



Planning and Development Services

Overhead to Underground Power Program – Guideline

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Overhead to Underground Power Program (the “Program”) is to enable housing by providing a financial incentive in support of the relocation of overhead powerlines in strategic growth areas where such infrastructure constrains redevelopment potential. The Program is funded through the Housing Accelerator Fund and supports Action 1.C.13 of *Home is Here: The City of Calgary Housing Strategy*, which commits to infrastructure upgrades that enable new housing.

The overall goals of the Program are to enable new housing, improve cost efficiency and site design and advance pedestrian-oriented urban design by:

- Removing redevelopment barriers in established area growth nodes and corridors, where approved Local Area Plans support higher-density intensification.
- Coordinating power lines burial projects.
- Transitioning away from overhead utilities.
- Generating evidence to inform future iterations of the Program through evaluation of cost, coordination, and development outcomes.

2. Application Criteria and Evaluation

To be considered for funding under the Program, applications must first meet eligibility requirements. Once deemed eligible, applications will be assessed using a scored evaluation framework to determine their relative strength and alignment with Program goals.

2.1 Eligibility Criteria (Pass/Fail)

The Program is open to projects that meet all of the following criteria:

1. **Location:** The project must be within the Developed Area, as defined in the Municipal Development Plan, and situated within an approved Local Area Plan policy that permits built forms of four (4) storeys or more.
2. **Land Use:** The project must propose new multi-residential uses (as listed in Part 6 and Part 14 of the Land use Bylaw 1P2007), excluding hotels, and a built form of four (4) or more storeys.
3. **Constraint by Overhead Power Lines:** The project must address situations where existing overhead powerlines, and/or the setback area surrounding them, materially constrain redevelopment potential by either:

- a. reducing the buildable envelope and residential unit count of a structure below what would otherwise be allowed under Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 or any relevant statutory policy; or
 - b. rendering cost prohibitive the scale or form of development that would otherwise be achievable under the Land Use Bylaw and relevant statutory policies.
4. **Project Timing:** Overhead-to-underground power conversion work must not have proceeded to construction prior to application.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria (Scored: 0-2 Points Each)

Eligible applications will be evaluated by The City based on the following criteria. Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 2 points. A maximum of 12 points is possible for each project. Applications must score at least 8 points to be considered for funding. Each criterion is weighted equally to ensure fair and transparent evaluation.

Criterion	Scoring Description
Comprehensive Utility Burial	<p>0: Burial benefits only one block or a single development.</p> <p>1: Burial benefits an additional block and/or future anticipated development.</p> <p>2: Burial benefits two or more additional blocks and/or future anticipated developments.</p>
Leverages Prior City Investment	<p>0: No City investments within 100 metres of the development in past 10 years.</p> <p>1: At least one City service investment (e.g., utilities, public realm, transit, mobility) within 100 metres of the development in the past 10 years.</p> <p>2: Two or more City service investments (e.g., utilities, public realm, transit, mobility) within 100 metres of the development in the past 10 years.</p>
Amenity-Rich Context	<p>0: Not within a 10-minute walk of a grocery store, multi-functional park, school, main street/commercial centre, community service, or major transit stop.</p> <p>1: Within walking distance of at least two of the above</p>

Criterion	Scoring Description
	amenities. 2: Within walking distance of four or more amenities.
Feasibility of Implementation	0: Major disruptions expected due to infrastructure conflicts, contamination, or other constraints that jeopardize completion within 12 months. 1: Some risks present, but evidence confirms construction can be completed within 12 months. 2: No significant risks; construction is feasible within the 12-month timeline.
Local Market Redevelopment Potential	0: No recent permit activity or visible redevelopment momentum; lacks vacant or underutilized land in proximity to the burial project. 1: Preliminary signs of growth (e.g., pre-applications, land use changes, development permits). 2: Recent building permit activity indicating active redevelopment.
Social Benefit	0: No subsidized or non-market housing component. 1: Includes below-market units. 2: Led by a non-profit organization delivering non-market housing

3. Incentive

3.1 Program Cost Coverage

The Program provides reimbursement for eligible costs directly associated with the underground relocation of distribution-level infrastructure. Eligible costs include: (i) civil and electrical construction within the public right-of-way and impacted private properties, (ii) distribution infrastructure installation (conduits, cabling, transformers, and related appurtenances), (iii) pole removal and associated restoration, (iv) customer conversion costs, including the relocation of overhead service connections to underground, electrical panel upgrades where required, and private property restoration, and (v) permitting, design, and coordination activities tied to burial.



