

South Shore bike trails, ball fields may expand

By Kathryn Reed

A multi-pronged approach is being taken to speed up the process of laying down the Greenway Bike Trail on the South Shore as well as improve other recreation amenities and the connection between areas.

California Tahoe Conservancy, the lead agency in the Meyers to Stateline trail, is working with South Lake Tahoe and Lake Tahoe Community College in a potential land swap that would have the government bodies owning more contiguous acreage and put a stream environmental zone into state ownership.

The college board on Tuesday night had a study session about possibly being a partner in applying for a state grant that could bring \$2 million to town to help build a chunk of the bike path that follows the old Caltrans right-of-way that the Conservancy acquired in 2000. Also discussed was the future of the community ball field.

The Active Transportation Program (ATP) is a combo of state and federal dollars that the state is administering. To receive the grant it's imperative to approach the proposal as a team and have a chunk of cash to assist with the project.

The Conservancy has \$1 million to put toward the project beyond the work that will be done this summer. (The trail from Herbert Avenue to the edge of Bijou Meadow at Glenwood Way will break ground next month.)

The city and college would also each need to put in about \$1 million. A commitment, though, from the electeds still needs to be obtained. The city and LTCC each has a subcommittee of two members working the trails issue as well as the community

ball field.

Sue Rae Irelan, who has been spearheading the Greenway trail for the CTC for years, told the college board that even if the South Shore is awarded the grant, it's possible to turn it down, so the college is not committed to spending money until it accepts the state money. The deadline to apply for the grant is late May.

At the April 21 meeting the college board was lukewarm in agreeing to pursue the conversation.

In Measure F, the voter approved facilities bond from 2014, there is money for trails. Any bond money must only be used for improvements on land the college owns. LTCC, with the multimillion-dollar donation for the university center, has even more cash for this bike project if the board decides it's a worthy project.

The next phase of the Greenway – that the grant would help pay for – goes from Glenwood Way to Al Tahoe Boulevard. This brings the trail right to the college, to the community ball field and the path on Al Tahoe.

The city is contemplating going after a separate ATP grant to further the South Tahoe Middle School connectivity plan. This would provide a trail along Al Tahoe to Johnson Boulevard. This would hook up with the Greenway.

Part of all the discussion is the future of what is a community ball field that has become the more exclusive use of the college for its soccer program. The field was built with Measure S money, the recreation bond. Two other fields were supposed to have been built.

The college and city are talking about building another field adjacent to the current one as well as a smaller practice field. It's estimated a second field, on land the city owns, would cost about \$1 million.

It will be at the college board's May meeting that a vote likely will be taken on whether to prepare a letter of support for the grant, whether to exchange property, allocate bond money to the bike trail project, and finalize plans for the future of the current ball field and construction of a new one.

CTC officials will be making a presentation to the City Council on May 5. At that same meeting the council is scheduled to hear about the grant proposal. The CTC board is likely to receive an update on the Greenway at its April 30 meeting.