



City of Huntington Beach Planning and Building Department  
**STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Scott Hess, AICP, Director of Planning and Building  
**BY:** Hayden Beckman, Planning Aide *HB*  
**DATE:** July 9, 2013

**SUBJECT:** GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE NO. 13-03 (BROOKHURST STREET UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT)

**APPLICANT:** Public Works Dept., City of Huntington Beach, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

**PROPERTY**

**OWNER:** City of Huntington Beach, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

**LOCATION:** Brookhurst Street (from Garfield Avenue to 900 ft. south of Adams Avenue)

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

- ◆ General Plan Conformance No. 13-03 request:
  - To determine if a proposed underground utility district on Brookhurst Street, from Garfield Avenue to 900 ft. south of Adams Avenue is in conformance with the goals and policies of the General Plan.
- ◆ Staff's Recommendation: Approve General Plan Conformance No. 13-03 based upon the following:
  - The proposed underground utility district conforms to the goals and policies of the General Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

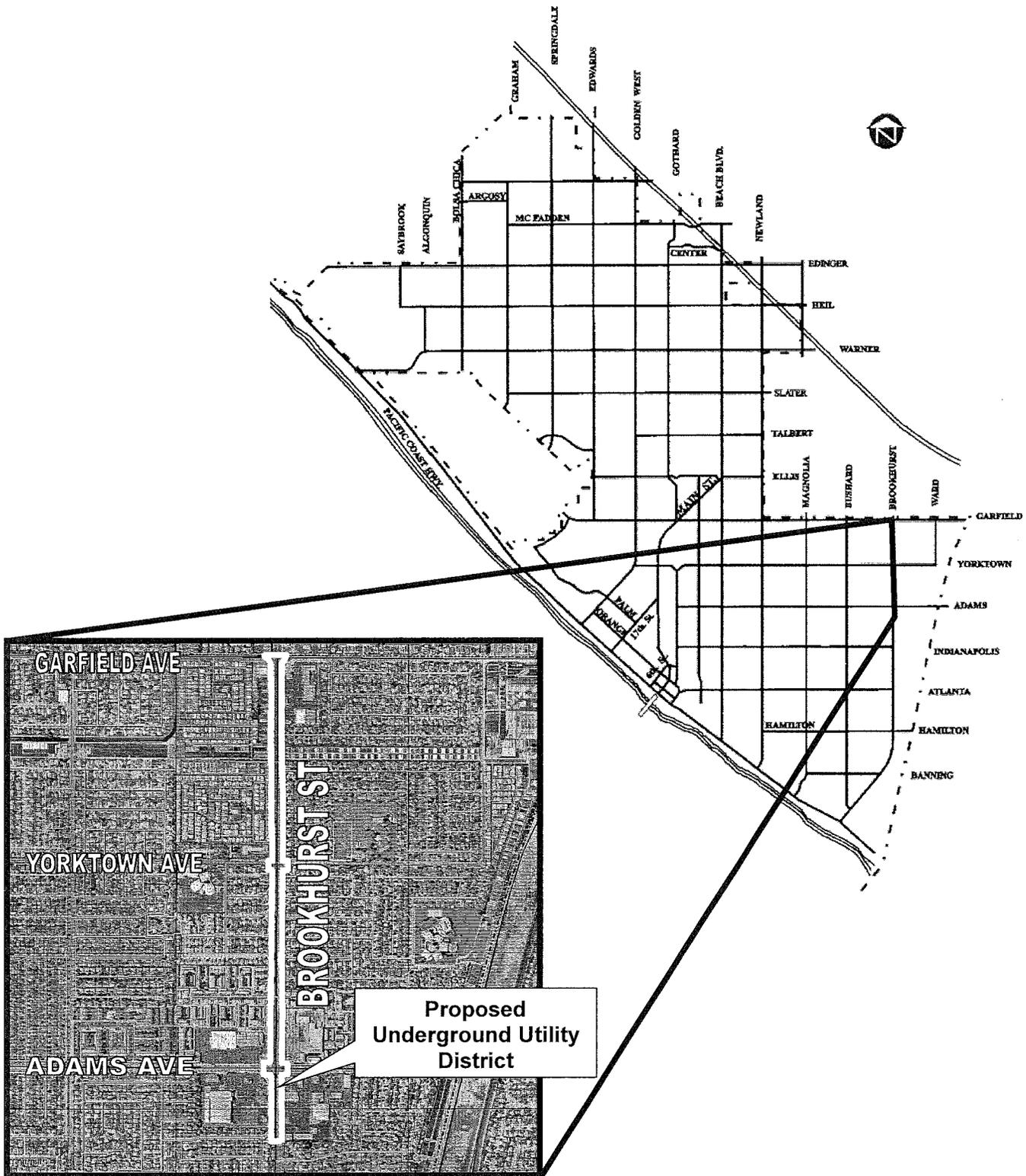
Motion to:

“Adopt Resolution No. 1672, approving General Plan Conformance No. 13-03 with findings (Attachment Nos. 1 and 2).”

