



City of Belleair Beach Property Owner Survey

Citizen Opinion of Undergrounding Electric
Communication Cables



Final Report
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Study Objective:

Although the question of undergrounding utility lines in the City of Belleair Beach has been before the City Council for some time, only a small number of citizens have provided their views on the subject.

Because determining the cost of such a project requires a costly engineering study, City Council desired assurances that public interest in the project is sufficient to justify the expense of exploring its financial feasibility.

The purpose of this study is to assist the City Council by assessing the public desire for undergrounding through a public opinion survey.

It was determined that the target population for this survey consists of people who own taxable property within the City boundaries.

Methodology:

The Pinellas County Property Appraiser provided a list of all properties in the City of Belleair Beach tax district. Of the 1,302 listed, seven have no ownership or address data, making 1,295 usable parcels for the study. Some of the parcels are tax exempt because they are owned by government entities or are common areas of condominium buildings. These were removed from the study. Also, some property owners have more than one property in the City. Altogether, there were 1,243 properties owned by 1,143 unduplicated owners. Only 636 of these show their primary residence as being in the City of Belleair Beach. The rest are in other parts of Florida, other states and foreign countries.

In order to include as many property owners as possible, the study used a combination of online, mail and telephone communications, pursued as follows:

17 August -- The City sent out a postcard announcing the survey to a mailing list of property owners as provided by the Pinellas County Property Appraiser.

22 – 26 August – The research team sent out an email invitation to property owners who had previously opted in to email communications from the City. Invitations were sent out in order of location, with closest residences first. Owners who requested online access were provided with a link to the study.

31 August – The survey was mailed to all property owners who had not submitted the survey online. A business reply envelope was included with each survey. Surveys were addressed to mailing addresses provided by the appraiser.

16 – 28 September – Telephone follow-up was made to property owners who had not submitted online or mail surveys and for whom telephone numbers were available (795 property owners out of the 1,143). Attempts were made to call owners living in Canada, Great Britain and Ireland as well as throughout the United States.

Telephone numbers were obtained from various City lists and by appending phone numbers to mailing addresses for property owners. If more than one telephone number was available for an owner, all of them were tried during the process. Calls were made daily and at different times of day until that owner had

responded or refused. Telephone calls were made by professional telephone interviewers working in a supervised phone room on a computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system.

Throughout this process, response status for each property was monitored through use of a “control number” which was attached or requested for each communication method.

Upon cut-off for new responses, all of the submitted interviews were placed into a single database, duplicates removed and the analysis prepared. The completed database has 104 online, 292 mail and 96 telephone interviews.

In total, 492 completed interviews were obtained, or 43% of eligible participants. For this survey, the margin of error is plus or minus 4.16 percentage points.

Survey Results:

Summary of Survey Results

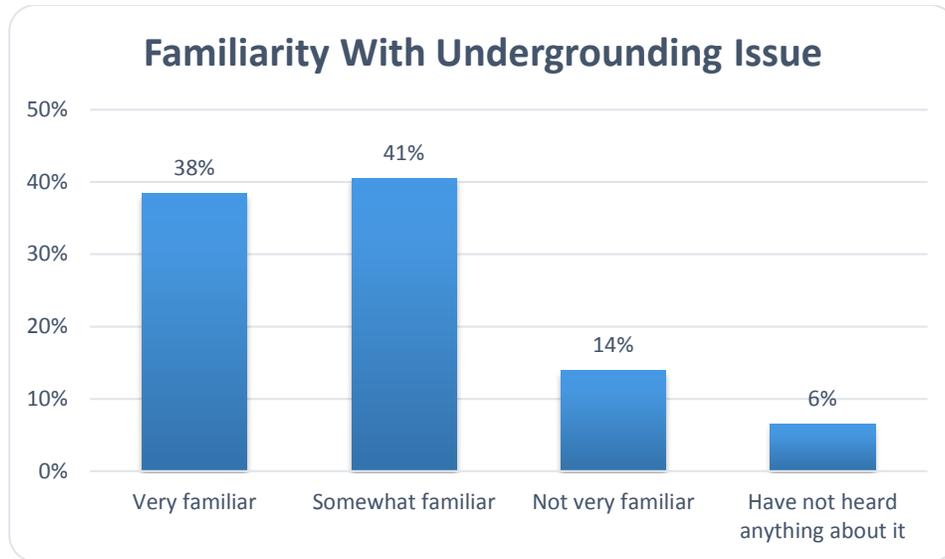
For the analysis, we divided properties into 5 sub-areas of the City, as recommended by City personnel. These were based on street address. These may be described as: 1. The length of Gulf Boulevard on the West side. 2. The length of Gulf Boulevard on the East side. 3. North Section. 4. Middle Section and 5. South Section. Specific streets in each section are given on page 10 below.

