

Summary – Temporary Pole Top Distributing Station (TPTDS) Matter

Introduction:

LADWP seeks to install a TPTDS in the public right of way (PROW) on Sunset Blvd. at Marquez Pl. TPTDS consist of elevated electrical equipment mounted on platforms on top of utility poles, intended as stop gaps to relieve overloaded power lines. LADWP has advised the PPCC Infrastructure Committee (IC) that the installation is temporary and will be removed (along with other TPTDS in Pacific Palisades, including the one on Temescal Canyon Rd. next to Palisades High School property) after undergrounding of utilities and planned improvements to Palisades Distributing Station 29 (at Sunset Blvd. & Via de la Paz) by LADWP are completed.¹ LADWP has also informed the IC that **undergrounding of utilities in the Palisades cannot begin unless all required TPTDS are installed**, to ensure that the community's power needs are met while work on undergrounding and improvements to DS 29 are ongoing.

Background:

In 2012, LADWP proposed to construct a new Distributing Station (DS 104) on property it owned adjacent to Marquez Elementary School (the current site of the PIPSC). The property had been posted for decades as the potential site for a new distributing station. The installation was strongly opposed by nearby residents and the school community, and efforts (via a task force of residents, formed by LADWP) to find a suitable alternative site for the DS were unsuccessful. Lawsuits were threatened, and LADWP paused its plans.

In 2016, LADWP informed the community that it would then need to install two TPTDS to ensure that the community's power needs were met – one at Sunset & El Medio (later moved to the location on Temescal Canyon Rd.) and one on the LADWP site next to Marquez Elementary. Reporting at the time indicated that 120+ residents – presumably wanting to ensure that a TPTDS would not be installed near the school -- submitted messages to the then-CD 11 Councilman, supporting installation of a TPTDS alternatively in the PROW along Sunset Blvd. at Marquez Pl. (the current proposed site). LADWP proceeded with that site (in the Coastal Zone), and over objections by the then-adjacent property owners, a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) was eventually issued and the initial TPTDS was installed at that location in 2017. To our knowledge there have been no public objections to that TPTDS in the nine years since its installation.

Current Status:

A lawsuit has been filed against the City and LADWP by an entity named "WSBO LLC,"² seeking to stop the current proposed installation at Sunset & Marquez Pl. A temporary restraining order (TRO) was issued, preventing further work on the TPTDS until a subsequent hearing on a temporary injunction takes place (the legal argument appears to center on whether the emergency orders issued post-fire excuse LADWP from the requirement to obtain a CDP).

¹ It is unclear if the proposed Sunset/Marquez Pl. TPTDS is an addition to or a replacement of the initial TPTDS installed at this location in 2017 and existing for the past nine years.

² The relationship between WSBO LLC and/or its principals, if any, to the owners of the property adjacent to the proposed TPTDS is unknown; questions to a PR firm ("ACTUM") representing unknown opponents of the TPTDS have gone unanswered. After initially agreeing to attend an IC meeting to present information and answer questions about the TPTDS opposition, ACTUM representatives cancelled due to illness; ATUM has also not responded to questions submitted by the At-large representative, inquiring about the TPTDS opposition.

After the TRO was issued, ACTUM began a PR campaign, including sending emails to residents, community leaders and organizations, and maintaining a table at the Farmers Market, urging signatures on a petition opposing the new TPTDS. The petition did not identify who was behind the opposition, nor did an opposition website that was supposedly backed by unknown “residents/stakeholders.” It omitted relevant historical facts about the existing TPTDS and the prior controversy over DS 104, and it misleadingly stated that the new installation would be located on Sunset Blvd. **at Marquez Dr.** – an entirely different location from Marquez Pl., *i.e.*, at an intersection farther to the east, adjacent to the site of former Marquez businesses and a severely damaged condo building (specific concerns about the location as stated in the petition were raised in meetings attended by the At-large rep). It is unknown how many individuals or organizations signed on to the petition based on misunderstandings as to where the structure would be located, or whether the petition has now been submitted to CD 11 and/or LADWP, or has been filed with the Court in the lawsuit.

The preliminary injunction hearing scheduled for September 2 was recently postponed until November 5 (according to available court records). We understand that the parties may be engaged in discussions about possible alternative locations for the TPTDS, which may include the PIPSC site (LADWP property) next to the school -- where a CDP would not be required, as that property is not in the Coastal Zone. Presumably, relocating the TPTDS to that location would engender even greater controversy and opposition from nearby residents and the school community, as previously occurred.

In this case, as noted, we have no information as to whether the opponent is a resident or owns the nearby property, and our questions have gone unanswered; moreover, because this is in litigation, City and LADWP officials are constrained by the City Attorney from speaking about the lawsuit.

PPCC strongly supports undergrounding of utilities. We are concerned with the delay as a result of the current lawsuit, and are **disturbed to learn that LADWP maintains that undergrounding cannot occur if the TPTDS cannot be installed.**

We will update the community as more facts become known about this matter.

Reza Akef, PPCC VP and Chair, Infrastructure Committee; Chris Spitz, PPCC At-large Representative – 9/7/26