

Letter: Explaining SLT's money for roads

To the community,

I am writing this letter to the editor in response to the *Lake Tahoe News* editorial publicized Oct. 2, 2017.



Jim Marino

First and foremost, I am writing this letter outside of my position of assistant director of Public Works of the city of South Lake Tahoe. I have always trusted and admired the straightforwardness and factual information provided in your articles/editorials, and will continue to do so.

The information you provided in your editorial against Measure C was factual though perhaps unintentionally misleading. Please allow me the opportunity to provide my perspective.

1. *"When looking at the city's budget for this fiscal year, which began Sunday, there are zero dollars for roads."* This is typical. The city's annual roadway rehabilitation appropriation is usually accomplished at mid-year budget adoption.

2. *"Still, from 1995 to today the city has spent \$11,792,473 on pavement rehabilitation. That is an average of \$512,716 in each of the last 23 years."* The amounts are correct, though we should associate the appropriation toward

the total value of the asset. We currently value the roadway network as is at roughly \$119 million to \$127 million. So an \$11 million investment over a recorded 23-year period represents less than 11 percent of total asset value that has been maintained over a span of 23 years. As roadways age and if not maintained, the deterioration increases rapidly after a certain point. In most cases, a roadway that has not received adequate preventative maintenance will begin to deteriorate three times faster after 15 years of life.

This rapid deterioration curve is what we are experiencing now and is occurring over roughly 62 percent of the roadway network.

3. *“That is an average of \$512,716.22 per year in each of the last 23 years.”* While the average of \$512,716 is accurate, it is a bit misleading as it clearly does not define an amount appropriated by year. Each fiscal year had varying appropriation amounts, thus dictating the rehabilitation productivity by year. Furthermore, from 2012 to 2017 the City’s General Fund contribution was \$6,215,942, indicating that 52 percent of the entire appropriation over the 23-year period has occurred during the last five years. From 2012–2017 the city averaged \$1,243,188 toward roadway rehabilitation. As reported many times to City Council and the public, approximately \$2.5 million to \$2.9 million is required annually to slow the deterioration curve and begin the process of stabilizing the network. Over time, this annual funding will raise the overall network condition. Even though the last five years of funding averaged \$1,243,188, it represents only 42 percent of what is actually required annually to stop the network decline.

4. *“Measure C on the November ballot is projected to bring in \$2.5 million annually. The proposal would have money going toward complete streets – meaning more than an overlay. It would include curbs, gutters and striping for bike lanes where appropriate.”* Would Measure C funds be utilized to fund

complete streets? Possibly, but not likely. Approximately 62 percent of the roadway network is in serious decline. Most of the 62 percent comprises of collector and residential class roadways. Funds would go straight to correcting this category of the network, with the premise being to rehabilitate the roadways in poor condition to gain the most productive increase in network condition over the shortest time period possible. What this means is most, if not all, of the funds would go to directly working within the asphalt travel way.

All of the city's complete streets projects to date have been funded primarily through state and federal transportation grants. Ski Run Boulevard, Al Tahoe Boulevard, Pioneer Trail from Highway 50 to Larch; were all built with very minimal General Fund dollars (typically 11 percent of project). The city's next project; Sierra Boulevard is at this time 100 percent funded through outside fund sources.

Thank you for allowing me to provide some clarification to the figures provided within your editorial. I appreciate and understand your opinion.

Sincerely,

Jim Marino