Other directly related costs may be considered at the discretion of The City's Internal Review Team. Costs related to electrical service provision to new development, infrastructure conflicts, power network upgrades or extensions, regional transmission infrastructure, and telecommunications relocation are ineligible under this Program.

The maximum reimbursement available under the Program is \$4 million per application, and payment will be issued as a lump sum pursuant to the terms of the fully executed Funding Agreement. Reimbursement will not cover cost overruns unless such costs have been expressly negotiated and approved through an amendment to the Funding Agreement.

3.2 Decision Making and Approval

The **Internal Review Team (IRT)** will be the main point of contact and will guide Applicants and applications through the application review process. The IRT will provide the comprehensive reviews and make recommendations to City Administration's City Planning and Policy Growth Committee (CPPGC) for decisions on applications.

City Planning and Policy Growth Committee (CPPGC): is an existing City Administration internal decision-making body on policies and initiatives that guide urban growth and development. CPPGC provides final approval on whether an application may proceed to negotiation of a Funding Agreement, based on IRT's recommendation.

The Director: is the Director, City and Regional Planning. The execution of Funding Agreements shall be at the sole and exclusive discretion of the Director. If an Applicant challenges CPPGC's decision, the Director has the option, but not the requirement, to act as a broker between the Applicant and The CPPGC to facilitate further discussion or resolution.

3.3 Funding Amount

The amount of funding that may be provided to Applicants will be determined using a return-on-investment (ROI) driven model. Each project will be benchmarked against the anticipated timeframe for The City to realize housing benefits from the investment. Where applicable, anticipated redevelopment in areas that benefit from the proposed burial work may also be considered as part of the ROI assessment. Projects that provide wider benefiting areas or incorporate non-market housing may be provided a City contribution on the higher side of the range. Applicants are encouraged to highlight these opportunities in the application form, and The City will work collaboratively with them to identify where such factors may exist, though inclusion and weighting of these considerations will remain at the sole discretion of the Internal Review Team.



As a general guidance, City contributions will range between 20% and 80% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum of \$4M per project. Applicants are responsible for a minimum of 20% of eligible costs.

Applicants can estimate their potential cost-share by applying the following illustrative ROI calculation, which does not reflect qualitative aspects of the ROI:

$$\text{Recovery Period (years)} = \frac{\text{Total Eligible Project Cost}}{(\text{Estimated Units} \times \$1,161^1)}$$

The ROI calculation does not imply that the revenue amount represents new revenue accruing to The City of Calgary, rather it is performance measure intended to contextualize the impact and to aid in evaluation.

The target recovery period for city investment made through this Program is 4 years. This duration was selected to ensure the Program can make a substantial financial contribution to individual projects while also maintaining the capacity to support multiple projects in the funding period. A 4-year recovery period helps balance impact and sustainability, allowing the Program to continue enabling redevelopment across a range of sites.

Applicants will be notified early in the application review process of the anticipated type of cost-sharing arrangement for their project, though the final contribution amount and structure will be confirmed through the Funding Agreement. The detailed methodology used to assess ROI will be determined, applied and may be refined over time, at the sole discretion of The City.

4. Application Process, Review, and Approval

This Program is designed to support projects in the early planning stages—ideally before burial work is scoped—so that the Program can meaningfully influence the scope of the burial work, enable higher-density housing, and encourage coordination that creates a wider benefitting area and higher ROI. While later-stage projects may still be considered, early engagement allows for greater flexibility, impact, and alignment with Program goals. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the Program team at overhead2underground@calgary.ca prior to submitting a formal application if they would like to discuss the potential fit or merits of their proposal.

4.1 Application Intake

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis beginning October 1, 2025 until available funding is fully allocated.

Applicants must first complete the online application form, which initiates the intake process. Following submission, the Program team will contact Applicants to request supporting

¹ \$300,000 = average assessed value per condo unit (2025)

\$1,161 = estimated annual property tax per unit (based on 2025 mill rate: 0.0038706)



documentation – such as site plans, elevation plans, and other relevant materials – which will be uploaded to a secure OneDrive folder provided by The City. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received. The City will make reasonable efforts to provide Applicants with timely feedback on eligibility, merit and anticipated funding contributions.

For questions or to confirm details prior to submission, Applicants may contact the Program team at overhead2underground@calgary.ca.

The City will endeavour to notify Applicants they are proceeding to Step 4 of the Review process within 4 weeks of receiving a complete application. Submission to the Program does not guarantee funding. Projects must be ready, feasible, and demonstrate strong performance against merit criteria to be considered for a funding commitment. The City may also decline or defer applications where preliminary review identifies significant feasibility challenges—such as utility conflicts, potential cost escalations, and/or timelines that cannot reasonably align with Program spending.

