

El Dorado keeping '13 roadwork to a minimum

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

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County planners are busy plotting what will be happening in the basin for the next few years. And while improvements to roads and bike trails could happen this year, 2014 will be super busy when at least six projects are expected to go in the ground.

For this building season, which officially starts May 1, things are still a bit up in the air.

The county is nearing completion to acquire the right-of-way on Sawmill Road to be able to finish the bike trail so it connects with the bridge at Highway 50 that takes cyclists into Meyers. All the environmental documents are in place.



The intersection of Sawmill Road and Lake Tahoe Boulevard will be upgraded by the end of 2015.

Photos/LTN

If everything comes together as the county wants, it's

possible finishing that segment of trail could begin this summer. Right now the trail meanders close to the northern side of Sawmill from Lake Tahoe Boulevard halfway down the street before it dead ends.

Connecting Sawmill to a future path on Lake Tahoe Boulevard has an outside chance of beginning late in the season. That trail will roughly follow the U.S. Forest Service dirt path that starts at Viking Way and goes into the Upper Truckee neighborhood.

This is part of a larger project to narrow Lake Tahoe Boulevard. Comments on the CEQA documents for the roadwork are being taken until April 24.

“The plans are nearly done for the bike trail portion. The plan is to split that job into two where the road improvements happen separate from the class 1 bike paths,” Brendan Ferry, senior planner with the El Dorado County Department of Transportation, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We are focusing on the bike portion. That is the most important piece as we see it.”

The trail will be built to American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards, which means 10-feet wide, plus 2-foot shoulders, meeting American with Disabilities Act requirements and limitations on the grade.

It will connect riders with the class 2 bike trail at the top of Clearview Drive.



The trail sign to the left

indicates where one end of the new paved bike trail will go, with the STHS sign to the right.

A crosswalk will be installed at Viking Way-D Street so cyclists can more safely connect with the trail on the other side of the street that leads into the city limits along Lake Tahoe Boulevard.

Lake Tahoe Boulevard was built decades ago with the anticipation of larger subdivisions being developed that would require that much asphalt. Those are off the books and now the roadway is more than what is needed, according to numerous traffic studies.

“There used to be a river running through that corridor. Now it’s a large roadway,” Ferry said.

Downsizing Lake Tahoe Boulevard from Sawmill to about Tahoe Mountain Road from four lanes to two will remove pavement in a stream environmental zone and make travel safer, Ferry said.

“A single lane with a guard rail will be safer,” Ferry said in regards to the sharp curve on the road.

The road will be restriped, pavement removed and improvements made to the intersection at Sawmill and Lake Tahoe Boulevard.

During construction one lane of travel will always be open, Ferry said.

Based on the various funding sources for the project, the work must be done by 2015 or the county would have to forfeit those dollars.

Other projects for 2013:

- One of the first items on the list is to finish the Christmas Valley Erosion control project.

- Boulder Mountain will be paved. This will likely start in July.
- An erosion control project in Montgomery Estates is slated to begin at the end of August.