



Legislation Text

File #: 15-0003, **Version:** 1

Community Development Agency, Transportation Division, recommending the Board consider the following:

- 1) Receive a presentation on Maintenance and Operations Snow Removal Equipment Status and Funding in the County Service Area 3 Snow Removal Zones of Benefit in the Tahoe Basin;
- 2) Conceptually approve the exploration of the feasibility of ballot measures in the 2016 general election for the South Shore and West Shore Snow Removal Zones of Benefits in the Tahoe Basin; and
- 3) Direct staff to return with more detailed information and funding options for County Service Area 3 Snow Removal Zones of Benefit in the Tahoe Basin. (Est. Time: 45 Min.)

Funding: N/A

Fiscal Impact/Change to Net County Cost

There is no Fiscal Impact or change to the Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. Staff costs associated with exploring the feasibility of ballot measures to increase the benefit assessment in the South Shore and West Shore Snow Removal Zones of Benefit will be accommodated within the existing fiscal year budget. With no action, the revenue generated by the snow removal zones will not be sufficient to fully fund ongoing equipment costs on the recommended replacement cycles. To maintain existing service levels into the future with the current zone benefit assessments, supplemental funding would need to be provided by the County's Road Fund, General Fund, or other funding source.

Background

Community Development Agency, Transportation Division (Transportation) would like to inform the Board of the condition of snow removal equipment and the status of funding in the County Service Area 3 (CSA 3) Snow Removal Zones of Benefit in the Tahoe Basin.

CSA 3 was established in 1963 to provide vector control service in the Tahoe Basin. The snow removal zones were added in 1983. The snow removal service area was split into two zones in 1993 to accommodate the West Shore residents' desire for newer equipment. Snow removal services in each zone are funded by a benefit assessment on each improved property. Equipment purchased with zone funds can be used only in the zone that provided the funding and only for winter operations.

Motor graders and rotary snow plows are used for snow removal operations in each zone. All equipment within the fleet should adhere to a replacement cycle to ensure reliable snow removal service. Motor graders are used for the initial response to a snow event. They have a replacement life of seven to ten years and cost over \$400,000 each to replace. In some situations an older grader is kept after a new grader is purchased. These older graders are used as backups in case one of the newer graders break down.

Rotary snow plows or "blowers" widen streets by pushing back snow and in extreme conditions are

used for "front line" snow removal. Rotary snow plows have an expected replacement life of around 25 years and currently cost approximately \$750,000 to replace. There are no backup rotary snow plows.

West Shore Zone

The West Shore Zone (98504) encompasses the area from the Cascade/Emerald Bay to the Placer County line including Rubicon Springs and Tahoma residential areas. The benefit assessment for West Shore residents is \$50 per improved parcel, generating a total of approximately \$88,000 per year. Currently, the two front line graders at West Shore are brand new. The backup grader is 25 years old. The two rotary snow plows are 11 and 20 years old and are within their replacement life cycle.

Given the current benefit assessment, the zone will collect approximately \$2 million dollars over the next 25 years (after repaying the \$280,000 borrowed from the General Fund to purchase new graders). Assuming the need for equipment will not increase and that there is a 3% inflation factor on equipment costs, the anticipated cost to replace the West Shore Zone's equipment over the next 25 years is approximately \$5.5 million dollars. This is more than double what the zone will collect during the same time period.

South Shore Zone

The South Shore Zone (98501) encompasses the area from Echo Summit to the City of South Lake Tahoe limits and to the Fallen Leaf Lake area. Currently, the eight front line graders at South Shore are all ten years old and in need of replacement. The backup grader is 23 years old. The six rotary snow plows range from 29 to 45 years old and most of these machines are well past their replacement life cycle.

The benefit assessment for the South Shore is \$20 per improved parcel and each year the zone collects approximately \$136,000. Over the next 25 years, the zone will collect approximately \$3,400,000 to add to its current balance of \$250,000. Assuming that the need for equipment will not increase and that there is a 3% inflation factor on equipment costs, the cost to replace the South Shore Zone's equipment over the next 25 years is approximately \$23 million dollars. This is more than six times what the zone will collect during the same time period.

Note: The cost of replacement equipment for South Shore includes replacing just 5 of the 6 rotary snow plows and 7 of the 8 graders. Some of the areas to which the County's forces respond for winter operations at Lake Tahoe are outside the CSA and must be maintained by equipment purchased by the County's Road Fund.

Discussion

As identified above, the current revenue generated in either zone is no longer sufficient to maintain the needed equipment replacement cycles. Most of the pieces of equipment discussed above are beyond their replacement life cycle and the parts for these older model motor graders and rotary snow plows are generally unavailable or difficult to find. If an older machine breaks down and no parts are available, the equipment becomes inoperable and may be unavailable for the entire season while a part is fabricated. When a piece of equipment is inoperable, if a backup is not available, the neighborhood serviced by that equipment must wait until equipment from another neighborhood is available. Snow removal areas are sized so that during a heavy storm once the neighborhood is complete it is time to start at the beginning again. It is possible that the neighborhood with the

inoperable equipment may not receive service until the end of the storm. Delays in snow removal service can result in delays of essential services such as police, fire, ambulance and daily public activities.

Purchase of Rotary Snow Plow

As stated in the note above, the County must maintain at least one rotary snow plow and one grader purchased with County funding. Currently, the newest rotary snow plow that services the areas outside the CSA is 29 years old and beyond the replacement life cycle. There is approved funding within the Transportation's current year fixed asset budget for the purchase of a rotary snow plow with Road Fund funding.

Staff Recommendation

Transportation recommends:

- The Board provide conceptual approval for Transportation to explore the feasibility of placing the discussed ballot measures in the 2016 general election.
- Direct staff to return at a later date with more detailed information and funding options for CSA 3 Zones of Benefits in the Tahoe Basin.

Action to be taken following the Board Approval

- 1) Transportation will proceed in accordance with Board direction.
- 2) If direction includes proceeding with exploration of feasibility of ballot measures for the West Shore and South Shore Snow Zones, the Agency will return to the Board with findings in sufficient time to meet the schedule for including the proposed measure on the ballot for the desired election date.

Contact

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