The survey represents all parts of the City, and indeed, every named street has property owners included in the results of this study.

However, in examining the responses, we found that the North, Middle and South Sections were somewhat over-represented and the Gulf Boulevard sections were somewhat under-represented. Weighting was applied to all responses to correct for this as follows:

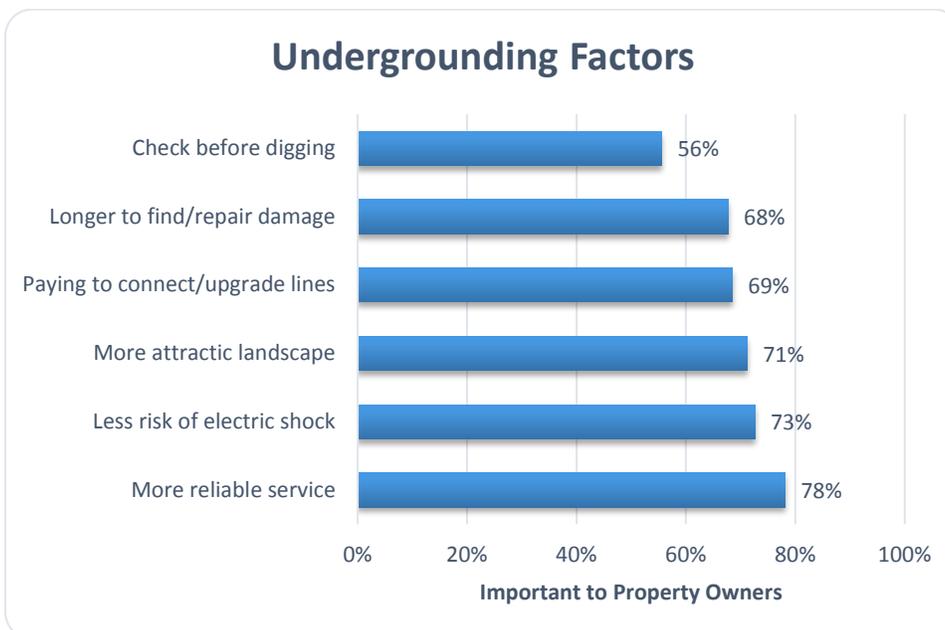
	Unweighted		Weighted	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
South	170	34.6	145	29.5
Mid	65	13.2	49	10.0
North	127	25.8	107	21.7
Gulf West Side	116	23.6	165	33.5
Gulf East Side	14	2.8	26	5.3
Total	492	100.0	492	100.0

When asked how familiar they were with the question of undergrounding all City utilities lines, 4 out of ten (40%) said they were Familiar, with it, and almost as many (38%) said they were Very Familiar. The remaining owners were Not Very Familiar (14%) or had Not Heard Anything About it (6%).

