

Massive South Tahoe erosion project delayed

Publisher's note: *This is one of a few stories about construction planned for the Lake Tahoe Basin this summer.*

By Kathryn Reed

An \$11 million erosion control project in South Lake Tahoe has been delayed for at least one month because on Wednesday at a special meeting the City Council threw out all bids and will start the process all over.

Staff recommended this course of action because Disney Construction, the low bidder, had so many errors in its documents that other bidders protested the bid process. The next bid was \$4 million higher. Only three bids were submitted.

"Disney during the council meeting (April 3) said they stand by their bid. I told them I appreciate that and that I expect to see the same bid, but cleaned up," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Disney said its numbers are spot on, but admitted the documents were a mess.

Other bids were so much higher because of the requirement to treat water during construction. But this is standard policy when working in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The city will spend time revising the bid docs to explain more thoroughly what this means so contractors understand the particulars.

The city expected the three-year project to be under way May 1. Now it won't start until at least June. The bulk of the work was to happen this year. How the rebidding process will impact the actual work remains to be seen.



This storm pipe near Lakeshore Lodge and Spa in South Lake Tahoe will be replaced in the Bijou erosion control project.
Photo/LTN file

This year the work will be most visible to the public, with minor work in the commercial area in year two because most will be done in the meadow, and the final year will be establishing the vegetation and other work.

“This is the first pump and treat system in the basin,” Jim Marino, capital improvements project manager for the city, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Normally it’s collected, treated and gravitationally goes to the lake.”

The project will collect the water flowing down from the 1,300-acre Bijou Creek watershed, treat it, pump it to sediment basins in the meadow off Glenwood Way, have sediment settle out there, so then the only thing being released into the lake is clean water.

The existing filtration system is 50-years-old and is ineffective in keeping sediment from the lake. This fine sediment is what scientists say is the primary reason the lake’s clarity has decreased.

With the Bijou area so developed, it’s not possible to build a detention basin in the commercial area to collect the water to filter out the fine sediment before it reaches Lake Tahoe.

Today water comes out of the meadow, crosses Highway 50, goes under the parking lot between CVS and Heidi's restaurant and flows into the lake.

"We will remove that storm pipe. There will be a new headwall there. It will be a much nicer structure," Marino said. "There will always be water going into the lake, but it will be treated."

When Caltrans was doing work last year on the highway the city went forward with putting in its infrastructure so the road would not have to be dug up this year.

Still, this project is going to affect that area once works begins. Not only will the commercial area be impacted, but motorists driving through this section of town, as well as side streets will have experience traffic delays.