

Measures P and T pass in S. Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Recreation, roads and a say in the loop road. That's what voters in South Lake Tahoe want.

Measure P, with more than the required two-thirds needed to pass, sent a message that locals want better recreation facilities. It will increase the hotel tax from 10 to 12 percent for most properties, while those in the redevelopment area will pay 14 percent instead of the current 12 percent. It is estimated to bring in \$2 million per year.

The measure passed with 3,214 votes, or 67.65 percent.

"This is unbelievably exciting," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The transient occupancy tax would be raised 90 days after the election is certified, which is 28 days from now.

First thing on the to-do list is to build a new recreation center to replace the outdated, dilapidated 40-plus-year-old structure. Preliminary designs have been drawn.

The goal is to begin construction in 2018, with people able to use the facility in 2020.

The council would sell bonds to pay for the facility, then use the revenue from Measure P to pay that debt.

While Measure U did not pass, the advisory measure wanting to have had that money go toward roads dominated the proposals. U would have raised the sales tax by one-half cent to 8.5 percent. While the city asked voters where to spend the money – roads, housing or facilities – the allocation was not

binding. However, roads did get the most support.

Measure U needed only a simple majority, but lost with only 42.26 percent wanting it.

Kerry was not completely discouraged by this turn of events.

“If the public is saying the highest priority is roads, I will recommend the council have a dedicated tax go to roads,” she said. That vote, though, could be two years away. It will likely be discussed at the February strategic plan workshop.

Measure T was the other South Lake Tahoe initiative on the ballot. This was brought forward by concerned citizens who want the town to have a say in the loop road. This is the proposal to turn Highway 50 near the state line into a city street and city streets into the highway, going from near Pioneer Trail, then behind Harrah’s and MontBleu.

“It forces the city to seek approval of the citizens before they can start supporting something,” Bruce Grego, one of the advocates for Measure T, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It doesn’t stop the process; it just requires another level of consent.”

T passed by 2,852 votes, or with 60.5 percent. It required a simple majority.

Next up will be the Dec. 5 court hearing. City Councilman-elect Jason Collin brought a lawsuit to stop the measure from going on the ballot. The judge allowed it, saying he would take action after Nov. 8. The judge could order a settlement conference, a trial date or something else – there just won’t be resolution that day.