

Kings Beach beautification: roads, sidewalks, lights

By Katherine E. Hill

KINGS BEACH – Kings Beach will be undergoing a face-lift over the next three years, with sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and a reconfigured three-lane highway through the small hamlet. With these improvements, known as the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, come long-term maintenance and repair costs from snow removal in the winter to replacing pavers and making repairs through the years.

A proposed benefit assessment district is being considered to pay for these long-term costs that would encompass property owners along Highway 28 from Highway 267 to east of Chipmunk Street and about one block back from Highway 28 into the area known as The Grid. Property owners learned about the proposed assessment district last week during a series of presentations by Placer County officials and consultants hired for the project.



Kings Beach will be transformed in the coming years.

Photo/Katherine E. Hill

NBS consultants recommend property owners form the benefit assessment district to fund the ongoing maintenance of the \$35 million capital improvement project. The consultants presented three alternatives for the district that ranged from \$378,878 per year to maintain a snowmelt system to \$266,246 annually to remove all snow by hand.

Greg Davidson, director of NBS, recommended against a snowmelt system in the sidewalks, noting that it would add an additional \$3 million in initial costs to install the system, with annual maintenance costs at more than \$378,000. Instead, NBS is recommending property owners consider a district that would cost about \$186,761 annually to maintain, with a wide portion of the sidewalks cleared during snowstorms by hand with some snow storage along the walkways.

"It seems to be the most popular," Davidson told members of the North Tahoe Business Association during a lunch presentation Dec. 6. Consultants had presented the proposal to property owners during a morning meeting that day and noted that those in attendance preferred the alternative with the most snow cleared by hand and to eliminate the snowmelt system. A third presentation was that night.

This proposal would mean an average annual assessment of about \$600 per property owner, which could change as plans for the district are finalized.

"Landscape maintenance may be something to be considered to add to the district," added Stephanie Parson, NBS senior consultant. Property owners at the morning meeting expressed interest in landscape maintenance being included in the assessment district, which was not part of the initial plan. NTBA members at the lunch meeting were also in favor of adding landscape maintenance to the plan, which will add about \$12,000 to the annual costs, Davidson said.

The assessments for each parcel are based on a variety of

factors, including street and sidewalk frontage, lot size, building size, and land use (residential, commercial, vacant land, recreational use, and more). Property values are not used for assessments within the district.

Assessments would be done annually to reevaluate each parcel, with a public hearing conducted yearly by the Placer County Board of Supervisors. Property owners also could dissolve the district in the future should they vote to do so.

Consultants are expected to have the final property assessments for each parcel completed by February, with property owners within the proposed district voting in February or March. The district would then have to approve by the Board of Supervisors, with assessments added to 2012-13 property tax bills.

Kings Beach project on track

While property owners consider the assessment district to pay for long-term maintenance of improvements, Placer County Associate Engineer Dan LaPlante says the project is on schedule to be finished by fall 2014.

During the summer, traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps and traffic circles were installed within The Grid. These traffic-calming measures will continue to be installed next summer, along with off-highway improvements such as sidewalks, drainage and five parking lots. As well, utilities will be moved and put underground along Highway 28 in summer 2012.

The bulk of the work, which will realign Highway 28 through Kings Beach from four lanes to two lanes with a center turn lane, will be done in the summers of 2013 and 2014, said LaPlante, who also is serving as project manager.

LaPlante said the county is still working to fully fund the project, but is optimistic that funding will be ready before

the major project work begins in 2013. The \$35 million project is being funded through federal and state agencies, transit occupancy tax, impact fees and other sources. There is currently a \$10 million funding shortfall, he said.

“If we can salvage the middle two lanes, we can save \$5 million,” he told NTBA members, bringing the shortfall down to \$5 million.

For more information on the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, go online.

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Note: Katherine E. Hill is a member of the North Tahoe Business Association, but does not own property within the proposed assessment district, and therefore, will have no vote in its formation.

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