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION:**

The Planning Commission may take an alternative action such as:

- A. “Deny General Plan Conformance No. 13-03 with findings for denial.”
- B. “Continue General Plan Conformance No. 13-03 and direct staff accordingly.”



**VICINITY MAP**  
**GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE NO. 13-03**  
**(BROOKHURST STREET UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT)**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL:**

General Plan Conformance No. 13-03 represents a request, pursuant to Section 65402 of the California Government Code, by the City of Huntington Beach Public Works Department to determine if a proposed underground utility district on Brookhurst Street, from Garfield Avenue to 900 ft. south of Adams Avenue, is in conformance with the goals and policies of the General Plan. The proposed underground utility district only encompasses the streets and sidewalks of the entire district.

The district will allow for the undergrounding of Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon. The Planning Commission must review the proposal for consistency with the City's General Plan prior to City Council action on the creation of the district. The Public Works Department initiated this request due to the high level of vehicular use of Brookhurst Street and the visual and safety impacts associated with the reduction of utility poles and overhead wires.

**ISSUES:**

**Subject Property and Surrounding Land Use, Zoning and General Plan Designations:**

<b>LOCATION – BROOKHURST STREET</b>	<b>GENERAL PLAN</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>LAND USE</b>
Subject Area:	ROW (Right of Way)	ROW	Existing Brookhurst Street and sidewalk
West of Subject Area:	CN – F1 (Commercial Neighborhood – Max FAR); P (Public); RL – 7 – RMP (Residential Low Density – 7 du/ac – Mobile Home Park); CG – F1 (Commercial General – Max FAR); RMH – 25 (Residential Medium High Density – 25 du/ac); RL-7	CG (Commercial General); RA (Residential Agriculture); RMP (Residential Mobile Home Park); RL (Residential Low Density); RMH (Residential Medium High Density)	Commercial, Utility Easement, Residential Mobile Home Park, Multi-family and Single Family Residential
East of Subject Area:	CN – F1; P; RL – 7; RM – 15 (Residential Medium Density – 15 du/ac); RMH – 25; CG – F1	CG; RA; RL; RM (Residential Medium Density); RMH	Commercial, Utility Easement, Residential Mobile Home Park, Multi-family and Single Family Residential
North of Subject Area:	Not Applicable: City Limit	Not Applicable: City Limit	City of Fountain Valley
South of Subject Area:	ROW	ROW	Existing Brookhurst Street and sidewalk

**General Plan Conformance:**

The General Plan Land Use Map designation for the subject property is public right-of-way. The proposed project is consistent with this designation and goals and policies of the City's General Plan as follows:

A. Urban Design Element

Goal UD 1: Enhance the visual image of the City of Huntington Beach.

Policy UD 1.3.2: Provide for the implementation of streetscape improvements along the major commercial corridors, through public capital improvement programs, business district improvements, or other techniques as funding is available.

Policy UD 2.2.4: Require the undergrounding of utility lines.

The undergrounding of existing Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon along Brookhurst Street will enhance the appearance of the Brookhurst Street streetscape by eliminating structures that detract from the visual image of the corridor and significant public views.

B. Utilities Element

Policy U 5.1.2: Continue to underground above ground electrical transmission lines.

The Underground Utility Committee has identified Brookhurst Street, from Garfield Avenue to 900 ft. south of Adams Avenue as a qualified district due to the high level of use of Brookhurst Street and the visual and safety impacts associated with utility poles and overhead wires. The proposed Underground Utility District will allow for the undergrounding of Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon along a segment of Brookhurst Street.

**Zoning Compliance:** Not applicable.

**Urban Design Guidelines Conformance:** Not applicable.

**Environmental Status:**

The undergrounding of utilities is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15302, Class 2 (d) of the California Environmental Quality Act, which states that, "Conversion of overhead electric utility distribution system facilities to underground including connection to existing overhead electric utility distribution lines where the surface is restored to the condition existing prior to the undergrounding," is exempt from any environmental review.

**Coastal Status:** Not applicable.

**Redevelopment Status:** Not applicable.

**Design Review Board:** Not applicable.

**Subdivision Committee:** Not applicable.

**Other Departments Concerns and Requirements:**

No concerns from other departments have been received regarding the request for General Plan Conformance.

**Public Notification:**

General Plan Conformances are non-public hearing items and do not require legal notification.

**Application Processing Dates:**

**DATE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION:**

May 30, 2013

**MANDATORY PROCESSING DATE(S):**

July 9, 2013 (40 days from complete application)

**ANALYSIS:**

Prior to City Council action on the district, the Planning Commission must review the proposal for consistency with the City's General Plan, pursuant to the Government Code of the State of California. Section 65402 of the Government Code provides that a local agency shall not acquire real property, nor dispose of any real property, nor construct a public building or structure in any county or city until the location, purpose, and extent of such activity has been reported upon as to conformity with the adopted General Plan.

Pursuant to Section 17.64.020 of Municipal Code Chapter 17.64 Undergrounding of Utilities, a Utility Underground Committee met on April 29, 2013, to advise the City Council with respect to technical aspects of the undergrounding of public utilities within the City. According to the meeting minutes (Attachment No. 3), Brookhurst Street is a heavily traveled arterial road that has an unusually heavy concentration of overhead facilities. Since the proposed Underground Utility District passes through a minor urban scenic corridor, and undergrounding is in the general public interest, the Committee voted to establish the Brookhurst Street Underground Utility District by a vote of 5-0.