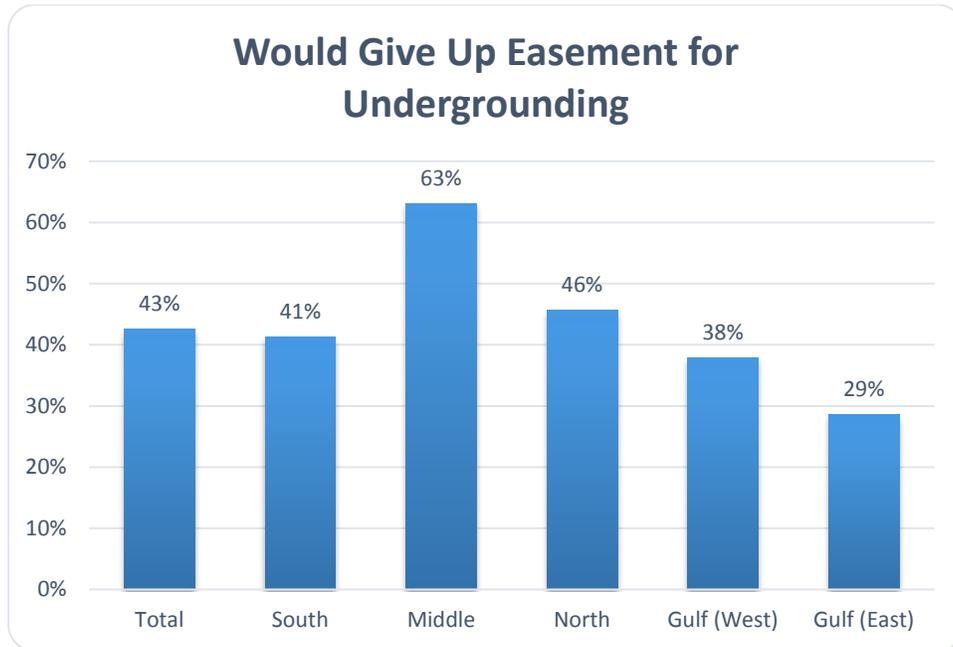


Presented with a set of statements about undergrounding, property owners were more likely to feel the positive factors were important: i.e. more reliable service (78%), less risk of electric shock from power lines (73%), and more attractive landscape which may increase property values (71%).

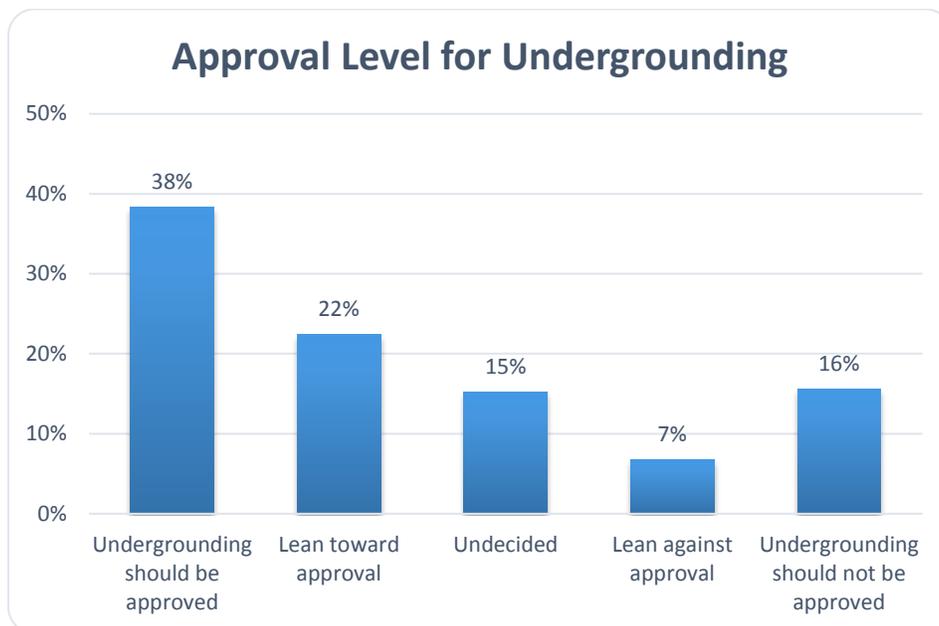
Less important were: homeowners having to pay to connect to undergrounding lines and possibly upgrade (69%), if damaged, it may take longer to find damage and restore service (68%), and residents would have to check for the location of underground lines before digging holes (56%).



