

TTD outlines transportation goals for basin

Lake Tahoe News staff report

One of the obstacles with securing funding for transportation projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin is that the area is considered rural.

But congestion defies that rural status when there are more than 5 million visitors vying for a spot on the road.

"On an average busy day there are more than 200,000 residents and visitors in the basin," Carl Hasty, executive director of the Tahoe Transportation District, said in his presentation last week to the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

His agency's goals include getting the rural designation changed, creating a regional transportation system, installing bike trails, all while keeping an eye on environmental concerns.

Hasty said there will be workshops this summer on the loop road project. This project would change the alignment of Highway 50 on the South Shore so it goes behind Harrah's and MontBleu and then turns the current highway into a city street. The draft environmental documents should be released this fall.

Councilwoman JoAnn Conner reiterated her concerns about displacing local businesses and residents, saying she believes the millions of dollars this project would cost could be better spent.

The ferry project that would service Ski Run Marina and one in Tahoe City is moving forward. TTD sees this as a commuter vessel and one for tourists.

Mayor Hal Cole said he could envision this as a recreation item, not something people would use daily.

Planning is progressing on the north end of the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail. It will eventually hook up with the route already completed on the South Shore that goes from Kahle Drive to Round Hill Pines Beach.

This summer 0.6 miles of bike trail will go in from the southern boundary of Sugar Pine Point State Park to Meeks Bay Resort.

Construction of the Highway 89 bypass around Tahoe City will start in 2015. This is so highway traffic avoids the seismically challenged Fanny Bridge. It will turn the bridge and approach to it into a city street.

Thirteen agencies are collaborating to create a scenic byway on Highway 28 near Incline Village.