Existing overhead utilities along Brookhurst Street consist of Southern California Edison (SCE) power poles and cables along with Time Warner Cable and Verizon cables. The proposed Underground Utility District is consistent with the long-range plans for the project area. The designated area is a highly utilized and highly visible arterial. The City has initiated placement of these utilities underground to facilitate the elimination of visual blight, eliminate potential risks and disruptions of service caused by vehicular or storm damage to utility poles, and enhance the appearance of Brookhurst Street.

Staff recommends approval of General Plan Conformance No. 13-03 finding the proposed establishment of the Brookhurst Street Underground Utility District in conformance with the General Plan.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Suggested Findings of Approval – GPC No. 13-03
2. Planning Commission Resolution No. 1672
3. Utility Underground Committee Meeting Minutes dated April 29, 2013
4. Project Narrative Dated April 30, 2013

SH:MBB:HB:kd

**ATTACHMENT NO. 1**

**SUGGESTED FINDINGS OF APPROVAL**

**GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE NO. 13-03**

**SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR PROJECTS EXEMPT FROM CEQA:**

The Planning Commission finds that the proposed project will not have any significant effect on the environment and is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15302, Class 2 (d) of the CEQA Guidelines because, "Conversion of overhead electric utility distribution system facilities to underground including connection to existing overhead electric utility distribution lines where the surface is restored to the condition existing prior to the undergrounding," is exempt from environmental review.

**SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL – GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE NO. 13-03:**

The General Plan Land Use Map designation for the subject property is public right-of-way. The proposed project is consistent with this designation and goals, objectives, and policies of the City's General Plan as follows:

A. Urban Design Element

Goal UD 1: Enhance the visual image of the City of Huntington Beach.

Policy UD 1.3.2: Provide for the implementation of streetscape improvements along the major commercial corridors, through public capital improvement programs, business district improvements, or other techniques as funding is available.

Policy UD 2.2.4: Require the undergrounding of utility lines.

The removal of existing Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon along Brookhurst Street will enhance the appearance of the Brookhurst Street streetscape by eliminating structures that detract from the visual image of the corridor and significant public views.

B. Utilities Element

Policy U 5.1.2: Continue to underground above ground electrical transmission lines.

The Underground Utility Committee has identified Brookhurst Street, from Garfield Avenue to 900 ft. south of Adams Avenue as a qualified district due to the high level of use of Brookhurst Street and the visual and safety impacts associated with utility poles and overhead wires. The proposed Underground Utility District will allow for the undergrounding of Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon along a segment of Brookhurst Street.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1672**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE  
CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH FINDING THE PROPOSED BROOKHURST  
STREET UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE  
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES OF THE GENERAL PLAN  
(GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE NO. 13-003)**

**WHEREAS**, the Government Code of the State of California, Section 65402, provides that a local agency shall not acquire real property, nor dispose of any real property, nor construct a public building or structure in any county or city until the location, purpose, and extent of such activity has been reported upon as to conformity with the adopted General Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Public Works Department has submitted a request for General Plan Conformance review of the proposed establishment of an Underground Utility District on Brookhurst Street, from Garfield Avenue to 900 ft. south of Adams Avenue; and

**WHEREAS**, staff has reviewed a description of the Underground Utility District and submitted it to the Planning Commission for review on July 9, 2013; and

**WHEREAS**, staff has indicated applicable General Plan goals, objectives, and policies to establish conformance with the General Plan (Exhibit A).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Planning Commission of the City of Huntington Beach finds the proposed Brookhurst Street Underground Utility District for the purpose of undergrounding Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon in conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Planning Commission of the City of Huntington Beach at a regular meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2013, by the following roll call vote:

**AYES:** Bixby, Peterson, Franklin, Pinchiff, Dingwall, Kalmick, Mandic  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None  
**ABSTAIN:** None

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Hess, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Planning Commission Chairperson

## EXHIBIT A

### GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES FOR BROOKHURST UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT (GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE NO. 13-03)

The establishment of the Brookhurst Street Underground Utility District conforms to the following goals and policies of the General Plan:

#### A. Urban Design Element

Goal UD 1: Enhance the visual image of the City of Huntington Beach.

Policy UD 1.3.2: Provide for the implementation of streetscape improvements along the major commercial corridors, through public capital improvement programs, business district improvements, or other techniques as funding is available.

Policy UD 2.2.4: Require the undergrounding of utility lines.

The removal of existing Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon along Brookhurst Street will enhance the appearance of the Brookhurst Street streetscape by eliminating structures that detract from the visual image of the corridor and significant public views.

#### B. Utilities Element

Policy U 5.1.2: Continue to underground above ground electrical transmission lines.

