

RPV's storm drain repair costs keep on rising

When property owners in Rancho Palos Verdes narrowly voted in favor of a storm drain tax last summer to raise more than \$25 million for repairs, supporters of the plan seemed hopeful that years of neglect could finally be reversed.

But things have not proved that simple. A city report released this month indicates that continued videotaping of the storm drain system has uncovered additional dam-

age. The current program includes \$4.6 million for storm drain lining, but as a result of revised repair estimates, lining costs could double.

Though Rancho Palos Verdes will begin collecting the storm drain tax funds this year, the city report says storm drain repair efforts will require at least \$2 million in city reserve funds over the next several years.

That news, of course, comes after a year of expensive sink hole repairs along Western Avenue that

were completed this month. The work was carried out by Rancho Palos Verdes and Caltrans.

Amid these mounting costs to fix the storm drain system, a signature-gathering campaign is going on in Rancho Palos Verdes to repeal the storm drain tax. Opponents of the tax say there are alternative funding sources to fix the storm drains, such as projected revenues from the Trump National Golf Course and eventually from

the Long Point resort development.

True, the city should reap significant revenues from those projects, but if more defects in the storm drain system continue to be discovered, it's hard to see how the city will be able to fund the rising repair costs without a dedicated revenue source.

At this point, we don't see much advantage in pulling the plug on the city's flood protection program, especially given the enormity of the work ahead.