



# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Jestin D. Johnson  
City Administrator

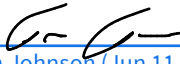
**FROM:** Josh Rowan  
Interim Director, OPW

**SUBJECT:** Critical Sewer Division Power Rodder  
Vehicle Acquisitions

**DATE:** June 5, 2025

City Administrator Approval

Date:

  
[Jestin Johnson \(Jun 11, 2025 11:48 PDT\)](#)

Jun 11, 2025

## RECOMMENDATION

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution: 1) Waiving The Advertising, Competitive Bidding, And The Local And Small Local Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) Program Requirements, 2) Awarding A Purchase Contract To Owen Equipment Sales, A TSE International, INC Authorized Dealer, In The Amount Not To Exceed One Million Five Hundred Thousand (\$1,500,000) Dollars For The Purchase Of Two (2) Sewer Power Rodder Vehicles; And 3) Adopting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exemption Findings.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewer Maintenance Division of Oakland Public Works (OPW) is responsible for performing preventive maintenance on over 932 miles of sewer mains, ranging from six inches to over 66 inches in diameter, and responding to sewer emergencies. The City of Oakland (the City) is currently operating under a Federal Consent Decree (**Case Number C 09-00186-RS and C 09-05684-RS**) requiring the City to clean 184 miles of sanitary sewer mains per year and inspect (CCTV) 92 miles of sanitary sewer pipe each year. To comply with this mandated operation, Sewer Maintenance must have adequate quantities of fully functional specialized equipment.

Sewer Maintenance Division operates with four power rodders, three of which were purchased in 2012, and one in 2013. Sewer rodder trucks such as these are designed to mechanically clear underground pipe obstructions as far as 300 feet into the pipe by driving rotating cutting and cleaning heads through the pipes. Due to the harsh duty-cycles and operating conditions, a normally expected service life for this type of equipment is 8-10 years. Due to the aging equipment being in use daily, all units have been experiencing more frequent mechanical failures and are out of service for maintenance more frequently. The motors used to drive the specialized pipe clearing heads are failing and due to age do not have enough power to break down and clear the overgrown roots and other obstructions found more frequently in Sewer

mains. These obstructions are the primary cause of Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO), and as such, the City is in danger of failing to meet Consent Decree minimum requirements and being subject to related fines and penalties if the equipment is not available and ready for use.

The two new power rodder units are designed to clear overgrown roots and other obstructions found in the Sewer mains and are equipped with the latest safety and technology features. The new, more powerful rodder trucks will serve as force multipliers for the existing sewer staff by clearing obstructions more efficiently and consistently, thus maximizing the use of staff time. The timely acquisition of this equipment is essential to ensure the City is operating in compliance with the mandated Consent Decree operations, and to ensure prompt responses to emergency requests for service from the public related to sewer spill response and sanitary sewer issues.

### **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

Per the 2014 Federal Consent Decree (**Case Number C 09-00186-RS and C 09-05684-RS**), the City Sewer Maintenance Division must operate under the Sewer Consent Decree, and to comply with this mandated operation, the Sewer Maintenance Division must have adequate quantities of fully functional vehicles and equipment.

Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) Title 2, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 2.04.050 requires the City to conduct advertising and competitive bidding for the procurement of goods, professional services, or a combination thereof. OMC Section 2.04.050.1.5 permits the Council to waive advertising and competitive bidding requirements upon a finding and determination that it is in the City's best interests to do so.