The Underground Utility Committee has identified Brookhurst Street, from Garfield Avenue to 900 ft. south of Adams Avenue as a qualified district due to the high level of use of Brookhurst Street and the visual and safety impacts associated with utility poles and overhead wires. The proposed Underground Utility District will allow for the undergrounding of Southern California Edison power poles and associated overhead wires for Time Warner and Verizon along a segment of Brookhurst Street.

CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH  
UTILITY UNDERGROUND COMMITTEE MEETING  
April 29, 2013  
3:00 p.m.  
Public Works Conference Room  
2000 Main Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

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**Minutes**

The meeting was convened shortly after 3:00 pm, followed by round table introductions as follows:

Committee Members: Travis Hopkins, Director of Public Works, Committee Chairman  
Bob Hall, Assistant City Administrator  
Jane James, Acting Planning Manager  
Jenelle Godges, SCE  
Robert Flores, Verizon

City Staff: Tom Herbel, City Engineer  
Todd Broussard, Principal Civil Engineer

Others Utilities: Larry Lilly, TW Cable

Todd Broussard provided an overview of the project area and walked through the criteria to establish that undergrounding is in the general public interest, one or more of the following needs to be met.

- Location has an unusually heavy concentration of overhead facilities. (Refer to Photos)
- Location is heavily traveled. (35,000 ADT)
- Location qualifies as an **arterial or major collector** road in a local government's general plan. (Figure CE-1)
- Overhead equipment must be located within or pass through a civic, recreational or scenic area. (Figures CE-12, UD-3)

Attached exhibits were used as a basis for determination.

Tom Herbel inquired about whether Adams Avenue has been considered. Todd Broussard mentioned that recent developments have or may likely take care of the undergrounding along Adams in that area. Travis Hopkins later commented that the only other street to be discussed in the past as a candidate for an underground district was Edinger Avenue.

Discussion ensued regarding the fact that this District would not relocate SCE transmission lines, which would require certain poles to remain.

Robert Flores opined that he did not feel that the amount of utility lines constituted a heavy concentration of overhead facilities.

With no further substantive discussion, Bob Hall made the motion to:

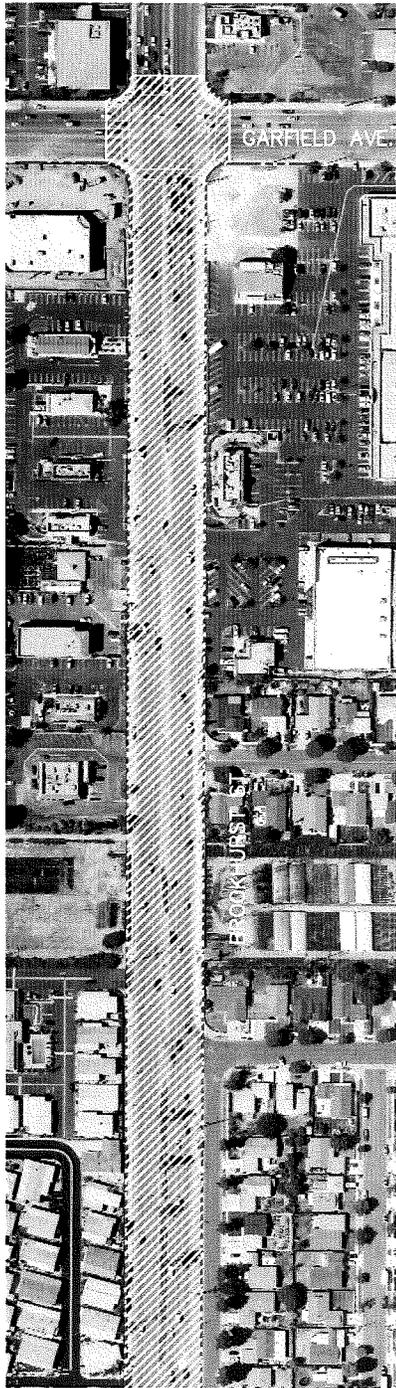
Recommend to City Council, the formation of the Brookhurst Street (Garfield to approximately 900' South of Adams) Utility Underground District.

The motion was seconded by Jane James. The motion was approved by the committee members by a vote of 5-0.

Attachments;

Photographs  
Project Boundary Description  
Excerpts from General Plan  
Figure CE-1  
Figure CE-12  
Figure UD-3  
Policy U 5.1.2

