

Millions to be spent in South Lake Tahoe upgrading infrastructure

Publisher's note: *This is the first of a few stories about road construction planned for the Lake Tahoe Basin this summer.*

By Kathryn Reed

Advice – set the alarm clock even earlier. That may be necessary to make it to your destination on time with the projected delays throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin from roadwork that is about to begin.

It's not just the highways that will be torn up, but city and county streets, too. Some of this is because of repaving jobs, part has to do with sidewalks, scenic improvements are another factor. Utility crews are also upgrading their infrastructure – much of which is below ground and requires a jackhammer to get to.

“Everything we are doing this year will impact the public,” Jim Marino told *Lake Tahoe News*. Marino is South Lake Tahoe's go-to guy when it comes to all things road related.



These are proposed projects for this construction season

in South Lake Tahoe for all agencies. Map/South Lake Tahoe

If all projects the city is involved with go forward this building season, it means about \$17 million in improvements.

Sidewalks along Pioneer Trail between Highway 50 near Stateline and Larch Avenue will be put in starting mid-June. The \$1.17 million contract is expected to be awarded at the April 16 City Council meeting.

South Tahoe Public Utility District must do some work in this area before the city begins its project.

The 5-foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the street will be traditional in design – nothing meandering or fancy.

“They will keep the baby carriages out of the roadway,” is how Marino described them.

This residential area has people walking and biking along the edge of the road at all times of day and night, as well as year-round. It can be difficult to see people because of how dark it is. And when the snow piles up, people are forced to walk in the road where drivers often whiz by at a high rate of speed.

Improvements will include lighting that is similar in design to what has been put in along Highway 50 where Caltrans made improvements for the last two years. All of these lights are expected to be operational by the end of the building season, Marino said.

Part of the bid process included having to specify traffic plans. The city will insist one lane of Pioneer Trail be open at all times.

Night work won't be possible because of the proximity to

residents.

This work is entirely funded by the feds through congestion mitigation air quality (CMAQ) funds.

Marino anticipates if the loop road ever gets built, it will take out some of the improvements being made this summer. But the rationale is do the work now and not wait for something that may never occur or could be a reality 10 years from now.

Plus, the city doesn't have the luxury to let grant funds earn interest. Most are a "use it or lose it" scenario.