STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Capital Outlay Budget Change Proposal (COBCP) - Cover Sheet  
DF-151 (REV 07/20)

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Project Title  
South Lake Tahoe Fire Station: New Facility

Project Status and Type  
Status: ☒ New  □ Continuing  
Type: ☒ Major  □ Minor

Project Category (Select one)  
- ☐ CRI (Critical Infrastructure)  
- ☐ WSD (Workload Space Deficiencies)  
- ☐ ECP (Enrollment Caseload Population)  
- ☐ SM (Seismic)  
- ☒ FLS (Fire Life Safety)  
- ☐ FM (Facility Modernization)  
- ☐ PAR (Public Access Recreation)  
- ☐ RC (Resource Conservation)

Total Request (in thousands)  
$ 3,000

Phase(s) to be Funded  
Acquisition

Total Project Cost (in thousands)  
$ 16,680

Budget Request Summary

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) requests $3,000,000 General Fund for the acquisition phase of the South Lake Tahoe Fire Station: New Facility project located in El Dorado County. This is a new project. The total estimated costs are $16,680,000.

Requires Legislation  
☐ Yes  ☒ No

Code Section(s) to be Added/Amended/Repealed  

CCC1

Requires Provisional Language  
☐ Yes  ☒ No

Budget Package Status  
☒ Needed  □ Not Needed  □ Existing

Impact on Support Budget  
One-Time Costs  ☒ Yes  □ No
Future Savings  ☒ Yes  □ No
Future Costs  ☒ Yes  □ No
Swing Space Needed  □ Yes  ☒ No
Generate Surplus Property  □ Yes  ☒ No

If proposal affects another department, does other department concur with proposal?  
☐ Yes  ☒ No

Attach comments of affected department, signed and dated by the department director or designee.

Prepared By  

Reviewed By  

Department Director  

Agency Secretary  

Department of Finance Use Only  

Principal Program Budget Analyst  

Date submitted to the Legislature  
1/12/2022
A. COBCP Abstract:

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) requests $3,000,000 General Fund for the acquisition phase of South Lake Tahoe Fire Station: New Facility project. This project will acquire property for a new South Lake Tahoe Fire Station, and to design and construct a single-building 16-bed/3-bay fire station with an extractor room and office, a standard administration office building, generator/pump/storage building, a vehicle wash rack with canopy, a fuel vault with canopy, a hose wash rack, and a storage building. Additionally, the scope of work will include site work as needed. Total project costs are estimated at $16,680,000, including acquisition ($3,000,000), preliminary plans ($704,000), working drawings ($704,000) and construction ($12,272,000). The construction amount includes $10,059,000 for the construction contract, $503,000 for contingency, $704,000 for architectural and engineering services, $40,000 for agency retained items, and $966,000 for other project costs. The acquisition phase is estimated to begin in July 2022 and estimated to be completed in June 2024. The preliminary plans phase is estimated to begin July 2023 and estimated to be completed June 2024. The working drawings phase is estimated to begin July 2025 and estimated to be completed June 2026. The construction phase is estimated to begin August of 2026 and estimated to be completed February 2028.

B. Purpose of the Project:

Background

The 2007 Angora Fire, which destroyed 254 homes and consumed 3,100 acres of Lake Tahoe’s southern region, prompted California and Nevada Governors to develop a Memorandum of Understanding and create the Emergency California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission (Commission). In 2008, the Commission submitted a report that determined funding levels for fire prevention and suppression activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin were inadequate. After the Commission’s recommendations, CAL FIRE delivered augmented prevention and suppression services to the Tahoe Basin through an Executive Order. On June 1, 2013, 33,000 acres of land previously protected by the United States Forest Service (USFS) was formally transferred to CAL FIRE for wildland fire protection and prevention services based on the Commission’s recommendations. This direct protection adjustment from the USFS to CAL FIRE was followed in 2014 by increasing permanent position authority for CAL FIRE to implement the State Responsibility Area (SRA) protection adjustments in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

In addition to receiving permanent funding for personnel, CAL FIRE also received funding for equipment in the Lake Tahoe Basin to achieve the 24-hour, 7 day per week emergency response and fire prevention activities. Wildfire risk in the Lake Tahoe Basin is extremely high and a large majority of the SRA lands CAL FIRE is charged to protect are classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone lands – the highest fire risk classification. Although the State and Commission recognized the need to add CAL FIRE resources to protect these high-risk lands, there still exists a need for adequate infrastructure to support the daily operations of CAL FIRE personnel and equipment.