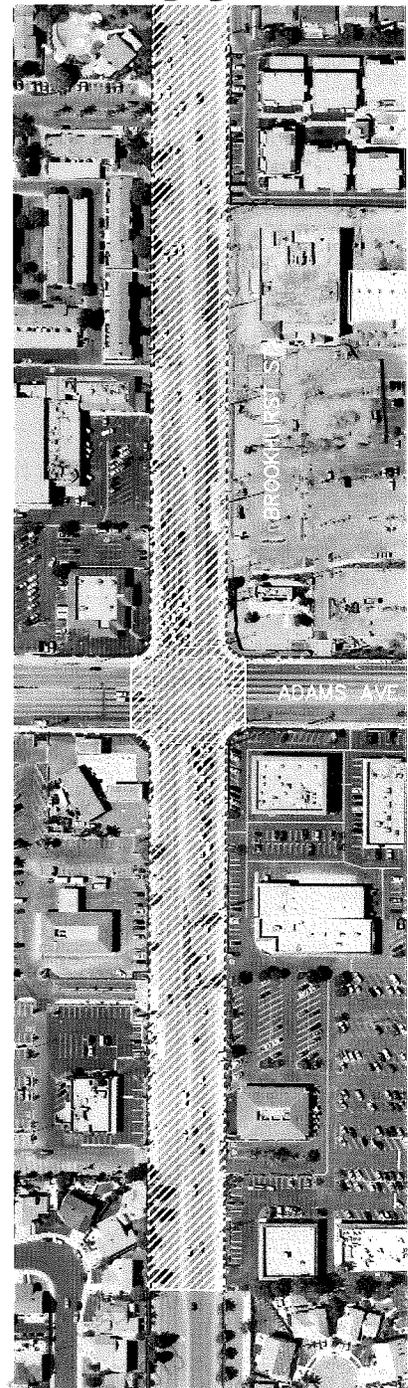
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A-A



B-B



B-B

EXHIBIT "A"

PROJECT BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

THE FULL 120' WIDTH RIGHT OF WAY OF BROOKHURST STREET FROM GARFIELD AVENUE TO APPROXIMATELY 900 FEET SOUTH OF ADAMS AVENUE, INCLUDING THE PROLONGATION OF THE INTERSECTION RADII OF GARFIELD, YORKTOWN, AND ADAMS AVENUES. AS DEPICTED ON EXHIBIT "A".

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SCALE: 1"=300'

