

## **APPENDIX C – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**November 24, 2020**

### **Background**

The White Gold Utility Undergrounding Project is a White Gold property owner-initiated project guided by the requirements of section 212 of the *Community Charter*. The project was initiated when 85 of the 160 White Gold property owners expressed a collective interest in pursuing a petition process to underground the existing overhead utilities in White Gold. The homeowners in support of pursuing this process sent a letter to Council, which was included in the November 19, 2019 Council Report. The direction provided to staff at the November 19 meeting was that, pending a successful petition, the RMOW agrees to fund the portion of the total project costs not covered by the BC Hydro Beautification Grant through a Local Area Service tax payable over time, by all parcels located within the identified Service Area.

White Gold owners were issued a petition with sufficient information to make free and informed consent, or to decline to consent to the project. As outlined below, opportunity was afforded to all owners to contact the project manager or attend the community information session in order to receive clarification about the project. Similar to elections, there exists no method to test comprehension of the electorate.

### **Methods of communication with White Gold property owners:**

RMOW staff engaged in public engagement and consultation regarding the White Gold Utility Undergrounding Project using multiple methods:

- **Web Page and Contact Info:** The project web page, updated throughout the petition process, included email and phone contact information for the RMOW project manager to allow owners to ask questions and discuss the project directly. The web page also includes a question and answer document that aims to outline frequently asked questions for the project.
- **Canada Post Mailed Letters:** The project was profiled in a hard copy Canada Post mailed letter dated August 4, 2020, and included information that was also posted on the project web page. This letter was followed by two additional Canada Post letters dated August 11 and September 8, 2020.
- **Public Meeting:** A formal community information session was held August 29, 2020 via Zoom.
- **Email and Phone Conversations:** Several emails and phone calls were received from owners throughout the petition process which led to the question and answer series on the project web page being updated on August 11, August 18, August 31 and September 18. The RMOW project manager responded to all email questions directly back to those owners.

### **Communication on costs**

Materials sent to residents provided the estimated cost of the work on public land and an indicative estimate of the cost for work on private land based on property complexity. The work on private land requires review of each property by an electrician (or electrical contractor) in order to have a detailed estimate of individual private owner costs. As the project design evolves there will be more information available to define the amount of land disturbance on public land; this information will be shared with residents when it's available.

The RMOW will not be able to provide detailed estimates of the private costs to upgrade each property, the individual property owners will need to determine the costs for the work required on their private property with their contractor.

### **Schedule of Petition Communication:**

The petition closing date was extended from September 15 to October 9, 2020 and the reason for the change was provided in the September 18, 2020 question and answer series posted on the project webpage. Specifically, the petition deadline was extended because some international owners were prevented from getting their mail due to Covid-19. The project team was advised by Canada Post that some countries were intermittently refusing international mail and this was confirmed when one owner contacted the project team to advise they had received a second letter from the project team but had not received the first letter with the petition while another owner contacted the team to advise they had heard about a petition from a friend but had not received any of the mailings. A small number of owners, away on vacation during the petition period, also contacted the project team advising they were unable to respond to the petition until they returned after the petition closing deadline.

### **Petition Verification**

The petition numbers were calculated only on the fully complete petitions received in support of the project. In the White Gold Utility Undergrounding Project petition process only petitions in support of the project were counted, if owners didn't submit a petition then the associated property address was calculated as a "no" vote. On September 15, 2020 the project team had received a total of 85 petitions in support of the project. This was 5 petitions **above** the 80 supportive petitions required to approve the project.

By the October 9 closing date, additional petitions were received via email for a total of 93 supportive petitions.

### **Extra Time to Rescind**

An email was sent to those 93 owners who signed their consent to have project information and updates sent to them directly via email. The project team took an extra step, beyond legislative requirements, of reconfirming support via email to all 93 home-owners who sent supportive petitions. The project team allowed the rescind period to remain open for four days. No requests to rescind a petition were received during this time.

The petition period is now over and there remains no opportunity for reconsideration by the petitioners, but any owner's comments on the project will continue to be included in staff presentations on this project.

**Pre-Conceptual Cost Estimate Details:**

BC Hydro (incl. design, construction, removal of old system)	\$2,730,000
Telus	\$1,120,000
Shaw	\$370,000
Survey & Legal costs	\$15,000
Project Management, Survey, & Legal	\$265,000
Contingency (for all items)	\$1,020,000

**Total Project Estimated Cost\$5,520,000**

Less estimated BC Hydro Grant	- \$845,000
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<b>Total Cost for Property Owners</b>	<b>\$4,675,000</b>
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Note 1 – repaving of the roads will be required once the work is completed, but this cost (estimated at \$800,000) has not been included in this project as it has been included with the previous water main replacement project.

Note 2 - the cost estimates for each component are based on our previous work in this neighbourhood and the information received so far from the private utilities.