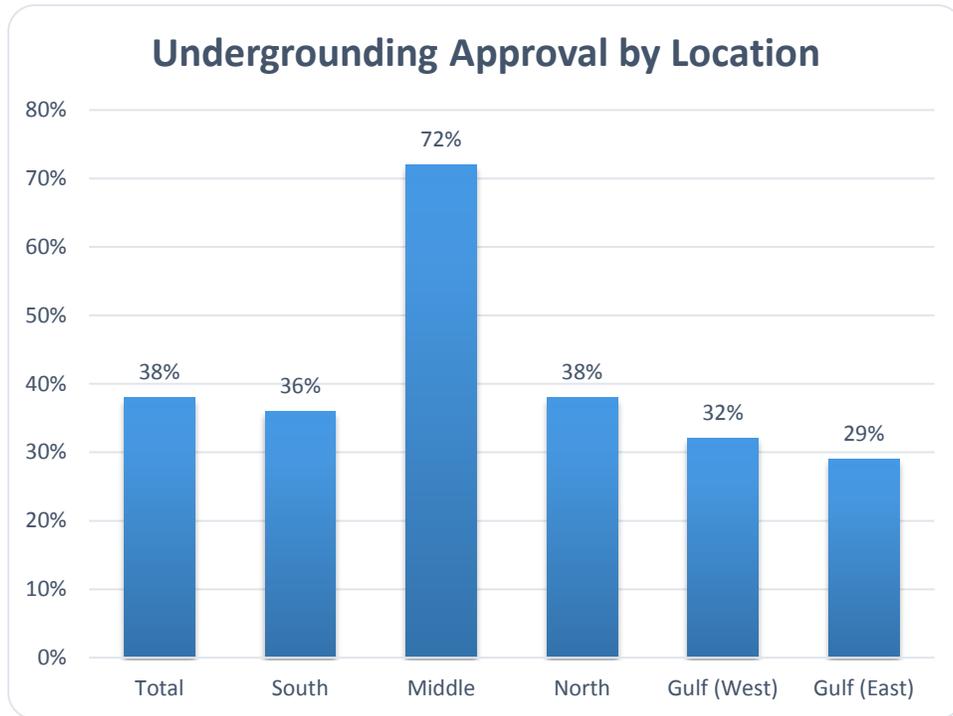
When asked about their willingness to give up some property to a utility easement, which may be necessary to enable undergrounding, four out of ten said Yes (43%), 3 out of ten said No (32%) and 1 out of 4 were uncertain (25%). Property owners in the middle section of the City are significantly more willing to give up an easement for undergrounding (63%).



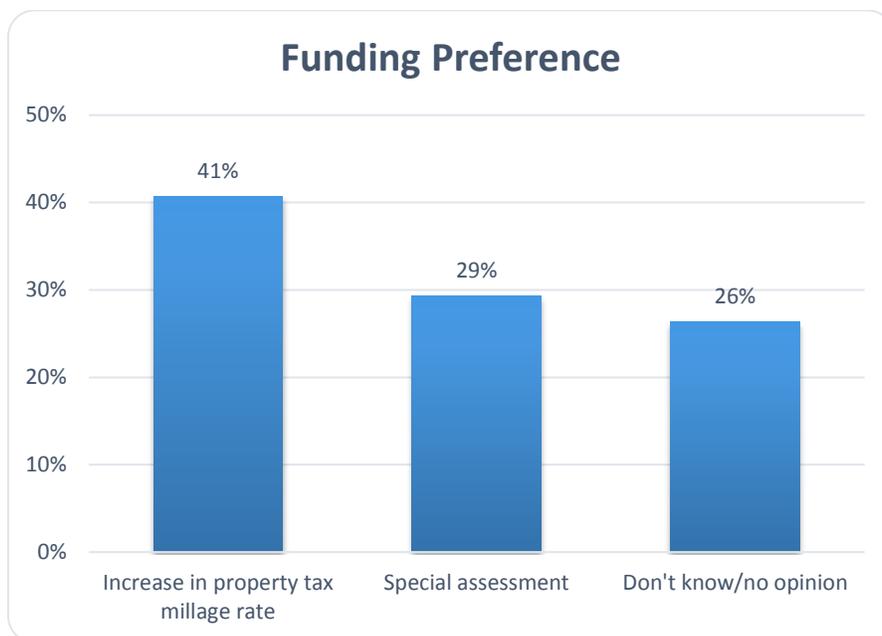
Six out of ten say undergrounding should be approved (38%) or lean toward approval (22%). About 2 out of 10 say undergrounding should not be approved (16%) or lean against approval (7%).



