

**Federation Resolution**

**on**

**Supporting the Undergrounding of Utilities & Communication Lines  
Throughout Fairfax County**

Approved by the Federation Membership  
October 24, 2019

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisor's (BOS) adopted a Policy Plan Objective 41 which encourages County citizens to "Construct underground transmission and distribution lines, whenever possible, along existing or planned utility or road rights-of-way, preferably on lot lines which will least disturb future development of the site"; and that "Visual impact should be a key element in the evaluation of proposed transmission line locations."; and,

**WHEREAS**, the BOS's Board Matter (dated March 5, 2019) directed the County Executive to invite the utility companies (Dominion, Cox, Comcast, Verizon, etc.) to attend a future Revitalization Board Committee Meeting to address undergrounding; and,

**WHEREAS**, the utility companies joined the BOS's Revitalization Committee on June 18, 2019 and stated that they were willing to work with the County on this matter for the Route 1 corridor; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Legislature passed and the Governor signed a bill on March 22, 2019, establishing a pilot program, running until June 30, 2022, for the undergrounding of utilities that allows local governments to request undergrounding of utilities in areas of transit oriented development, and for which the County, in a letter to the Governor, stated the costs to underground utilities cabling should be shared by the entity, the County and the utility; and,

**WHEREAS**, 75% of the Fairfax County Citizens that responded to the 2019 Fairfax Federation Legislative survey were in favor of undergrounding of utilities in conjunction with road widening and improvements and were willing to financially support such undergrounding; and,

**WHEREAS**, Washington, DC, is pursuing a 7 year project of undergrounding its utilities; and,

**WHEREAS**, Maryland has completed a thorough analysis of undergrounding its utilities; and,

**WHEREAS**, James City County and Prince William County have undergrounded utilities using a variety of funding measures; and,

**WHEREAS**, the value added to hardening the grid by undergrounding of utilities and communication lines is multifold; that is, undergrounding

- a. Improves safety and reduces maintenance risks;
- b. Reduces vehicular utility poles accidents and the consequent related injuries, fatalities, and outages;
- c. Reduces outages from storms, from which damages are costly for business and citizens;
- d. Removes overhead power and communications lines and their supporting structures and fencing, thus reducing deaths of birds and other wildlife;
- e. Improves environmental and property aesthetics for communities and businesses.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations supports the undergrounding of utilities and communication lines throughout the County during the widening of or improvement to roadways and transportation projects; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations urges the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and staff to make undergrounding an infrastructure improvement priority throughout Fairfax County.