

South Shore loop road down to 6 alternatives

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – While a decision has yet to be made as to whether a loop road beyond what exists today in the Stateline area should or will ever be built, the choices are being narrowed.

At a Dec. 13 meeting at Harveys there were six choices presented. This is down from the 16 that were talked about at the last two meetings. While people had the chance to write down their thoughts, no longer were they offered the chance to draw their own version.

Deanna Shoopman with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News* it is not unheard of in California to take a city street and make it a state highway and for the state highway to become a city street.



People study the various loop road alternatives on Dec. 13 at Harveys. Photo/LTN

That is essentially what proponents of the project want to do. While not everyone is convinced rerouting Highway 50 behind

two or four of the casinos is necessary, the bigger arguments are about where the rerouting would start on the west side and whether it should be a half loop or full loop.

“Safety to the traveling public is our No. 1 priority,” Shoopman said.

For now, this is a Tahoe Transportation District project. Shoopman said her agency would formally weigh in on the project when the environmental documents come out.

Eric Guevin, fire marshal with Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, was perusing the maps Thursday afternoon, too. Traffic flow is what his department is concerned about.

“Intersections that are offset have more problems. There are visual barriers,” Guevin told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Squared intersections tend to be safer.”

Mike McKeen, who owns property in South Lake Tahoe that could be impacted depending on the route, believed the presentation was a charade, a propaganda campaign.

He took issue with the poster board that said 92 percent of the people favor moving forward, while 8 percent want the status quo.

Carl Hasty, TTD executive director, admitted those numbers were derived from the 118 people who attended the last two loop road meetings and that some of the same people attended both meetings and therefore were counted more than once.

What also isn't in that number are the people who would vote to do nothing if their particular alternative is not selected.

Hasty said when his board next hears about the loop road, which could be March, that the history of the project will be told. This includes the various alternatives, not just what staff believes are the most popular.

It will be up to the TTD board to select which alternatives would be studied in the environmental analysis.

In the meantime, the economic analysis is ongoing. That, too, will be part of the environmental study.

TTD reps are also going business-to-business to talk to owners about their opinions.