

Flood control issues divide Reno City Council

By Susan Voyle, Reno Gazette-Journal

Fourteen years after the New Year's Day flood in 1997 roared into downtown Reno and left a shimmering lake at the Sparks industrial zone and the airport, Washoe County and Sparks have approved a new management authority to oversee the long-planned Truckee River flood control project.

The Reno City Council, however, remains split on creating a new government agency. If a vote were held today, it likely would be three for the project, two against and two undecided. A fourth vote is needed for passage.

While Sparks and Washoe approved it this week, the Reno council postponed its vote until Feb. 9 so Councilman Dan Gustin and Mayor Bob Cashell, who are undecided, have more time to study the 67-page agreement setting up the new authority.

Reno council members Jessica Sferrazza, Dave Aiazzi and Pierre Hascheff are in support, saying an agency focused only on the flood project will get it built.

Council members Sharon Zadra and Dwight Dortch opposed.

Zadra said she doesn't want to create a new government agency at a time when local governments should be consolidating operations. "It flies in the face of being more efficient," she said.

Dortch said he can't ever see the federal government putting \$1 billion into the project as expected. And without those federal dollars, he said there's no sense in creating a new agency with the power to raise \$520 million in fees from local

property owners.