

# Roads-paths near STMS being scrutinized



Garrett Villanueva, right, marks his trail ideas as Ben Fish with Design Workshop looks on Nov. 19.  
Photo/Kathryn Reed

## By Kathryn Reed

Reducing the width of travel lanes to create bike or multi-use paths around South Tahoe Middle School was a reoccurring theme during a workshop Wednesday night.

Statistics show from 2008-12 in a two-mile radius of STMS there have been 257 collisions, of which 23 involved pedestrians and 37 were cyclists. There were four fatalities, 21 involved severe injuries, 75 visible injuries and 155 complained of injuries.

Improving street crossings, and creating better bike paths and sidewalks could reduce those numbers, advocates believe.

Another problem is there are many gaps in the connections in

and around the middle school. The goal is to fill those in and make what exists better.

Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative was awarded a \$153,625 On Our Way grant from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to look at how bike and pedestrian connections around STMS could be improved. The Community Mobility Group, a subgroup of the collaborative, on Nov. 19 presented alternatives to the more than 20 people who attended the workshop.

The first workshop was in October.

It was pointed out how most roads adjacent to a school have signs altering drives to the facility. Not so for STMS on either Highway 50 or Al Tahoe Boulevard. And neither requires motorists to slow to 25 mph when students are present.

Signage is the minimum the group is proposing.

To figure out what improvements to make the group has conducted community, STMS parent and student surveys, and two workshops. Traffic studies and counts have been done. Stakeholders have been consulted.

The east-west connection through Bijou Community Park is an idea that came earlier from the public.

More than 20 poster boards were scattered about the STMS multipurpose room outlining statistics and possibilities. They delved into the intersections of Al Tahoe and Highway 50, Al Tahoe and Johnson Boulevard, Lyons and 50, and Rufus Allen Boulevard and 50.

Class 1 bike trails, cycle tracks, green painting and bike lanes are being looked into.

Organizers and those stakeholders will pick a preferred alternative from all the data that has been collected. It will then be 30 percent engineered – close to shovel ready so grants could be secured for implementation.

**Some of the thoughts, ideas and concerns on Wednesday included:**

- Putting a diagonal crosswalk at Lyons Avenue and Highway 50;
- Wondering if user trails will go away;
- Desiring select trees to be cut to allow more sun on paths;
- Elevating a trail through Bijou Meadow instead of paving it;
- A crosswalk on Al Tahoe Boulevard to get to the future bike park;
- Shared cart path for golfers-walkers-cyclists at Bijou Golf Course, and add signs.

A long-term vision of the group is to either improve the current Trout Creek Highway 50 underpass or build a new underpass to the south.

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**Notes:**

- More info about the Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative Community Mobility group may be found online.