4.2 Application Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit a complete application that includes:

- **Applicant Information:** Name, company (if applicable), ownership status, and authorization if representing the property owner.
- **Overview of the Proposed Development:** Project location, a site and/or elevation plan, project description, anticipated residential units and storeys, phasing, timelines, and any relevant City permits or funding applications.
- **Optional Evaluation Questions:** Applicants may provide additional context to support program evaluation, such as surrounding development potential, alignment with City investments, nearby amenities, site constraints, and whether the housing provider is a non-profit organization.

4.3 Review Process

The review process helps break approvals into clear stages and provides greater transparency to Applicants as to the status of their application in the process. It also provides decision-makers defined points in the process to either advance an application to the next stage or conclude it will not proceed further.

Additionally, the staged approach is intended to ensure that Applicants are not required to undertake costly scoping, design, or other preparatory work unless their project demonstrates sufficient alignment with program objectives and is considered a strong candidate for funding.

4.3.1 Step 1: Application Intake

Upon receipt of an application, the Internal Review Team will review applications for completeness. This step will confirm whether an application satisfies the Program eligibility criteria (as detailed in Section 2.1) that allows it to proceed to the next step.

If the application does not meet all of the Program eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2.1, the application will not be accepted.

4.3.2 Step 2: Application Evaluation

Upon confirmation that the application satisfies the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2.1, the Internal Review Team (IRT) will proceed to a full evaluation. A recommendation will be presented to the Applicant within approximately four (4) weeks of receiving a complete submission.

As part of the review, the IRT will:

- Assess alignment with Program objectives.
- Evaluate technical feasibility, including potential coordination challenges and risks such as utility conflicts, cost escalation, or timelines that may not align with Program spending deadlines.
- Evaluate the application against the criteria outlined in Section 2.2, including redevelopment potential, proximity to amenities, ability to leverage prior City investments, and the extent of burial coverage.

4.3.3 Step 3: Application Recommendation

Following its assessment, the Internal Review Team (IRT) shall submit a formal recommendation—either to approve or not support the application proceeding to the next step in the review process—to the City Planning and Policy Growth Committee (CPPGC) for consideration. If approved to proceed to Step 4, CPPGC may, at their sole and exclusive discretion, attach conditions to an approval. Conditions may include but are not limited to: the Applicant entering into a Funding Agreement within a specified timeline.

Application decisions, including approvals, made pursuant to the Program do not: (1) constitute the granting by the municipality of The City of any approval or permit as may be required pursuant to the Municipal Government Act (Alberta) or any other legislation, including Municipal Guidelines, Bylaw or Policies in force in the Province of Alberta, including approvals of subdivision and permit applications and any land use redesignation applications, Line Assignment, Excavation or Street Use Permits or (2) restrict the municipality of The City, its Council, officers, employees or agents in the full exercise of any and all powers and duties vested in them in their respective capacities as an approving authority over subdivision and permit applications and land use redesignations applications, or as a governmental authority.



After this decision, the Applicant shall engage with ENMAX Corporation and/or other qualified contractors to conduct detailed scoping of the proposed underground burial work. This engagement must result in a formal cost estimate and scope of work, including red-line drawings, to be procured within six months of the CPPGC's decision. The resulting documentation shall be submitted to The City for review and to facilitate the preparation and execution of a Funding Agreement, as outlined in the subsequent step.

4.3.4 Step 4: Funding Agreement

The Internal Review Team will provide the Applicant with the standard form of the Funding Agreement. Engagement of the parties (CPPGC, Applicant, Applicant's legal counsel, City Law) continues until either the terms of the Funding Agreement are agreed upon or they are not agreed to, and the deal terminates.

If the parties agree to the terms of the Funding Agreement, the parties execute the Funding Agreement.

Required Materials to Execute Funding Agreement

Prior to execution of the Funding Agreement, the Applicant shall provide the following materials to The City:

1. Cost Estimates
 - A formal quote issued by ENMAX and/or other qualified contractor that clearly itemizes and distinguishes burial-related costs from other associated expenses, including but not limited to site servicing and power extensions.
2. Project Drawings
 - A red-line drawing prepared by ENMAX and/or other qualified contractor that corresponds to the cost estimate and delineates the scope and extent of the burial work.
3. Proof of Development Permit Submission
 - Documentation evidencing submission of a complete development permit application, such as an official file number issued by The City.
4. Additional Materials for Construction Constraints

In cases where overhead power lines materially constrain construction logistics, the Applicant shall also submit:

- A site plan clearly identifying proposed construction zones;

- A letter from ENMAX confirming the existence and nature of conflicts between construction zones and overhead power infrastructure;
- A letter from the construction contractor detailing the specific logistical challenges posed by the overhead power lines.

