

Public given opportunity to come up with loop road ideas

By Kathryn Reed

With pens in hand, people started drawing what they thought would be the best route for a loop road at the South Shore's state line. At the other end of the table a container was filling up with those casting a vote for there never to be a loop road beyond what exists today.

Tuesday's meeting at Lake Tahoe Community College was a bit of a do-it-yourself exercise instead of having people talk ad nauseam.



People have multiple choices for what a loop road could look like on the South Shore. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Along the walls was information detailing the history of the road that dates to the 1970s. At that time the road was to be an actual loop around the backsides of the Stateline casinos.

The most recent official drawings have the road only going on the mountain side – behind Harrah's and MontBleu.

A long table had placemat size renderings of 16 alternatives. At each one was a bucket of sorts where people could cast up to two votes for their preferred alternative(s). Those not wanting change could put their chip(s) in the 17th container.

Plenty of other people came up with suggestions that were unique or melded alternatives already on the table.

People were also asked to list their top three goals of a loop road or offer new ones. The 12 that were listed, that consultants said came from the community, were:

- Decrease traffic congestion
- Improve pedestrian-bike facilities
- Safer streets
- Increase access to amenities
- Better pedestrian amenities
- Fulfill requirements of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Compact and area plans
- Better pedestrian lighting
- Have advanced forms for transportation
- Encourage special events
- Increase air-water quality
- Improve economy
- Enhance community and tourist experiences.

Some people read the list and wondered who came up with those and why people aren't trying to achieve them even without a loop road.

Wood Rodgers is the consulting firm hired by the Tahoe Transportation District to cull all the information and run the workshops. TTD is the lead agency for the loop road.



Several people drew alternatives not already provided by planners.

While the bulk of the businesses and residents that could be displaced are in South Lake Tahoe, this project could go through even if the City Council doesn't want it.

Proponents of a loop road want to turn the current state highway into a city street so the state line area – which includes California and Nevada – would be more pedestrian friendly. Highway 50 would be routed behind the casinos in Nevada and through existing neighborhoods and/or businesses in California.

For those who want some sort of rerouting of the highway, it's the "where does it go in California?" that causes the most consternation. To this date, consensus has been elusive.

"We want to quantify what we've heard from the community," Mark Rayback with Wood Rodgers told *Lake Tahoe News*.

His team will do that by coalescing the written comments, looking at which alternatives are most popular, and taking the similarities of what has been suggested to come up with what the public deems the top priorities.

A second meeting like the one Oct. 30 will be conducted Nov. 7 from 1-3pm at Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe. It will be the same format.

It's possible at the Dec. 14 TTD board meeting that someone from Wood Rodgers would present a summary of findings, but with no action to be taken.

In the first quarter of 2013 a design charette is likely to occur. From there, four alternatives – though that number is not definite – could be chosen to be studied via environmental documents.