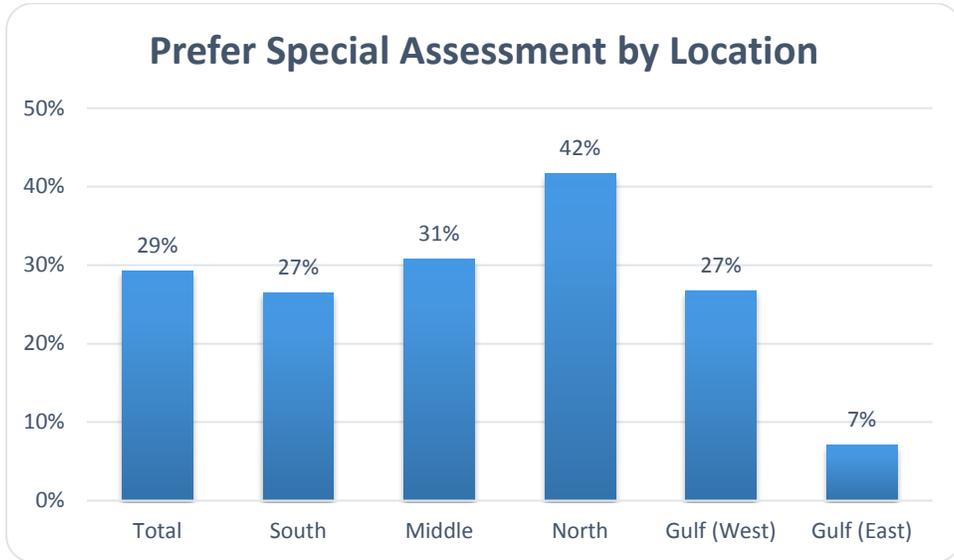
Owners in the middle section of the city are almost twice as likely to say undergrounding should be approved (72%).



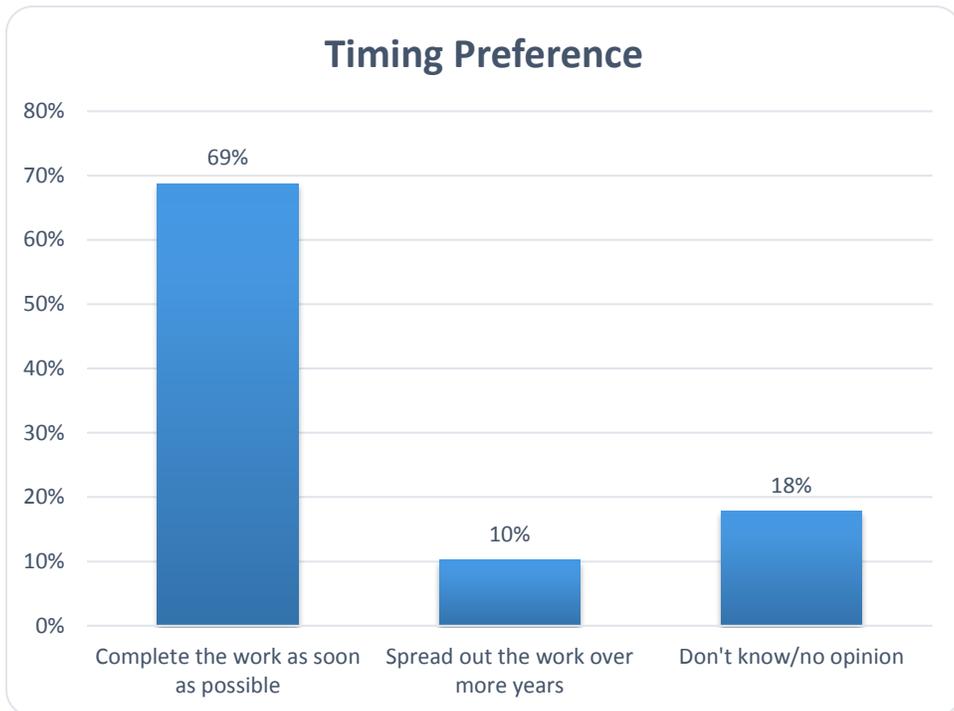
More property owners prefer funding undergrounding with an increase in the property tax millage rate (41%) than with a special assessment (29%).



