

October 11th, 2022

Introduction:

I am pleased to offer the Council an update on the PSPS Outage program and other ongoing challenges the City faces working with PG&E. I was last here in May and some notable changes have occurred. My focus always remains on safety and reliability.

PSPS Outage Program:

PG&E remains fully committed to TechnoSylva, a sophisticated fire weather forecasting tool. In January of 2022, relying on these forecast tools, PG&E leadership decided the risk of damaging north winds in most of EL Dorado County and Placerville was almost non-existent. They have defunded the Micro Grid generators at the Placerville Substation. They are confident IF a north wind event did occur, they would have ample time to have generators installed. One could argue these decisions have eliminated the risk of no-wind PPS outage in Placerville. It also agrees with our fire and weather history as noted by staff and County Fire.

Fire Safe Switch Settings:

PG&E did expand this program, setting their existing automatic field switches to allow for maximum fire safety. Early this summer north Placerville did see a number of these outages. These outages occur with no warning and require a patrol of the impacted lines. The length of these outages was not excessive.

Placerville Weather Stations:

With the reduced north wind exposure adopted by PG&E in January, no new weather equipment or cameras will be installed in Placerville. With the greatly reduced exposure to PPS outages, the need for backup power supplies is lower.

Undergrounding Feeder for South Main Street:

PG&E has begun design work to underground the line feeding the south side of Main Street. This is NOT a full underground project. It will remove the overhead high voltage lines, leaving selected low voltage lines. All overhead communication and CATV lines will remain along Reservoir Street. This project faces a number of challenges: Limited street easements, surface rock, existing underground AT&T duct system, storm and sewer conflicts, difficult/expensive service conversions to historic buildings to name a few. Excellent communication between PG&E, City Staff and property owners is needed to ensure project success. Note: The change to PPS outage potential did not impact PG&E's decision to proceed with Reservoir Street.

Transmission Switches:

The project to install automatic transmission switches in Placerville and Camino is moving forward, construction now expected in late 2023. These switches will reduce the need to run a Gen Set at Placerville sub and reduce outage times.

Placerville Substation Building:

Thanks to Brandon Sanders and PG&E Paint Department this project was completed this summer. The new earth tone color is a huge improvement to our Broadway corridor.

Distribution Hardening Projects:

I am pleased to update the Council on two projects: The new underground connection to Eskaton Village is completed.

Circuit reconfiguration and new automatic switch installations are completed to better protect our vital commercial and government buildings along Placerville Drive, Ray Lawyer and Forni Road areas.

Double Pole Issue:

The issue of the communication utilities transferring their cables and removing the old pole remains unresolved. The number of “double poles” continues to grow.

We continue to learn more about the workings of the Joint Pole Association of Northern California. It clearly sets costs and responsibilities for all pole work.

Transferring cables and removing old poles remains a low priority. As noted in May, addressing decades of deferred pole maintenance by PG&E has created a tremendous burden on other utilities, property owners and public works departments. The impacts include, blocking traffic lanes, sidewalks, site distances and public safety. Staff has met with AT&T representatives to discuss how to address the backlog.

Scenic Highway and Encroachment Permitting:

The City Engineer and various City staff continue to work with PG&E and its contractors to insure compliance. These efforts are critical to reducing or eliminating impacts to our congested streets, business districts and neighborhoods. Ensuring every agency complies with City or State regulations is an ongoing effort. The City Engineer and City Staff are to be commended for their perseverance, and commitment to safety and timely communications.