BROOKHURST STREET  
UNDERGROUND DISTRICT  
PROJECT BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

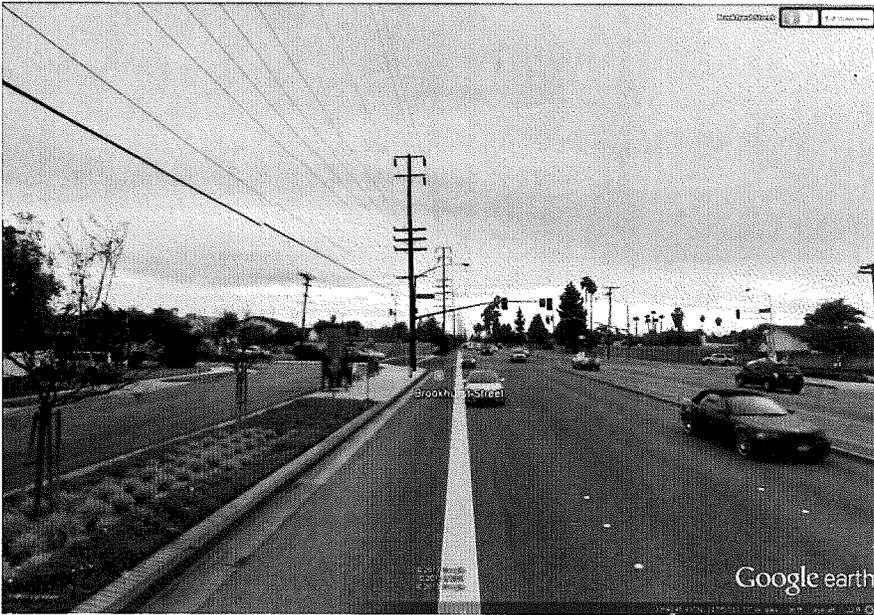


3.3

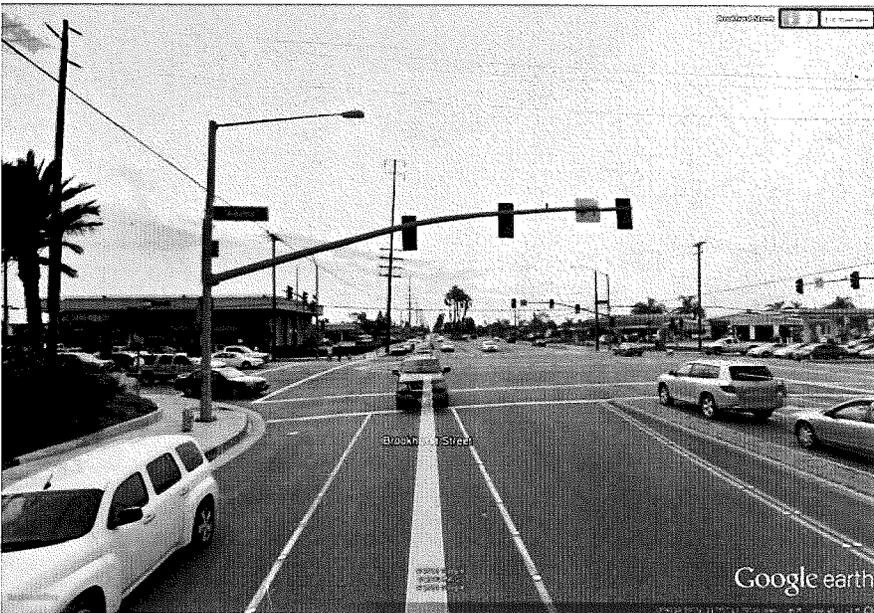
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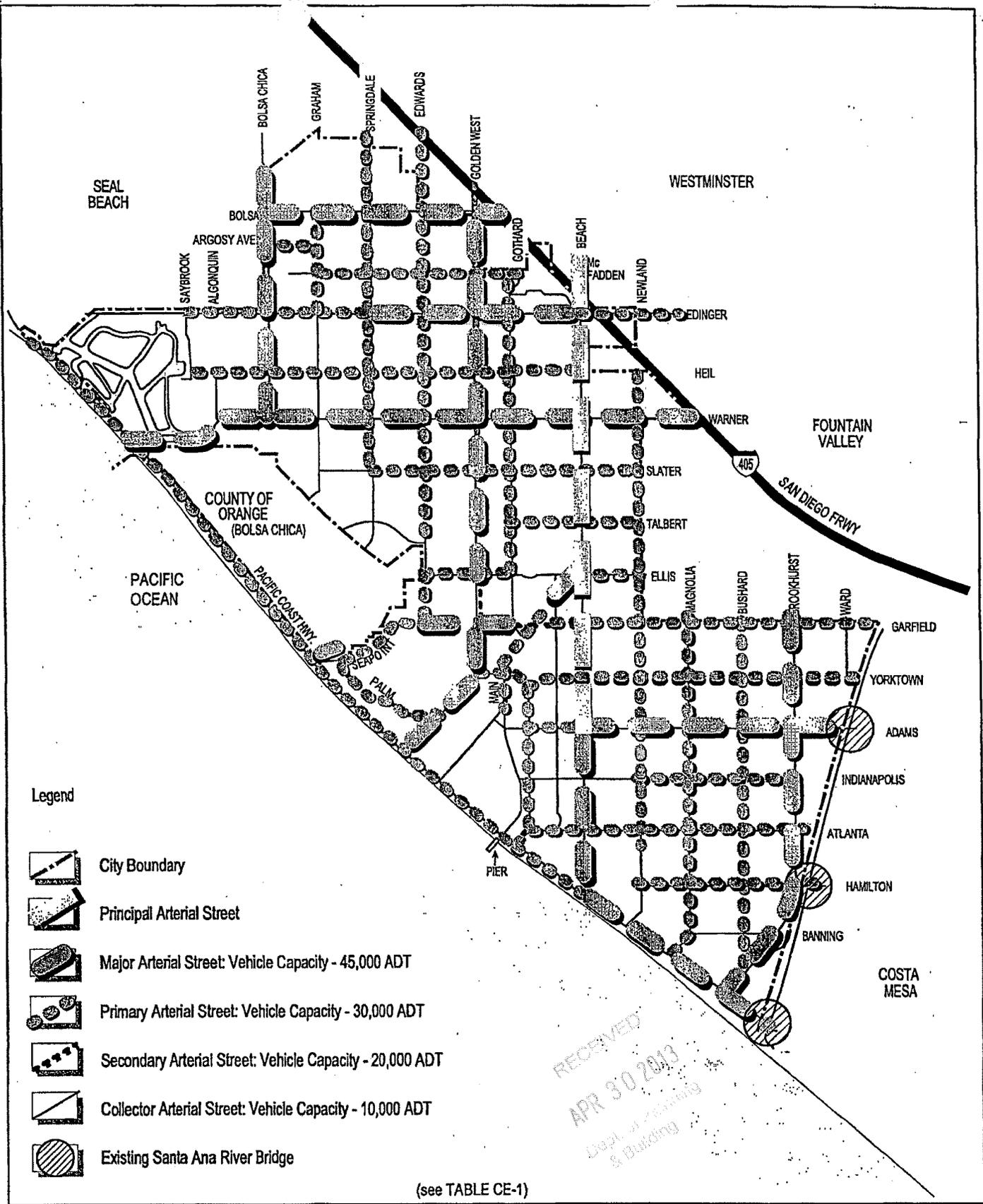
Brookhurst @ Garfield  
(Looking South)



Brookhurst @ Yorktown  
(Looking South)