Problem

Since 2008, per the Governor’s Executive Order to staff engines in the Tahoe Basin, CAL FIRE has leased facilities from local fire protection entities on a short-term basis to provide additional Direct Protection Area (DPA) coverage. CAL FIRE currently leases volunteer Fire Station for engine company personnel. This facility’s size, location, and lack of bed space constrains CAL FIRE’s ability to effectively pre-position resources (e.g., engines, crews, dozers, and chief officers) in South Lake Tahoe during times of high fire danger.

The SRA lands CAL FIRE is responsible to protect in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee can best be described as a geographic island in relation to the rest of the unit’s DPA. Typically, SRA lands are contiguous and CAL FIRE stations are located approximately 20 miles apart from the next fire station to provide sufficient coverage. The nearest CAL FIRE stations to South Tahoe are Truckee at 47 miles...
away, or Camino at 51 miles away. Each of these distances represent significant response times in a region noted for single-lane roads, heavy tourist traffic, and summer road construction projects. These factors further increase response times for CAL FIRE dozers that are transported on low bed trailers. In the case of South Tahoe, the nearest CAL FIRE dozer is 65 miles away in El Dorado.

The Lake Tahoe Basin experiences a high number of Red Flag Warnings because of the localized weather patterns and dry fuel conditions. When a Red Flag Warning or Fire Weather Watch is issued by the National Weather Service, CAL FIRE deploys additional resources (e.g., engine and dozer complement) from other CAL FIRE facilities to ensure coverage in high fire danger areas. This pre-positioning of resources ranges from one or two days, to well over a week based on weather conditions and risk. Currently, there is no space at South Tahoe’s leased facility for an additional engine and bed space is limited for additional personnel. In addition, the location of the facility is in a residential development and is not conducive for pre-positioning dozer units.

Other support functions outside of the fire suppression response require additional workspace and offices that cannot be facilitated in the standard fire station design. Prevention activities are as much a priority as the fire suppression response and will require additional office space. This space cannot be facilitated at the Truckee Station due to the interagency design and shared office space scenario.

In summary, the current leased facilities are inadequate to meet the Department’s mission and goals in the Lake Tahoe Basin and are not consistent with the recommendations of the Emergency California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission. There is an opportunity, however, to design and construct a modern fire station and administrative office on State lands to enhance wildfire response and more effectively implement fire prevention activities (e.g., defensible space, fuels reduction, and prescribed fire). This enhanced capability will better protect life, property, and the unique natural resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin from the effects of devastating wildfires.

C. **Relationship to the Strategic Plan:**

This project relates to the following goals in the CAL FIRE 2019 Strategic Plan:

Goal: Improve our core capabilities.

Objective: Evaluate and improve existing emergency response capabilities.
D. Alternatives:

1. Approve the funding request for the acquisition phase.  

   - Design and construct a single-building 2-engine/16-bed fire station and administration building in South Lake Tahoe. This alternative provides a modern fire station and office space that meets the Department’s standards for an emergency response facility in the Lake Tahoe Basin. A new fire station will support CAL FIRE’s goal to be an efficient, effective, quality organization with the resources necessary to carry out the Department’s mission, a goal that cannot be accomplished in the current leased facilities. The standard administration building design will provide adequate space for the Battalion Chief, 4 Forestry Aides, Forester I and Fire Prevention Officer. The 2-engine station design will provide two additional bedrooms for the Battalion Chief and provide enough space for the pre-positioned resources (e.g., engines, crews, dozers) that are deployed to South Lake Tahoe during high fire danger conditions such as Red Flag Warnings and high wind events.

