

Incline Village segment of Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail whittled down to 2 options

By Kathryn Reed

Riding closer to the lake or being more in the woods. That is what people are being asked to decide when it comes to developing the first three miles of the Incline Village segment of the Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway.

The environmental documents for the project are in circulation. Two options plus a do nothing alternative are proposed. The Tahoe Transportation District, the lead agency, has not picked a preferred route.

“There is give and take in both based on user experience and environmental and regulatory constraints,” Alfred Knotts, lead planner with TTD, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Either the mountain or lakeside are both pretty much 100 percent public lands.”



The South Shore demo bike path is meeting expectations of developers. Photo Copyright 2014 Carolyn E. Wright

Easements would still need to be obtained, along with a special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service.

This segment is part of a more than 30-mile bike trail that one day will connect Crystal Bay in the north to Stateline in the south. The Stateline demo project is finished. It goes from Kahle Drive to Round Hill Pines Beach. It has already proved to be a popular trail. Douglas County tallied the users with 10,768 on the trail in July. The peak day was July 4 with 963 people. The total for August was 7,842 users; peak was Aug. 8 at 405.

This summer the Laura Drive connection will be built. Still to come is the path involving Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. Eventually that will link to the Greenway Trail that will go from Meyers to Stateline.

For now, the focus is getting the paperwork done for the Incline segment and then looking for the funding once the final alignment is determined. It's estimated to cost \$12 million if the lake version is chosen. This is the more expensive alternative.

"It would be separated from the highway and would be depressed," Knotts explained.

It's likely the project would be broken into segments. In part this has to do with money, but also because the building season in Tahoe is so short. Next year is the earliest it could start.

No matter the preferred alternative, the first segment is the same – going from Incline to Tunnel Creek.

The mountain version then goes from Tunnel Creek to Memorial Point then to Sand Harbor.

The lake version would cross Highway 28 at Tunnel Creek, go to Memorial Point and end at Sand Harbor.

A 30-space parking lot is proposed for the area near Tunnel Creek Café.

Studies have shown it's not just Tahoe residents and visitors riding at Lake Tahoe. A substantial number of people from Reno bring their bikes to the basin to ride.

"We've identified recreation is the economic driver of Lake Tahoe. Facilities will help bring that to reality," Knotts said.

Once the comment period closes, the agency will review them, incorporate changes and address issues. By the end of June it's likely the project will have been before the TTD, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Federal Highway Administration boards for approval.

As work is being done on these three miles, the section of the larger trail is being discussed. This could come to fruition years sooner than once believed possible. This is because the Incline Village General Improvement District has to do work on an export line. IVGID has expressed interest in working with TTD to have the bike trail go in at the same time.

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Notes:

- Comments will be taken until April 11. Send them to Brian Judge, TRPA, P.O. Box 5310, Stateline, NV 89448.
- Washoe County commissioners will have a public hearing March 25 at 6pm at 1001 E. Ninth St., Bldg. A, Reno.
- Tahoe Transportation District's board will have a meeting April 11 at 9:30am at Sierra Nevada College, 291 Country Club Drive, Room 141, Incline Village.
- The project document may be found online.