




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Howard S. Lazarus, P.E., PWLF, Director, Public Works Department 

DATE: May 14, 2015

SUBJECT: 5th Street Chilled Water Line Project

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This memorandum provides a status update on the 5th Street Chilled Water Line project. The project is currently under construction and includes two 30 inch Austin Energy chilled water lines inside an 8 foot diameter tunnel. The tunnel is approximately 40 feet deep and runs under 5th Street with access shafts near Trinity Street and Red River Street. The shaft areas are secured with safety fencing and traffic has been routed around the sites.

The underground boring method was selected for this project in order to minimize disruption to 5th Street. The boring method required three access shafts, one of approximately 14 feet by 24 feet near the intersection of 5th Street and Trinity Street, and two of approximately 15 feet in diameter and 12 feet by 10 feet along Red River near the intersection of 5th Street. These access shafts cannot feasibly be filled until the project is completed.

The project was originally scheduled to be complete by the end of February 2015. However, the project team identified deficiencies with the welded connections of the segments of 30-inch chilled water lines. The deficiencies are caused by faulty construction and were approved in error by a private inspection firm hired by the city to inspect the welds. The City issued notices to cure to both the contractor (SJ Louis) and the inspection firm (PSI), and met with all involved parties on Friday, May 8th.

At the meeting, SJ Louis and PSI agreed to bear the cost to remove and replace the defective work. This approach is technically superior to in-situ repair options that were being considered as it meets the full design intent of the project. However, we anticipate that the corrective work will take an additional 6-8 months to complete. We are sensitive to the inconveniences this delay will cause and are committed to acting in the best interest of Austin Energy ratepayers and our citizens. The Public Works Department will provide updates to all interested stakeholders as the work progresses.

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