

Planners plotting Tahoe's cycling future

By Kathryn Reed

Cycling in the Lake Tahoe Basin can be compared to driving in rush hour traffic. It's a lot of stop and go, along with frustration.

With the lack of connectivity, routes abruptly stopping and harrowing experiences when having to interact with vehicles, two-wheelers in Tahoe are often relegated to second-class citizens – at least on the roads. Planners, with the help of the public, want to change that reality.

“We are transitioning into an active transportation plan,” Nick Haven, transit planner with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Historically, we've been focused on circulation and transportation.” Now health and other modes of transit like skateboarding are part of the bigger picture.

The bi-state agency is updating its bike and pedestrian plan – something that is done every four years.

On April 14 more than 20 people gathered at the South Lake Tahoe Library to offer input about what planners should focus on when designing trails, what overall goals should be, where missing links in the trail system exist, and where bike racks should be installed.

Greg Kendall of Marla Bay voted for buffered or protected bike lanes, as did many others. While he prefers a separated bike path, he told *Lake Tahoe News* he knows that isn't realistic for his part of the South Shore where the roads are narrow. Kendall also believes it's necessary to accommodate the different types of cyclists – those out for a leisurely ride,

and those who are more serious, going faster and would be encumbered by a multi-use path.

Morgan Beryl, who is TRPA's project manager for what is now called an active transportation plan, told *Lake Tahoe News* the document would prioritize projects for funding, be a guide for what should be implemented and be a source for designers.

TRPA has found that people are sticking to their vehicles because they don't feel safe on the roads or in intersections – whether on a bike or foot. Working to make intersections safer is a goal. Caltrans recently added a class 4 designation to bike trails. This allows for two-way travel on the same side of the street along the road. Bike boxes are being tested in Sacramento and Davis. These put cyclists in front of vehicles at an intersection. Removable signs in the roadway and flashing lights to alert motorists of the presence of cyclist are other innovations.

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Notes:

- Feedback on the bike-pedestrian plan is also being sought via an online survey that will be up through June.
- A draft plan – which will seek more public comment – should be ready by October, with the final document completed by the end of the year.
- There is a meeting at Kings Beach Elementary on April 16 from 5:30 to 7:30pm about the plan.