

Press Release
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PRESS RELEASE

Gulf Breeze Highway 98 Utility Undergrounding Project Reaches Major Milestone

GULF BREEZE, Fla. — August 26, 2026 — A long-term vision to improve the appearance and storm resiliency of Gulf Breeze Parkway reached a major milestone today with the removal of the final three utility poles along the Highway 98 undergrounding project.

Mayor JB Schluter and City Manager Samantha Abell were on hand as the final poles came down, marking the culmination of nearly three years of construction and almost a decade of planning and investment by the City of Gulf Breeze and its Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

“Undergrounding our utilities is fundamentally an investment in the resiliency of Gulf Breeze,” said Mayor JB Schluter. “We live in a coastal community where preparing for the next storm is always a priority. This project also demonstrates what can be accomplished when a City Council remains united around a long-term vision. Councils over many years have consistently supported this effort, and today we are seeing the results of that commitment.”



Nearly a Decade in the Making

The City began formally advancing the Highway 98 undergrounding initiative in 2017 with a feasibility study. The utility relocation study was completed in 2019, establishing the technical foundation for the project.

In 2021, the CRA approved financing for major capital improvements, including the Highway 98 undergrounding project, and selected Utility Consultants of Florida, LLC to manage the conversion. Following design, permitting, and coordination with utility providers and the Florida Department of Transportation, construction began in April 2023.

The approximately \$7.5 million investment included underground conduit and highway crossings, electrical and communications infrastructure, utility conversion, decorative lighting, restoration, and removal of overhead facilities. In total, the project removed 70 utility poles and 10,210 feet, nearly two miles, of overhead wire and installed 80 new decorative streetlights along the corridor.

The funds originated from the Community Redevelopment Agency, a tax increment financing district between the City of Gulf Breeze and Santa Rosa County. The project reduces infrastructure exposed to severe weather, eliminates visual clutter along the City's primary commercial corridor, and creates a more attractive environment for businesses, residents, and future private investment.

Neighborhood Collectors Mark Next Phase

The Highway 98 milestone is not the end of Gulf Breeze's undergrounding initiative. Later this year, work is expected to begin on undergrounding more than 4 miles of utilities along Fairpoint Drive, Shoreline Drive, South Sunset Boulevard and Daniel Drive.

The Neighborhood Collector Underground Utility Project will extend the City's investment in storm resiliency and community appearance from the Highway 98 commercial corridor into major residential corridors.

Together, the Highway 98 and Neighborhood Collector projects represent a sustained, multi-year investment in a more resilient and attractive Gulf Breeze.

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