs, improving reliability, enhancing public safety, and improving aesthetics and property values.

Gulf Boulevard is a major thoroughfare for visitors and residents with ingress & egress on and off the island. Falling tree limbs, high winds, and heavy storms are just a few of the things that frequently cause utility disruptions and destroy overhead lines. Burying lines eliminates weather-related power outages, provides more reliable service, eliminates fire hazards, accidents, and safety risks from power outages. This type of project provides improved quality of life for residents, visitors and employees by providing enhanced post disaster recovery time and reduced loss of power to the barrier island. Furthermore, there is a reduced hazard to the area and maintains an increased level of service for evacuation routes to aid in response time

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for first responders. Increase of economic activity by improving the ability for people to access the city for shopping and dining throughout the city post disaster.

To meet these goals and objectives, the City of Indian Rocks Beach request consideration from the State of Florida for funding Phase 3 of the Gulf Boulevard Undergrounding Project in the amount of \$7,625,000 .

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Undergrounding	\$ 5,700,000
Street Lighting Enhancement	800,000
Management, Admin, Inflation Contingency (20%)	675,000
Multi Year Project Inflation Cost (3 years)	<u>200,000</u>
Other Miscellaneous Costs and Costs Incurred to Date	<u>250,000</u>
<b>Total Estimated Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ 7,625,000</b>

For additional information and questions please contact Dean Scharmen, Public Works Director 727.595.6889 / dscharmen@ircity.com

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