

Money, leadership stall Kahle Drive's future

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Kahle Drive is an auto repair shop's dream. It's that bad.

Douglas County owns this Stateline road, but it's Oliver Park General Improvement District that is responsible for maintaining it and the other neighborhood streets.

The five-member board that operates the GID plans to fix the potholes, but the problem is the entire road needs to be overhauled. Like so many streets that were created in the basin decades ago, they were never designed to a high caliber or intended to be used year-round with the level of today's traffic.

About a dozen residents attended an OPGID board meeting June 21 to voice their frustration. Some believe all the trucks going down the road to build the lakefront Tahoe Beach Club, the multi-million-dollar luxury housing development, have contributed to the road degradation because they drive through the potholes, which makes them larger.

Tom Castaneda and Bob Mecay bought the 19-acre parcel in 2002 for about \$12.6 million. At that time 155 mobile homes occupied most of the land that sits between Rabe Meadow and the University of Nevada 4-H Camp.

They have a vested interest in wanting the road to be nice; it would help sales. After all, the goal is for people to move into the first 46 units in about a year.



Potholes mar the entrance to the Tahoe Beach Club construction site on Kahle Drive. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Tahoe Beach Club was part of a group in 2014 that had Design Workshop come up with preliminary plans to make Kahle Drive a complete street. This would include sidewalks, curbs, gutters, undergrounding the utilities (electric, cable, telephone), lighting and bike lanes.

Tahoe Beach Club is not a member of the OPGID, however, the owners help pay for the maintenance of Kahle Drive. Along with Lakeside Inn, they are the largest contributors. Mecay and Castenada own a 39-unit apartment complex in the area that is part of OPGID.

Leadership and money are missing from the equation in order to move the complete street idea forward. While Oliver Park was part of the discussions about redesigning the entire street, the board members are all new since then and don't have any institutional knowledge.

Mecay and Castenada brought consultant Steve Teshara to the

meeting to talk about the complete street proposal. He repeatedly urged the OPGID board to have a bigger community meeting to get other players involved to move the project forward, and added that the district needs to decide if it wants to be the lead agency on this.

Most residents at the meeting just wanted the potholes fixed. The board at its July meeting is expected to have an agenda item regarding a future meeting to discuss the bigger road project.

The only enthusiasm for the larger project was from Teshara, Mecay and Castenada. It's obvious why Mecay and Castenda want a beautiful gateway to their lakefront development.

For **Lakeside Inn**, the plan is to redevelop the corner of Highway 50 and Kahle Drive. (The current building is the sales office for Tahoe Beach Club.) The hotel-casino wants that intersection to be a gateway to Stateline with expansion of their holdings going there.

For the residents, they may get squeezed into paying for a nice road that benefits two commercial entities. Though, they would have a nice road to drive on.

Oliver Park GID's responsibility is just roads; maintenance includes snow removal. Other than Kahle Drive, no one at Wednesday's meeting had any complaints about the streets. And if the road becomes more than it is today, all that improved infrastructure would be OPGID's responsibility – at least as things stand now. It is assessments to property owners that pay for the road maintenance.

Kahle Drive shows up in the five-year transportation plan for Douglas County that was approved by the commissioners in March. It's under the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program. The estimated cost to turn it into a complete street is \$2.283 million. No time line was given and the county's share was listed as "undetermined."

Under comments in the document, it says, "Reconstruct road with cost sharing from the Beach Club project. Redevelopment (sic) District area may be a source of funding. Chairperson [Nancy] McDermid to write a letter to assistant DA Zach Wadle about desolving (sic) Oliver Park GID."

Dissolution was not discussed this week.

"This is not our road to maintain. Oliver Park GID is responsible but to our knowledge they have not been able to come up with a funding source. The county has met with the Beach Club and Oliver Park to discuss options last year, but that is about as far as it has gotten at this time," Melissa Blosser, spokeswoman for Douglas County, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

No one from the county was at the meeting.

In January 2016, the county created a **redevelopment area** that includes Kahle. The hope is that some of the money collected through tax increment could be used to fund the Kahle Drive project. However, that cash will take years to accumulate and right now the powers that be want to spend it on the Stateline **entertainment venue**. Estimates are the redevelopment agency through the tax increment would collect \$47.2 million in 30 years.

With how things move in the basin, this complete street could be a decade away at best.