



Council questions and staff responses for items on April 24, 2025 City Council Meeting

Item 7.8: Rejection and Cancellation of ITB 25-051 for Construction of a Firewall at Southwood Valley Substation

Sponsors: Timothy Crabb

Question: Where is the Southwood Valley substation? Also, what is a “firewall” in an outdoor substation? Is this common or necessary? Or a matter of reducing future risk?

Response: Southwood Valley Substation is just north of the intersection of FM 2818 and Rio Grande.

The substation is a two-transformer configuration with eight feeders coming out of the sub. In order to meet insurance and fire requirements, it is now required to either have 50’ between the transformers, or to have a “firewall” in between them. A firewall is a fire-resistant wall that hopefully prevents a transformer fire from taking out the adjacent transformer. It is built for fire protection, but it also needs to be sturdy enough to not fall over into the transformer due to high winds.

When this substation was constructed (it was COCS’s third substation) the design did not meet the current requirements as there was less than 20 feet left between the transformers. In order to remedy this situation we went out for a bid to install a firewall between the transformers. We only received one bid for the firewall and it was around \$750k not including the material for the wall. We are rejecting this bid and looking into alternatives at this time.