

Officials work to make travel in basin more functional

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – How to move people around the East and North shores in a more pleasant and manageable manner dominated Friday's discussion of the Tahoe Transportation District board.

Stephanie Grigsby with Design Workshop presented a video of Highway 28 showing how it could be possible to make parking less treacherous while at the same time providing information for people who are new to the area.

Although this stretch of East Shore roadway from the junction of Highway 50 at Spooner Summit to Crystal Bay was designated a National Scenic Byway in 1996, improvements have been lacking. At that time it was called America's Most Beautiful Drive. Efforts are under way to make the drive complement the natural beauty.



This shows Tahoe Transportation District projects throughout the basin.

Access to the lake is also a big goal of the project. This

should eliminate people needing or wanting to climb over guardrails and walking down steep embankments to reach Lake Tahoe.

Plans came about after the public gave input last fall. Safety, transportation, environment, recreation, scenic and economic needs are being woven into the plans.

The draft Highway 28 Corridor Management Plan is expected to be finished in the next two weeks. Three alternatives, plus a do nothing, are being created. In May, officials are expected to decide on the environmental review process.

This is a cooperative plan that has buy-in from the Nevada Department of Transportation, state parks, state lands, Nevada Highway Patrol, Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID), Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, U.S. Forest Service, Federal Highways Administration, Washoe County, Carson City, Douglas County and Washoe Tribe.

“All of the scenarios include shared use paths, emergency pull-outs, vista points, and various levels of transit service providing connectivity between parking nodes and access to recreational areas,” the TTD staff report from March 22 says.

Tied into this is better public transit, which started last summer with the inaugural East Shore Express. More than 12,000 passenger trips between Incline Village and Sand Harbor were tallied. The goal was to eliminate walk-ins at the popular state park beach because of the dangers parked vehicles and pedestrians create in that area.

It is estimated that 2.6 million vehicles are on this highway every year.

While not part of the Corridor Management Plan, the Nevada Stateline to Stateline Bikeway was also on agenda. In some ways it is a companion piece to the greater transit discussion for the area.

TTD and IVGID are looking at whether six miles of the route can be placed on top of the sewer line; some of which is scheduled for replacement.

“If this works, we will be years ahead of where we would have been with the bike trail,” TTD Executive Director Carl Hasty said.

The bikeway when completed will go from Nevada’s two state lines in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Board member Ron Treabess spoke about the changes that will take place this summer with the North Lake Tahoe Water Shuttle. It’s possible the Hyatt in Incline will be integral in future years as a marina stop; creating another tie-in to the bike route and scenic highway improvements.

This is the second of a three-year pilot program that transports locals and tourists to various marinas – Captain Jon’s Restaurant in Tahoe Vista, Gar Woods in Carnelian Bay, Tahoe City Marina and West Shore Café in Homewood. Captain Jon’s will be substituted for the North Tahoe Marina this summer because it is better protected.

Other changes include charging a flat \$10 fee no matter the marina one departs at, allowing walk-on travelers and not just reservations, running from June 27-Sept. 22, and increasing hours to 10am-11:30pm.