



CHAPTER VII: ISSUES TO ADDRESS
COMMUNITIES BECOMING TOURIST ATTRACTIONS
Benefits of Relocating Utilities*

More than three million miles of electrical cables are strung across the country and at least 180 million telephone and cable television lines coexist with above ground power lines. As a result, the aesthetics of our communities and landscapes are often overwhelmed by unsightly utility wires and accessories.

Because of the benefits of undergrounding utilities, 9 out of 10 new subdivisions bury utility lines. In addition, dozens of cities have adopted comprehensive plans to bury or otherwise relocate utility lines, including San Antonio, TX; Colorado Springs, CO; New Castle, DE; Saratoga Springs, NY; Williamsburg, VA; Tacoma, WA; and Frederick, MD.



Together, communities and utility companies can reduce the visual impact of utility lines and poles; saving scenic beauty, improving safety, reducing utility disruptions, and increasing property values.

Benefits of Relocating Utilities

Utility wire undergrounding and relocation projects are expensive. Communities need to convince their local officials and utility companies of the benefits of wire relocation or burial.

Aesthetics

The appearance of an area can be greatly improved by reducing the visual clutter of utility wires. Undergrounding utility wires allows communities to highlight their unique beauty without a maze of poles and wires in the way. Without overhead utilities, communities can more readily undertake improvement projects such as sidewalk widening and tree planting without having to snake around poles or trim vegetation to make way for power lines.



Utility lines above ground take away from the architecture of historic downtowns



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Reduced Maintenance

Falling tree limbs, high winds, and heavy snows are just a few of the things that frequently cause utility disruptions by destroying overhead lines. Burying lines eliminates weather-related power outages and provides more reliable service to subscribers.

Safety and Community Health

Burying lines eliminates fire hazards, accidents, and safety risks from power outages due to downed lines. Relocation also reduces possible health risks from electromagnetic radiation and improves road safety by removing or reducing the chance of motorists striking poles.

Economic Development

Many revitalization experts agree that investing in improving the appearance of traditional commercial areas is one of the best ways to attract new business and stimulate economic development. Beauty benefits business, and minimizing the visual impact of utilities can be a major strategy to beautify and revitalize an area.



Utility wires along the proposed route of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail take away from view shed.



Add billboards and a proliferation of smaller signs with the wires and you have a mess!

** This article is from the website http://www.scenic.org/utility_wires by Scenic America. Additional articles on this subject are available at the same site.*

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