

Loop road may cost STPUD customers \$10 mil.



Shannon Cotulla, STPUD assistant general manager, talks about water-sewer lines in the loop road area. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Ten million dollars. That's what it could cost to move South Tahoe Public Utility District's water and sewer lines if the loop road goes through.

"It could have devastating impacts for our utility," Shannon Cotulla, STPUD assistant general manager, said of the relocations process.

Cotulla and General Manager Richard Solbrig explained at the Feb. 1 South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce meeting at the Cantina restaurant that while many questions remain to be answered, the easements are what are most important.

"If they give us the easements for the facilities, then it would be up to the developer to come up with the cost to relocate the lines," Cotulla said.

The district has encroachment permits, but not the easements.

Solbrig put a preliminary estimated price tag of between \$5 million and \$10 million to move the water and sewer lines. Part has to do with whether the road would be lowered to mitigate noise issues. Digging down, like what the **Nevada Department of Transportation** is doing in Carson City, is a normal engineering tactic.

With STPUD having gravity lines in this area bordering Nevada, it would become more costly to have to put lines deeper than if they operated in a different manner.

Last week South Tahoe PUD finished mapping its assets in the proposed project area. An exact dollar figure is hard to pinpoint because it's not known how far the lines would have to move. Just to plan such an endeavor costs about \$300 per foot.

The district officials said a 30-year loan would likely be needed to foot the bill. This in turn would equate to about a 10 percent rate hike. Solbrig envisions that cost being spread out among all customers in the district.

It's not just the water-sewer lines that would need to be relocated if Highway 50 were routed behind Harrah's Lake Tahoe and MontBleu and the current highway becomes a city-county street through the Stateline casino corridor. Cable television, gas, electric and phone infrastructure would also need to be moved. And those rates would then likely spike.

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Notes:

- There will be a meeting about the loop road on Feb. 10 from 4:30-7pm inside South Tahoe Middle School's multipurpose room.