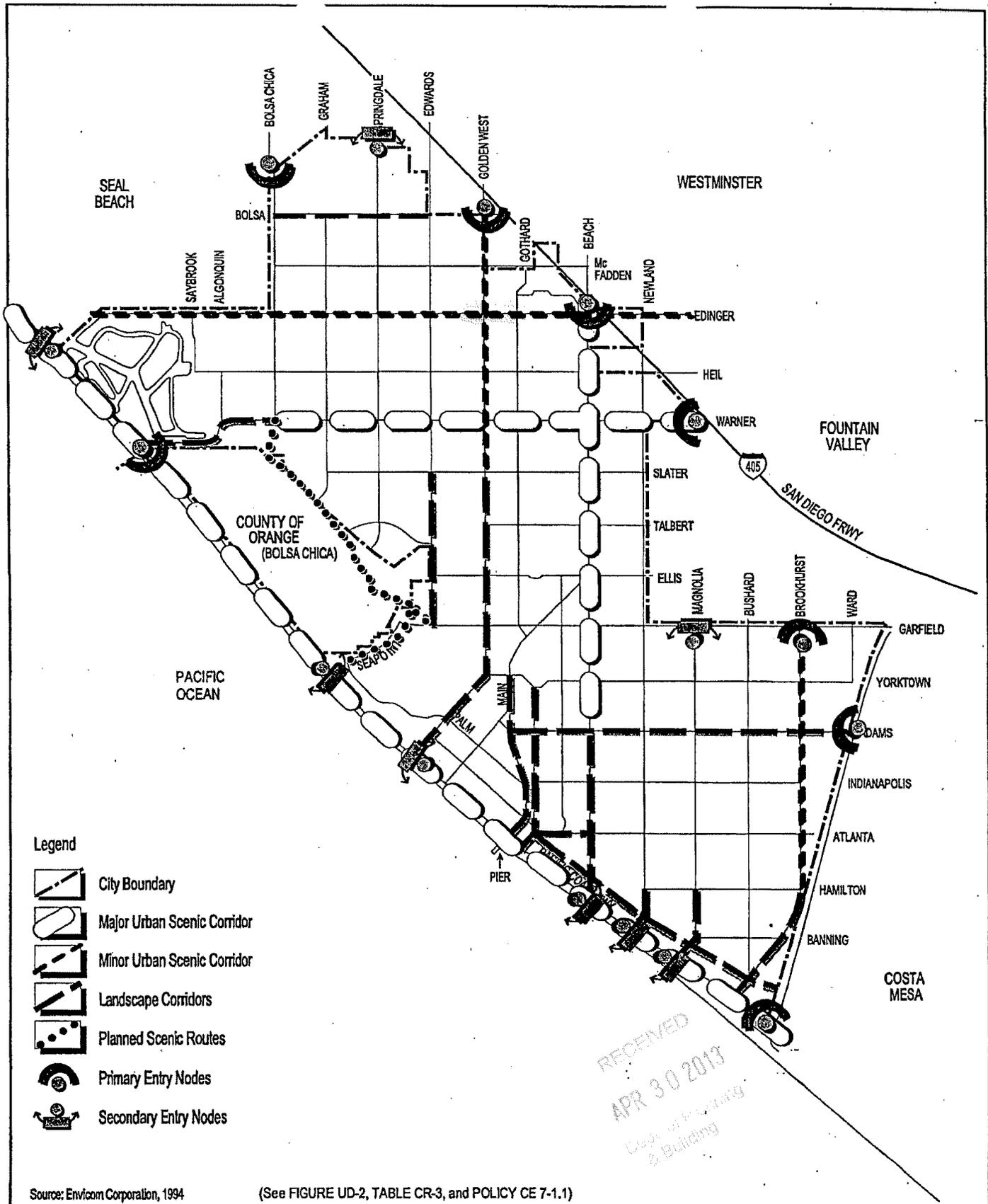
Brookhurst @ Adams  
(Looking South)



(see TABLE CE-1)

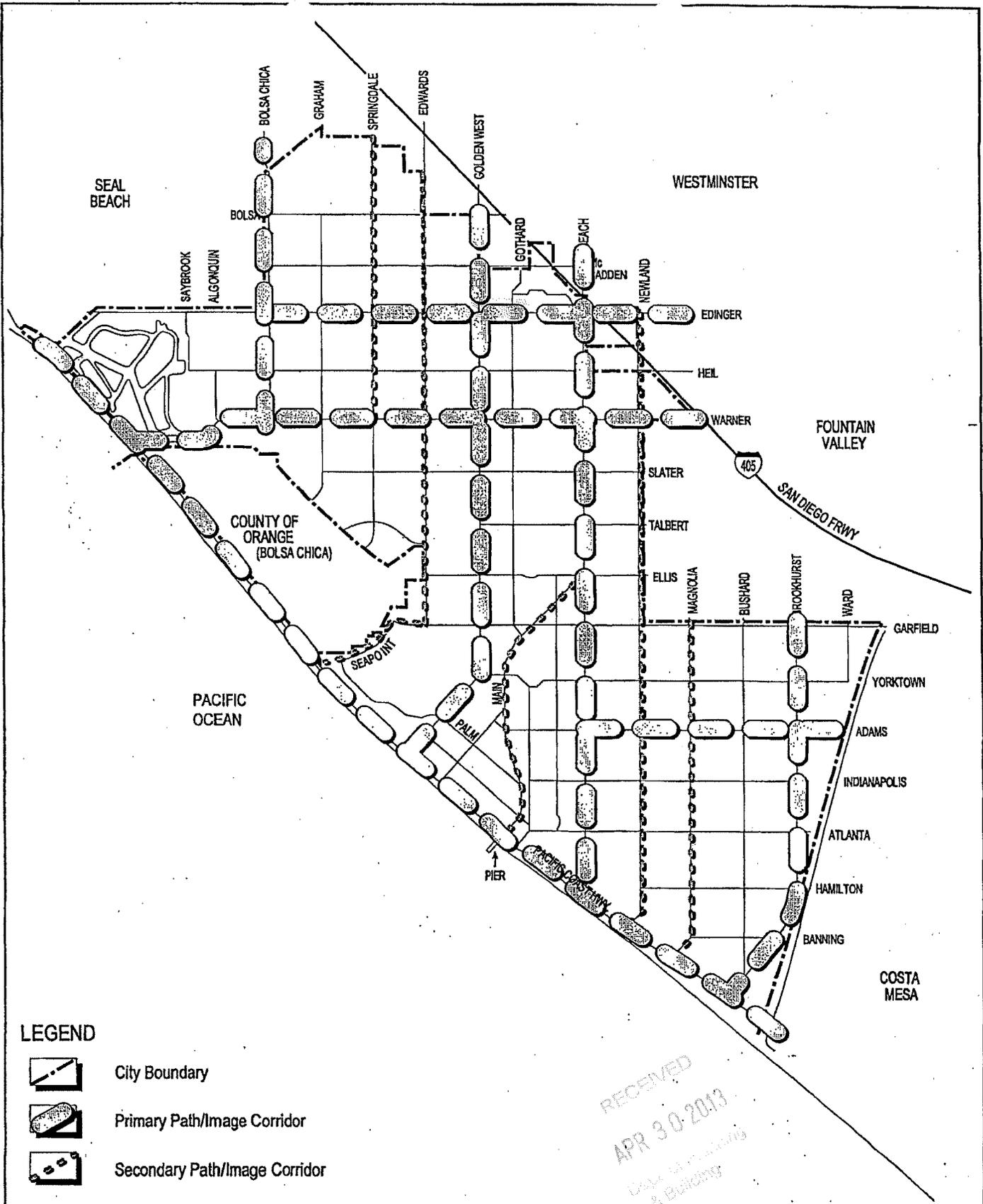
**EXISTING NETWORK OF ARTERIAL STREETS AND HIGHWAYS**  
 CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH GENERAL PLAN