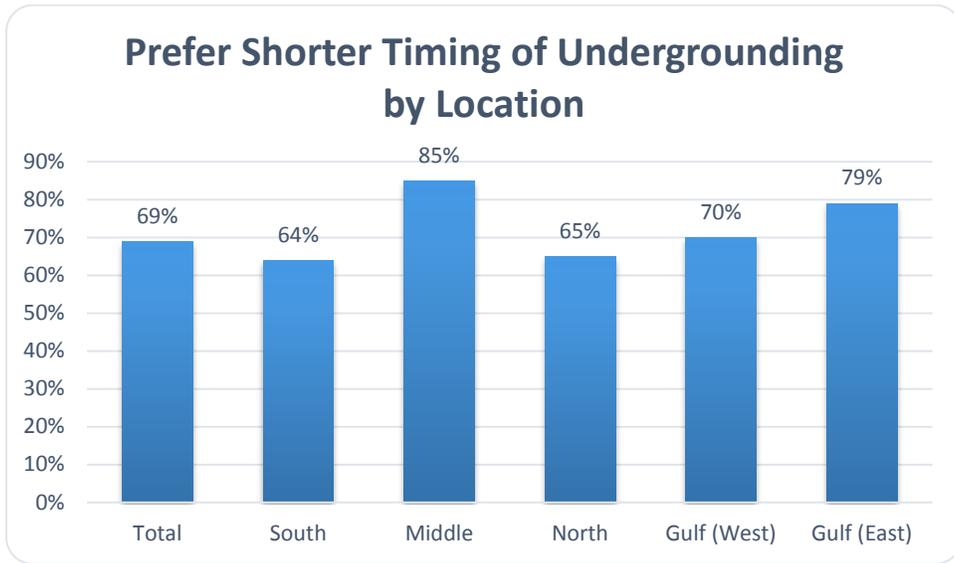
Only the North section of the city is more in favor of a special assessment (40%) than a millage rate increase (27%).



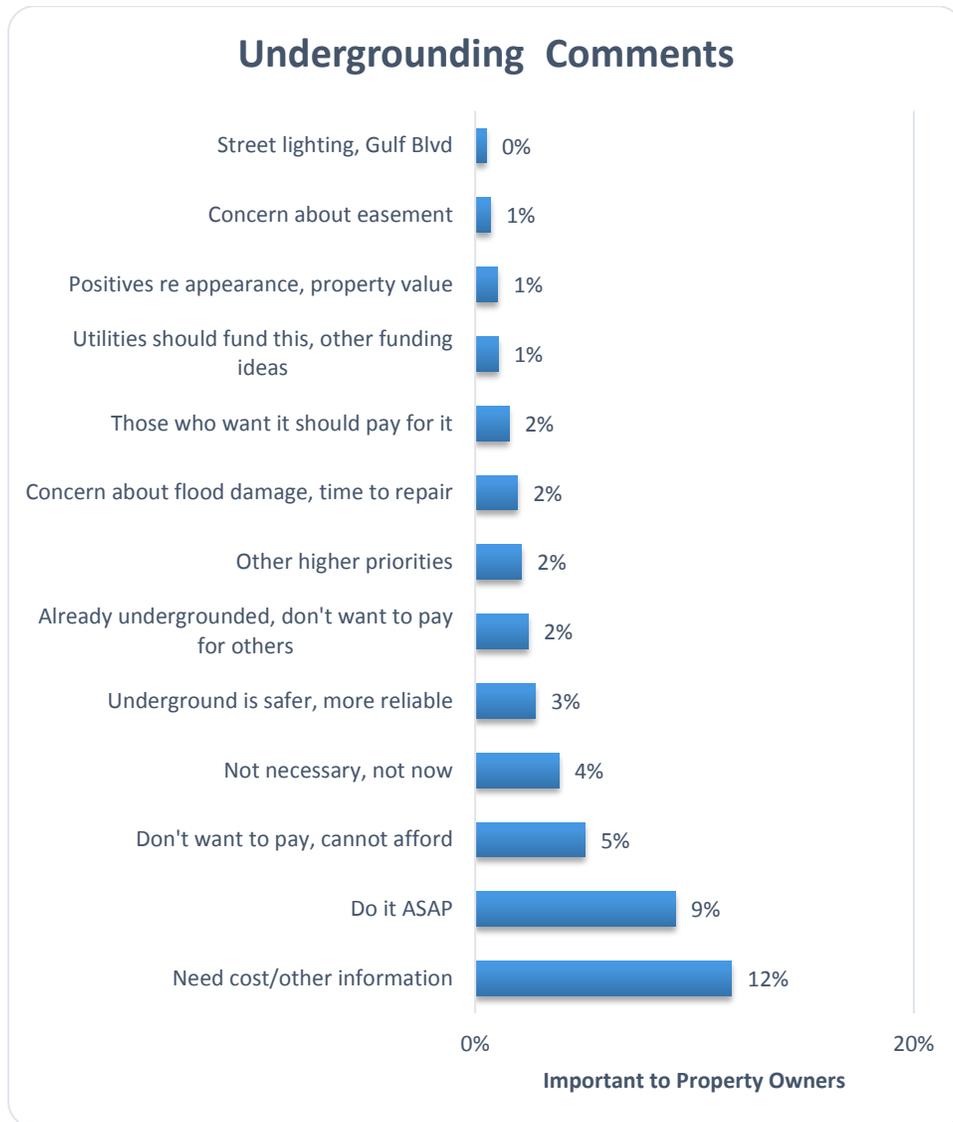
If undergrounding is approved, seven out of ten owners say it should be completed as soon as possible (69%). Only one in ten (10) prefer to see the work spread out over more years.



