



BY JESSICA OGILVIE |  SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

In the wake of the Eaton and Palisades Fires, Southern California Edison announced that it will rebuild over 150 miles of power lines underground. Many of those lines are in Altadena and Malibu.

In Beverly Hills, a similar effort was recently undertaken on a smaller scale. A property owner on the 700 block of Hillcrest Road, who prefers to remain anonymous, installed underground power lines for a new home.

A byproduct of the project, said Jason Somers, the president of Crest Real Estate who coordinated the work, is that the design and engineering teams created a rough roadmap for burying power lines in other locations in Beverly Hills.

"There is a path now, and we know what that path is," Somers told the Courier.

The development of a plan to underground the power lines on Hillcrest Road began approximately five years ago. Working alongside Southern California Electrical Firm, Mabante Development, Inc. and Southern California Edison, Crest Real Estate oversaw the creation of the technical design and installation plans. From there, legal teams created easements.

Since private companies cannot work on power lines owned by Edison, the physical process of moving the lines underground involved multiple companies, said David Kanowsky, the owner of Southern California Electrical Firm.

Kanowsky noted that the power lines are joint pulls, meaning that all utilities are joint owners of the poles.

"[Southern California Electrical Firm] installs all the conduits, all the structure that's required by the utilities," he said. "Once everything's signed off and ready for Edison and the other companies to come out and install their cable, they install the cable underground and start removing all the wires and poles."

Work on the undergrounding project was paid for by the property owner on Hillcrest Road.

"The client spent an awful lot of money building a brand new home, and thought this was an important part of their investment," Somers said.

Other homes in Beverly Hills have undertaken similar projects; however Frank Mabante, the president of Mabante Development, Inc., said it was nevertheless a daunting process.

"It was a huge learning curve going through it," he said. "It heavily involved Southern California Edison and their design committee, multiple contractors ... it was incredibly involved from start to finish."

Mabante added that it's important for local homeowners who may be interested in undergrounding their own power lines to understand that each project will likely be different, and that the process will take anywhere between nine and 16 months at a minimum.

"Every home is unique," he said. "These are not tract home properties, where every single point of service is landing at exactly the same location on every single home. These are custom residences in Beverly Hills that all have unique conditions."

With that said, Somers envisions a future in which multiple homeowners on a given block in the city would join forces to bury the power lines on their street.

"They're quite the blight in such incredible neighborhoods," Somers said. "Backyards have these big power poles, and people have been complaining about them for years ... I think that if people realized this was an opportunity for them, they would communicate and collaborate with their neighbors [to place them underground]."

Mabante noted that the team that worked on the Hillcrest Road home now has the experience and information to work on similar projects.

"What would be interesting to do ... is take plot plans and surveys and understand the [power line] footage on a block-by-block basis, and actually put budgets together so people could understand the costs," he said.

Construction on Hillcrest Road is expected to be complete within the next month.

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