**SCENIC HIGHWAYS, SCENIC CORRIDORS,  
AND LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS**

CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH GENERAL PLAN



**LEGEND**

-  City Boundary
-  Primary Path/Image Corridor
-  Secondary Path/Image Corridor

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**URBAN IMAGE CORRIDORS**  
 CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH GENERAL PLAN



FIGURE UD-3

**U 3.3.3**

Require that new developments employ the most efficient drainage technology to control drainage and minimize damage to environmentally sensitive areas. (I-U 2, I-U 6, and I-U 5)

**U 3.3.4**

In areas of known subsidence, require new development to minimize the use of cross gutters and utilize technology such as low flow storm drains. (I-U 2, I-U 6, and I-U 5)

**Solid Waste**

**Goal**

**U 4**

Maintain solid waste collection and disposal services in accordance with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB939), and pursue funding sources to reduce the cost of the collection and disposal services in the City.

**Objective**

**U 4.1**

Ensure an adequate and orderly system for the collection services and the disposal of solid waste to meet the demands of new and existing development in the City.

**Policies**

**U 4.1.1**

Maintain adequate solid waste collection for commercial, industrial, and residential developments in accordance with state law. (I-U 11)

**U 4.1.2**

Investigate the feasibility of providing trash and recycling receptacles along City streets in pedestrian oriented commercial areas (i.e., Downtown, Peter's Landing, Beach Boulevard nodes, etc.); design receptacles to be aesthetically compatible with the district in which they are located. (I-U 3)

**Objective**

**U 4.2**

Recycle solid waste to reduce the amount of bulk which must be disposed in area landfill, to conserve energy resources, and to be consistent with the provisions of the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB939).

**Policies**

**U 4.2.1**

Monitor SRRE and HHWME programs to ensure proper implementation and achievement of mandated solid waste reduction and diversion goals. (I-U 5 and I-U 12)

**U 4.2.2**

Revise and replace programs that do not achieve their intended purpose as stated in the SRRE and HHWME. (I-U 5 and I-U 12)

**Gas Supply, Telecommunication,  
Electricity**

**Goal**

**U 5**

Maintain and expand service provision to City of Huntington Beach residences and businesses.

**Objective**

**5.1**

Ensure that adequate natural gas, telecommunication and electrical systems are provided.

**Policies**

**U 5.1.1**

Continue to work with service providers to maintain current levels of service and facilitate improved levels of service. (I-U 5)

**U 5.1.2**

Continue to underground above ground electrical transmission lines. (I-U 6)

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**PROPOSED UNDERGROUND UTILITY DISTRICT  
BROOKHURST STREET (GARFIELD TO 900' SOUTH OF ADAMS)**

**Project Narrative**

In early 2013, the Public Works Department initiated the process of having the overhead utilities along Brookhurst Street (Garfield Avenue to 900' South of Adams Avenue) placed underground. In accordance with Huntington Beach Municipal Code, Chapter 17.64.020, the Underground Utilities Committee met on April 29, 2013 and identified this project to be recommended to City Council.

In furtherance of this Code, Planning Commission review, for General Plan Conformance, is required prior to submitting a proposal to create an Underground Utility District to City Council. Attached to this Narrative are the Meeting Minutes and excerpts of the City's General Plan, which support this project.

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