All parts of the City prefer to see any undergrounding project completed as soon as possible.

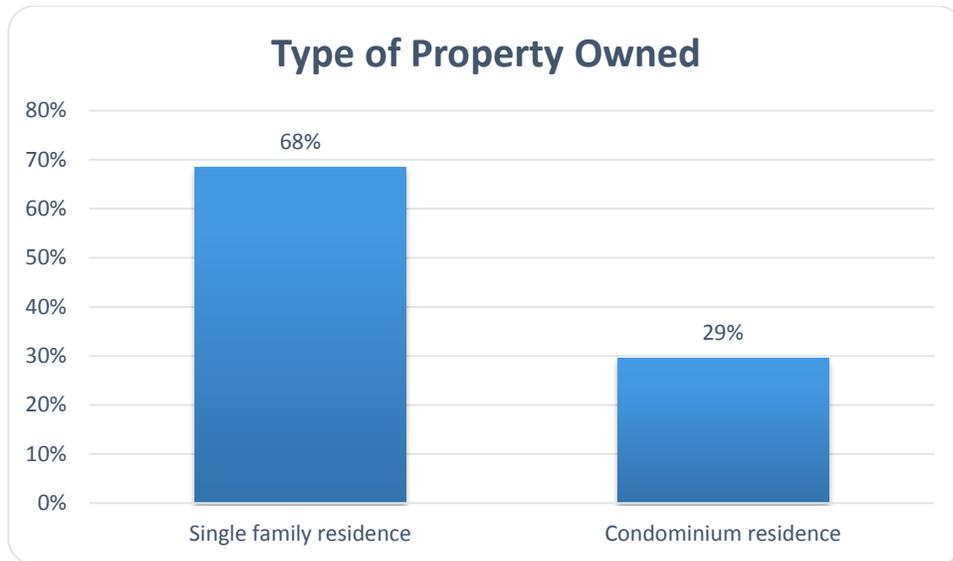


At the end of the survey, property owners were given an opportunity to comment. Many (44%) of them responded, with cost being the most often mentioned concern. .

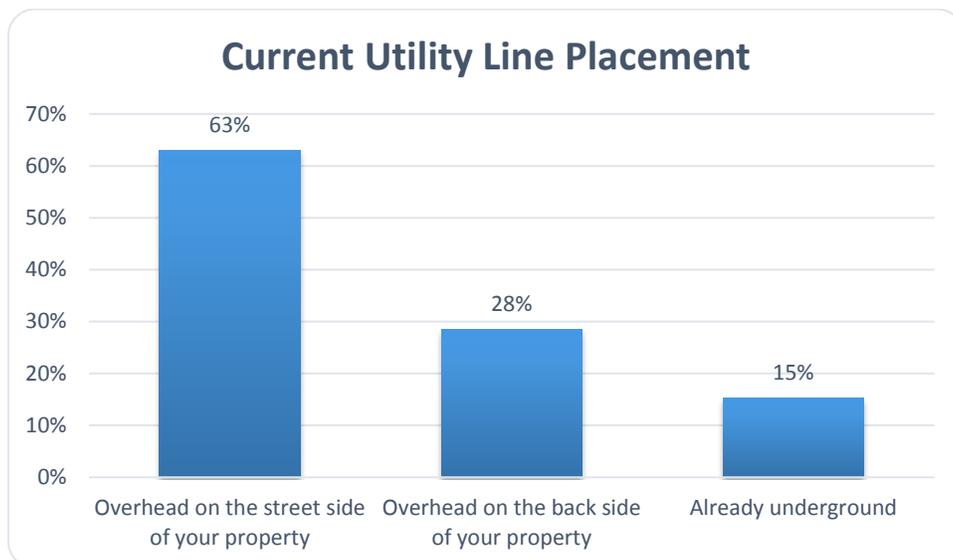


Profile of Property Owners Responding

Seven out of ten survey respondents (69%) own single family homes and three in ten (30%) own condominiums.



