

Seismic deficiencies require changes to Fanny Bridge

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – News that a main sewer line may possibly run under where the intersection of highways 28 and 89 in Tahoe City could be relocated came as a surprise to transportation officials.

Marcia Beals, general manager for the Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency, dropped this piece of information on the Advisory Planning Commission of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency at the Jan. 11 meeting.

She was one of nine people to share her views and concerns about altering the highway configuration to accommodate Fanny Bridge. Fanny Bridge has been deemed seismically unsafe for a state highway.



Fanny Bridge in Tahoe City does not meet seismic standards.

“We’ve looked at relocation concepts and have difficulties in how that could be done,” Beals told the board.

Jeff Smith, a consulting engineer for the sewer district,

pointed out there could be problems with manhole covers, the weight from the road placed on the lines, and if a rupture occurred during construction what that would mean to contaminating the Truckee River.

After the meeting Tahoe Transportation District officials spoke briefly with Beals and Smith, with the plan to have more in depth discussions soon.

At this stage, all lines on a map are rough and no decisions about a route have been made.

Originally five alternatives were proposed by the Tahoe Transportation District to reroute highway traffic from this busy intersection and off the bridge that crosses the Truckee River.

Two other alternatives were introduced at the APC meeting from comments brought forward at the two scoping meetings in December.

“There’s a lot of conflict in that area,” Alfred Knotts, TTD planner, told the APC board.

One alternative is the standard do nothing. That alternative could bring load restrictions for trucks crossing it – which in turn could affect commerce along the West Shore.

Some alternatives have a section of Highway 89 running along the lake becoming a road Placer County would own, with a bypass going through 64 acres owned by the U.S. Forest Service to the west to connect with Highway 89 farther west of the current Y in Tahoe City.

One idea is to not allow any traffic crossing Highway 89. This would create a more pedestrian, bike friendly area.

Another is to build a bigger, more stable bridge.

“A new or improved bridge would reflect that cultural value,”

Knotts said.

Roger Kahn, who owns two parcels at the Tahoe City Y, would have preferred TTD staff met with him and others whose property are likely to be affected.

He said closing the road would have a huge economic impact at that end of Tahoe City. The Bank of the West branch manager echoed that concern.

Leigh Cullen said she's concerned if Placer County is responsible for Fanny Bridge that necessary repairs won't be made.

Richard Courcier took issue with studies that say part of the project is designed to relieve congestion, when in fact he said it's only busy in July and August at the Y. He also said having two roads – not closing off the bridge – would be better to help on high traffic days.

He owns the rafting company that operates on the Truckee River. Courcier said shutting Fanny Bridge off to vehicle traffic would create more vehicle miles traveled by anyone coming up the West Shore wanting to go into the heart of Tahoe City.

The APC board took no action last week.

Comments on the Fanny Bridge project are being taken until Jan. 30. Documents are on TTD's website.

All of the alternatives will be studied in the environmental impact statement, environmental impact report, and environmental assessment. It's expected a draft of the three environmental documents will be released in the fall for a 60-day comment period. The final EIS/EIS/EA could come out in the first quarter of 2013. Project approval would be on target by summer 2013, with construction possible in 2015.