2. Defer the project.  

   - Defer the project and maintain status quo. This alternative does not correct known deficiencies at the existing leased facilities that currently impede CAL FIRE’s ability to provide emergency response services to the Lake Tahoe Basin. Deferring the project adds to the Department’s backlog of critical capital improvements and will likely increase project cost in the future.

E. Recommended Solution:

1. Which alternative and why?

   The recommended solution is Alternative #1 — design and construct a single-building fire station and administration building in South Lake Tahoe. New structures will be in full compliance with code and service level requirements for an essential services facility, as applicable. A new facility will provide adequate space for current personnel and pre-positioned resources during time of high fire danger.

   There is a potential opportunity to locate this project on state lands owned by the Department of Parks and Recreation as a cost-effective alternative to acquiring private lands in South Lake Tahoe’s competitive real estate market. This opportunity will be explored further during the acquisition phase in addition to co-locating any improvements proposed by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

2. Detailed scope description.

   Buildings

   - Standard 16-bed/3-bay fire station with BC office and extractor
   - Generator/pump/storage building
   - Storage building
   - Standard administration office building
Site Development

- Earthwork
- Drainage
- Access road
- Concrete paving, walks, parking, curbs, and gutters
- Dozer transport and tender parking
- Fuel island and vault with canopy
- Hose wash rack
- Wash rack (with canopy and water recycling system)
- Security site lighting
- Security fencing and gates
- Landscaping and irrigation
- Illuminated flagpoles and signage
- Trash enclosure

Utilities

- Potable water and municipal connection (or well and treatment system)
- Sanitary sewer and municipal connection (or treatment and disposal system)
- Fire water (storage tanks and pumps as dictated by code)
- Fire sprinkler system
- Stormwater collection and management
- Electrical power, generator, and transfer switch
- LPG/natural gas (LPG tank as required)
- Solar power system
- Telephone cabling and installation
- Radio tower, cabling, and installation
- Security access control at building and gates
- Security camera system

3. Basis for cost information.
   The estimated costs are based on the actual costs of other projects with similar scope.

4. Factors/benefits for recommended solution other than the least expensive alternative.
   The recommended solution is driven by the need to effectively deliver reliable critical emergency response resources to the State of California and meet the program requirements specific to fire suppression and prevention in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

5. Complete description of impact on support budget.
   Maintenance and repair costs for the new facility will be low at the beginning of its 50-year lifespan. In accordance with funding agreements with contract counties that provide SRA fire protection, the State must allocate, in the form of a support budget item to the contract counties, a proportionate share (19%) of capital outlay funds provided to CAL FIRE for fire station projects.

6. Identify and explain any project risks.
   There are no known risks associated with the completion of this project.

7. List requested interdepartmental coordination and/or special project approval (including mandatory reviews and approvals, e.g., technology proposals).
This project will require a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliant review. Plans for the new facility will be subject to review and approval by the State Fire Marshal and Division of the State Architect.

F. Consistency with Government Code Section 65041.1:

1. Does the recommended solution (project) promote infill development by rehabilitating existing infrastructure and how? Explain.
   
   Yes. CAL FIRE promotes infill when possible, by renovating or replacing existing infrastructure in areas served by existing facilities, as is the case with this project.

2. Does the project improve the protection of environmental and agricultural resources by protecting and preserving the state’s most valuable natural resources? Explain.
   
   Yes. Due to the nature of the Department’s mission, it can be necessary to locate facilities into areas that could have negative environmental and agricultural impacts; however, strategic placement of these facilities to provide more effective response to wildland fires will ultimately protect nearby forests, watersheds, agricultural land, and other valuable natural resources.

3. Does the project encourage efficient development patterns by ensuring that infrastructure associated with development, other than infill, support efficient use of land and is appropriately planned for growth? Explain.
   
   Yes. CAL FIRE facilities are strategically located to meet the Department’s mission. To the maximum extent possible, CAL FIRE prefers to develop close to existing roads, water, sewer, and other utilities to promote efficient development in the area and to mitigate future support costs for facility maintenance.