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Agenda Number: 4.

**SAFE BOARD MEETING
JUNE 25, 2015**

SUBJECT: CALL BOX SYSTEM RESTRUCTURING

ACTION: APPROVE THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE CALL BOX SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the **restructuring of the Los Angeles County Kenneth Hahn Call Box System** as outlined, based upon the findings and recommendations of the recently concluded Call Box Assessment Study (Attachment A).

ISSUE

As part of the overall management of the Call Box System, an assessment Study was completed in 2014. The Study recommends that LA SAFE proceed with a four phase restructuring of the call box system resulting in the removal of approximately 412 call boxes in phase 1 from service or a 23% reduction. This recommendation is being brought to the Board for approval prior to implementation.

DISCUSSION

The Call Box system was established to provide a motorist aid service to the public. In 2007, the Board authorized an initial restructuring that transitioned the call box system from a primary motorist aid resource to a secondary safety net. This resulted in a decrease of approximately 2,500 call box sites from the initial base of 4,500 call boxes. At the time the usage of the call box system had decreased from an average of 20,000 calls per month in the year 2000 to approximately 5,000 calls per month in 2007. Current call box system usage averages approximately 1,700 calls per month spread over an installed base of approximately 1,800 call boxes.

Due to the decrease in usage and the continued proliferation of cell phones, as well as the implementation of new motorist aid services, the call box system was further evaluated to identify call boxes that are no longer useful in meeting program goals, as well as those that present a safety risk due to their location. A field site assessment of all existing locations (1,786 sites at the time of the assessment) was conducted. The field assessments were conducted during the months of May 2013, June 2013, and March 2014 and consisted of the following tasks:

1. Verification of the location and sign number data;

2. Verification of the call box site type;
3. Assessment of the availability of cell phone coverage to determine if sufficient service is available to support personal cell phone usage;
4. Confirmation of the width of the shoulder;
5. Identification of any unusual conditions such as poor sight distance, steep grade, vegetation covering the site, etc. that can pose a safety hazard to call box users and/or the motoring public;

In addition to the field assessment, a review of the maintenance history and usage data for each call box was also conducted. Utilizing the results of the field assessment, maintenance history and usage data, three main criteria were used to evaluate each call box location and determine if the box should be removed:

1. Site Type - Due to safety concerns, Caltrans has recommended the phased removal of Type B and C call boxes where they are no longer effectively used. These call box types were cut into an existing hillside (Type B) or built over an existing down slope (Type C). As such, an assessment of Type B and C call boxes with low utilization was conducted and locations identified.
2. Knockdowns - Call boxes with a history of multiple knockdowns in a year indicate a potential problematic location or site and as such were identified for removal.
3. Program Goals - The Call Box program goals are to provide motorist aid service to the public. For various reasons, primarily the proliferation of the usage of cellular telephones and other alternative emergency services available to the motorists, there are call boxes with a pattern of little or no usage.

As a result of the evaluation, a total of 412 type B and C call box sites have been recommended for removal within Phase I.

In addition to the recommendation to remove the 412 identified type B and C call box sites, the assessment also provides a working roadmap to continue identifying call box sites that are candidates for removal and/or relocation under the above criteria.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Removal of the identified call boxes is not anticipated to present any negative safety impacts. The recommendations have been reviewed by our partner agencies, Caltrans and CHP, for safety implications and both agencies concur with the findings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding of \$500,000 for implementation of the restructuring has been included in the FY16 budget

request under Cost Center 3351, Project 300209 for LA SAFE.

Since this is a multi-year project, the cost center manager and Executive Officer will be accountable for budgeting the cost in future years, including any options exercised.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could elect not to approve the restructuring. Staff is not recommending this alternative, since the restructuring will ensure a more efficient, effective and safe system for the motoring public.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval, staff will begin steps to restructure the call box system. Additionally staff will continue monitoring the system and move forward with additional call box removals as warranted and report to the Board annually of any implemented changes.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Call-Box Assessment Study

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