Funding Agreement Execution and Conditions and Conditions of Funding Withdrawal

The finalized Funding Agreement shall be subject to review and approval by the Director prior to issuance. All Funding Agreements are non-transferable. In the event of a change in property ownership, the Applicant shall notify The City immediately. A new Funding Agreement may be required at The City's sole discretion.

To maintain an active funding commitment under this Program, the following conditions shall apply:

1. Development Permit : A Development Permit must be approved within six (6) months of the Funding Agreement being executed.
2. Building Permit : A complete Building Permit submission must be received, and ENMAX must provide a letter of construction completion and the actual costs of the completed construction project, within twelve (12) months of the Funding Agreement being executed. Where private contractors are engaged in delivering project components, cost estimates and final invoicing from those contractors must also be submitted within the same timeframe.
3. Program Timelines:
 - All Development Permit submissions must be received by August 1, 2026.
 - By August 31 2027, complete Building Permit submissions must be received, and ENMAX powerline burial construction must be completed, to satisfy the disbursement requirements of the Housing Accelerator Fund.

Failure to meet these conditions will result in the funding commitment being subject to re-evaluation, with the possibility of withdrawal and reallocation to other eligible projects. Time extensions may be considered by The City where the Applicant demonstrates continued and reasonable progress toward project delivery. Where a Development Permit is under appeal, milestone assessment timelines may be paused until the appeal is resolved. All such decisions remain at the sole discretion of The City.

Cost Revisions and Additional Funding

Maximum funding amounts shall be based on the ENMAX cost estimate available at the time of execution. If actual project costs are lower than the estimate, reimbursement will be based on verified actual costs.

4.3.5 Step 5: Contract Management



The Applicant is required to meet the terms of the Funding Agreement. Failure to meet the terms of the Funding Agreement could result in an event of default and potential termination of the agreement.

4.3.6 Step 6: Payment of Funds

The reimbursement will be payable once the Applicant has submitted and The City has verified: (i) a letter from ENMAX confirming completion of the overhead-to-underground power conversion project; (ii) invoices from ENMAX and, where applicable, qualified contractors demonstrating actual costs, with sufficient detail to allow The City to determine which costs are eligible under the program; and (iii) evidence of a complete building permit submission.

Reimbursement will be based on verified actual costs, and if such costs are lower than the initial estimate, reimbursement will be adjusted accordingly. Once all three documents are received and verified by The City, reimbursement will be processed.

Development permit submissions must be approved by August 1, 2026, and complete building permit submissions along with ENMAX powerline burial construction must be completed by August 2027 to meet the terms of the Housing Accelerator Fund.

5. Confidentiality

For the purposes of this section, "Confidential Information" means information considered proprietary to an Applicant and disclosed to The City pursuant to the Program, and includes all material, data and information (regardless of form and whether or not the same is protected by copyright, patent, or other applicable law) which is not available to the public. "Confidential Information" does not include any information that: (i) is now in or subsequently enters the public domain through means other than by the direct or indirect disclosure by The City; (ii) is already in the possession of The City; (iii) is lawfully communicated to The City, free of any confidentiality obligation; (iv) The City has received the Applicant's prior written approval to disclose; or (v) The City is required to disclose pursuant to the Municipal Government Act (Alberta), the Protection of Privacy Act ("POPA"), or any subsequent legislation of similar effect, or The City is required to disclose pursuant to any law or order of a court having jurisdiction over the matter.

Applications may include the Confidential Information of the Applicants. The City shall make all reasonable efforts to maintain in confidence the Confidential Information. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, The City will make reasonable efforts to keep, file and store all Confidential Information, together with any notes or other material incorporating or relating to the Confidential information, in a manner consistent with the POPA, as well as in a manner consistent with its confidential nature and to take all reasonable action, whether by instruction,



agreement or otherwise, to ensure that its employees do not disclose or use the Confidential Information directly or indirectly, for any purpose other than the purposes for which it was provided.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, The City may be required to disclose Confidential Information pursuant to its public disclosure obligations as contained in the Access to Information Act ("ATIA"). Should such disclosure be required, The City shall use its reasonable efforts to limit that disclosure and, in any event, shall make that disclosure only to the extent so required. The City shall communicate its disclosure obligations to all Applicants and advise them that any disclosure of Confidential Information pursuant to The City's obligations under the ATIA shall not breach any obligation of confidentiality that may exist between The City and Applicant.

Version History

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