

Initial Greenway Bike Path phase coming in '14



Planned and existing bike trails on the South Shore. Map/CTC

By Kathryn Reed

The significance of a stretch of bike trail cannot be measured in its length.

Such is the case with the initial phase of the South Tahoe Greenway Trail that is slated to be built next summer. It will be less than a half-mile and comes with a construction price tag of about \$500,000.

The money to build what is being called Phase 1A is in hand and was allocated at Thursday's California Tahoe Conservancy board meeting.

In 2008, the CTC was projecting the entire 9.2-mile trail

would cost \$20 million to build.

While that entire project that has been on the books since 2002 is still on the drawing board, it is now being cobbled together, but in a way that is designed to attract future funding.

“We strategized how we were going to phase this carefully so we could attract additional funding,” Sue Rae Irelan, with the CTC, told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting. “If you can make transportation an argument, there will be bike funding available.”

This initial phase is in a heart of a community that relies heavily on walking and biking as its modes of transportation.

Today, grant dollars go to entities that also have a proven track record. The CTC has built numerous bike trails on the California side of the basin.

The Greenway Trail has been Irelan’s baby since the get-go.

“It’s just going to feel so wonderful to ride this first section of trail,” Irelan said.

It will be 10-foot wide, with 2-foot shoulders, meet ADA requirements and have a grade of less than 5 percent.

The entire project is now three phases. And within phase 1 are three phases. Phase 1A is 0.47 miles linking the Bijou neighborhood to the edge of Bijou Meadow. It will be ready to ride at the end of the 2014 construction season.

Phase 1B hooks up at the meadow and connects to Bijou Community Park and crosses Al Tahoe Boulevard to connect to Lake Tahoe Community College and the community ball field.

Phase 1C connects on the other side of 1A and goes to Ski Run Boulevard.

All of Phase 1 is 3.62 miles. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has issued a permit for the entire phase.

Phases 2 and 3 include going to Meyers in one direction and Van Sickle Bi-state Park in the other.

Phases 1B and 1C may cost more because they involve boardwalks to cross stream environmental zones. But the extent of those crossings is up in the air with the TRPA Regional Plan update not classifying all SEZ areas the same. And with coverage for bike trails not part of the equation, that, too, could drop the price.

This will be a CTC owned trail. Usually the state agency is a funding pass-through of sorts to other entities. This means the CTC also needs to figure out how to pay for maintenance and operation costs.

Irelan at the June 20 meeting told the board because CTC is not eligible for voter approved Measure R funds for bike trail maintenance it's possible an agreement with the city will be worked out so the local government could use Measure R dollars for the Greenway.

That topic has not been discussed by the Measure R board, which consists of a city rep, El Dorado County member and Tahoe Paradise Park person.

Also at the Thursday board meeting, the board allocated up to \$350,000 for the remainder of the Sawmill bike path to be finished in 2014.