

Network of Lake Tahoe bike trails increasing

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – Piece-by-piece agencies in the basin are putting together a comprehensive bike trail system with the goal of eventually being able to ride a bike around Lake Tahoe on something other than a state highway.

At this month's California Tahoe Conservancy meeting the board awarded \$500,000 to the Tahoe City Public Utility District to build a one-mile section in Homewood that will link Tahoe City with Sugar Pine Point State Park.

TCPUD has 22 miles of trails that are well used. It's estimated 400,000 people are on the paths each year. And there are only 7,000 permanent residents in the area.



Today cyclists must ride next to traffic in Homewood. That will change next summer. Photo/LTN

Most of the new trail will be Class 1, meaning it will be separated from traffic. It will be 8-foot-wide, with 2-foot shoulders. Part of the trail will be Class 3, meaning next to a vehicle lane. This is when it veers off Highway 89 and goes

onto San Souci Terrace.

A new bridge will also be built to cross Madden Creek.

The plan is for the trail to be constructed on the west side of the highway in 2014. This will be concurrent with a Caltrans water quality project.

The total cost of this one mile is \$1,557,970. The North Lake Tahoe Resort Association has contributed \$600,000, the Tahoe Fund \$34,375 and Placer County \$25,000. The remaining nearly \$400,000 is expected to come from a grant, additional county park fees or TCPUD capital funds.

The trail will be striped in front of Homewood Mountain Resort. If JMA Ventures, the property owner, redevelops the resort, then it would be mandated to put in a more formal bike path to complement what will be constructed next summer.

Also on Sept. 19, the CTC board agreed to award Placer County \$500,000 for it to buy a 19.5-acre parcel from NV Energy that will be used for the Dollar Creek Shared-Use Trail project.

The 2.2-mile section of trail will tie into the TCPUD's 22 miles of trails on one end and to Kings Beach on the other.

Connections beyond the parcel that was just bought will involve the U.S. Forest Service because that is where its ownership begins.

Larry Sevison, board chairman, said Northstar is interested in creating a loop that would link up with the newly acquired property.

There is also a cross country ski resort that abuts the parcel.

"We are talking to the ski center. There is a bridge crossing Dollar Creek that could be upsized for their groomer," Jon Mitchell with Placer County told the board.

This means the trail could become accessible year-round.

The first priority is to get the trail built and then land ownership will be discussed. CTC, Placer County, California State Parks and North Tahoe Public Utility District all own a slice of where the trail will go.

The entire network of trails helped the North Lake Tahoe area in May to receive the League of American Bicyclists' bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community.