Six out of ten survey participants (63%) say they have overhead lines on the street side of their property, and three in ten (28%) say they have lines on the back side of their property. A few have lines on both the street side and back of their property, and these are counted in both categories. Just 15% say their lines are already underground.



Street location of properties for which owners responded.

South	Middle	North	Gulf West Side	Gulf East Side
145	49	107	165	26
Bay	Aleta	Bayshore	Gulf (2000 - 3500)	Gulf (East Side)
Causeway	Donato	Belle Isle		
Cedar	Louisa	Crystal Cay		
Harbor	22nd Street	Harrison		
Palm		Hibiscus		
Spruce		Howard		
1st Street		Morgan		
2nd Street		Tiffany		
3rd Street		Wedgewood		
4th Street		23rd Street		
5th Street		24th Street		
6th Street		25th Street		
27th Street				
8th Street				
9th Street				
12th Street				
13th Street				
14th Street				
15th Street				
16th Street				
17th Street				
18th Street				
19th Street				
20th Street				
21st Street				

Key Question Detail by Significant Factors

Significant Factors: Familiar with Undergrounding

		No response	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not very familiar	Have not heard anything about it
		%	%	%	%	%
Total		1	38	41	14	6
Current Lines	Overhead Street Side	1	41	39	13	6
	Overhead back side	0	36	48	10	6
	Underground	0	40	38	19	3
Home Type ***	Single Family	1	45	40	9	5
	Condominium	1	24	44	23	9
Sub-Area ***	South	0	38	41	14	8
	Mid	0	55	38	2	5
	North	2	52	38	6	2
	Gulf West Side	1	27	43	21	9
	Gulf East Side	0	29	36	29	7

* Statistically significant factor, ** Highly significant factor, *** Very highly significant factor

Significant Factors: Willing to Give Easement

		No response	Yes	No	Don't know
		%	%	%	%
Total		1	43	31	25
Current Lines **	Overhead Street Side		48	25	27
	Overhead back side	0	34	40	26
	Underground	0	47	39	13
Home Type	Single Family		45	31	24
	Condominium	1	38	31	30
Sub-Area *	South	0	41	36	23
	Mid	0	63	20	17
	North	2	46	31	22
	Gulf West Side	2	38	32	28
	Gulf East Side	0	29	29	43

* Statistically significant factor, ** Highly significant factor, *** Very highly significant factor

Significant Factors: Favor or Oppose Undergrounding

		No response	Should be approved	Lean toward approval	Undecided	Lean against approval	Should not be approved
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Total		2	38	22	15	7	16
Current Lines	Overhead Street Side		43	25	13	7	11
	Overhead back side	1	35	18	16	5	25
	Underground	0	43	21	18	6	13
Home Type	Single Family	1	43	22	15	5	15
	Condominium	0	31	26	17	11	16
Sub-Area ***	South	2	36	21	15	6	20
	Mid	0	72	9	5	2	12
	North	2	38	21	17	6	15
	Gulf West Side	1	32	23	18	10	16
	Gulf East Side	7	29	57	7	0	0

* Statistically significant factor, ** Highly significant factor, *** Very highly significant factor

Significant Factors: Funding Approach

		No response	Increase in property tax millage rate	Special assessment	Don't know/no opinion
		%	%	%	%
Total		4	41	29	26
Current Lines ***	Overhead Street Side	1	48	24	27
	Overhead back side	3	43	20	34
	Underground	4	16	67	13
Home Type	Single Family	2	40	31	27
	Condominium	0	45	27	28
Sub-Area *	South	4	45	26	25
	Mid	2	48	31	20
	North	6	27	42	26
	Gulf West Side	3	41	27	30
	Gulf East Side	7	64	7	21

* Statistically significant factor, ** Highly significant factor, *** Very highly significant factor

Significant Factors: Timing Approach

		No response	Complete the work as soon as possible	Spread out the work over more years	Don't know/no opinion
		%	%	%	%
Total		3	69	10	18
Current Lines ***	Overhead Street Side	0	77	8	15
	Overhead back side	3	60	11	26
	Underground	3	63	16	17
Home Type	Single Family	2	68	11	19
	Condominium	0	75	7	18
Sub-Area	South	3	64	15	19
	Mid	0	85	6	9
	North	5	65	12	19
	Gulf West Side	3	70	7	21
	Gulf East Side	7	79	7	7

* Statistically significant factor, ** Highly significant factor, *** Very highly significant factor