Per Ordinance [No. 13101 C.M.S.](#), and [No. 13640 C.M.S](#) require a minimum 50-percent (50%) Local Business Enterprise/Small Local Business Enterprise (LBE/SLBE) participation for all purchase of commodities, goods and associated services for contracts valued at or over fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) when there are at least three certified business listed in the industry, trade, or profession that constitutes a major category of work; and the City Council may waive the City's LBE/SLBE requirements for the purchase of commodities, goods, services, supplies or combination thereof due to a lack or limited availability of SLBEs or LBEs pursuant to Part I of Oakland's Local and Small Local Business Enterprise Program guidelines adopted by Ordinance [No. 13647 C.M.S.](#)

The S660 Power Rodder is manufactured exclusively by **TSE International**; Inc. **OK Champion** developed the S660 for utility and sewer rodding in 1966, and Owen Equipment is the local authorized dealer. The city owns four of these units.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

The OPW Sewer Division has four (4) rodder/root cutter vehicles that are over a decade old. All units are frequently in and out of the repair shop for maintenance, and may become inoperable at any time. Due to aging, the rodder unit motors are often jammed with roots, which are laborious to untangle, and the back operator seats do not feature the latest air cushioned technology. This has caused several injury incidents, resulting in staff unavailability due to medical leave. Operating with the current aged and marginally serviceable equipment has cost Sewer Division staff time, injuries, and delays in responding to emergency services. The use of a Sole Source justification to waive the competitive bidding will maximize fleet standardization, saving time and expense if parts stocking, mechanic training, and dealer support, and will save the City time from conducting its own RFQ/P.

The Sewer Maintenance Division frequently operates with only 50% capacity. Failure to purchase this sewer emergency response equipment immediately increases the risk of sewer main blockages, and the resulting Sanitary Sewer Overflows that release toxic biological waste into the environment and waterways and cause sanitary issues throughout the City. This may result in the City not being in compliance with the Federal Consent Decree and being subject to related fines and penalties.

Due to the immediate need of these critical emergency response vehicles, time and cost savings the City will benefit from adopting this proposed resolution and based upon the fact that TSE International; Inc. OK Champion is the sole certified sewer power rodder manufacture, in accordance with OMC Section **2.04.050.1.5** permits the Council to waive advertising and competitive bidding requirements upon a finding and determination that it is in the City's best interests to do so, staff recommends awarding a purchase contract with Owen Equipment Sales in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000.

The use of these funds will advance the citywide priorities of **vibrant, sustainable infrastructure and improving the quality of life.**

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The acquisition of two new sewer flusher trucks for **\$1,500,000** will be funded from Fund **3100** (Sewer Maintenance Division), Infrastructure Maintenance Sewer System Org No. **30533**, **EPA-SEWER CLEANING** Project No. **1001676**.

Approval of this proposed resolution **does not impact the General-Purpose Fund (1010)** and **will not** result in the additional appropriation of funds.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

No outreach was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

### **COORDINATION**

The Oakland Public Works Department prepared the requested action. This report and resolution were reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** The proposed Resolution provides best value pricing to the City and introduces new power rodder vehicles into the fleet, featuring the latest safety and technology advancements, which will increase efficiency and productivity.

***Environmental:*** The proposed Resolution will ensure the Sewer Maintenance Division has adequate resources needed to minimize, respond to, and clean up after harmful Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO) into the environment.

***Race and Equity:*** The proposed Resolution will ensure the Sewer Maintenance Division has enough equipment and capability to equitably provide sanitary sewer cleaning and emergency response throughout the City, including vulnerable front-line communities.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under the following CEQA Guideline Sections: Section 15060(c)(2) (no direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment); Section 15061(b)(3) (no significant effect on the environment); Section 15301 (existing facilities); Section 15307 (protection of natural resources); Section 15308 (protection of the environment); and Section 15309 (inspections), each of which provides a separate and independent basis for CEQA clearance and when viewed collectively provide an overall basis for CEQA clearance.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution: 1) Waiving The Advertising, Competitive Bidding, And The Local And Small Local Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) Program Requirements, 2) Awarding A Purchase Contract To Owen Equipment Sales, A TSE International, INC Authorized Dealer, In The Amount Not To Exceed One Million Five Hundred Thousand (\$1,500,000) Dollars For The Purchase Of Two (2) Sewer Power Rodder Vehicles; And 3) Adopting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exemption Findings.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Johnny Nicks, Public Works Operations Manager, at (510) 615-5567.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Rowan (Jun 5, 2025 18:20 PDT)

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Josh Rowan  
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Reviewed by:  
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Oakland Public Works

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