

# Tahoe roadwork to severely impact drive time



CITY OF SOUTH LAKE TAHOE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
2015 PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY (AS OF 3-31-15)

Engineering Division 

By Kathryn Reed

Extra time. It's something motorists will need more of this summer because of all the road related work occurring in the Lake Tahoe Basin this summer.

With the weather being unseasonably dry, the work is already beginning. Some of the work is on state highways, other is on municipal streets, bike paths are being put in, utilities changed and water meters installed.

In South Lake Tahoe, nearly all the main thoroughfares will be affected, which means normal shortcuts are not going to save any time.

Southwest Gas starting in mid-May is expected to begin

relocating its infrastructure from the Y to Al Tahoe Boulevard. It will then go up Al Tahoe Boulevard to the first entrance for Lake Tahoe Community College. This will take two years.

This needs to be done before Caltrans comes in in 2017. The state will repave that 2-mile stretch, put in curb and gutter. It will essentially look like other areas of town where Caltrans has upgraded the roadway; but it won't have streetlights. The Caltrans job when it starts will take three years to complete.

Lane closures will be the norm all summer.

The other utility project is Liberty Utilities will be putting its lines underground on Pioneer Trail from Golden Bear to the city limits. This mean lane closures on Pioneer Trail.

Compounding that area will be El Dorado County's repaving project on Black Bart, Martin and Barbara avenues.

Then the city will be working on Sierra Boulevard most of the summer, with the start date being early May on the \$4.5 million project. There will be curbs and gutters on the side that drains into the meadow. This is mostly a water quality project that will tie into the Caltrans project that is coming in 2017.

"In Sierra Tract there are not many places in the road to put big storm drain pipes. That is what is supposed to be put in first before the roads, not last," Jim Marino, assistant public works director, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There will be a lot of detours, road closures and definite impact to that residential area."

The most noticeable and impactful project may be through Camp Richardson. Caltrans will be working on a \$25 million project on Highway 89 from the Y to Cascade Lake. This will take at least two years, if not three.

Trees have already been removed to accommodate 4-foot shoulders in the two-lane area.

The four-lane stretch will see curbs, gutters and sidewalks, much like the middle of South Lake Tahoe.

While at the end of the day the road is designed to look better, the main thing is improved water quality by putting in drainage features so less sediment is reaching Lake Tahoe.

The contractor is set to begin work today. Significant traffic controls are slated to begin next week. Expect up to 20-minute delays just in this area.

Off-peak season work will be around-the-clock from Sunday at 10pm to Friday at 11am. During peak season it will be Sunday at 9pm to Monday at 7am, and Monday-Friday 7pm-7am.

“There is a proposal that our resident engineer has put forth to work during the day during the season in the four-lane section of town where the motels are,” Steve Nelson with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The hotel owners are pushing for us to work during the day because of the disturbance to their guests. It has not been approved yet.”

The concern about working during the day is that backups would be more severe.

With all of Caltrans' projects, it may take more than an extra hour to drive from South Lake Tahoe to Tahoe City.

The Vikingsholm to Meeks Bay project should be completed this year. Half of the 7-mile section was finished last year, with the other half on the books for this season.

Meeks Bay to Wilson Road in Tahoma is a separate 2-mile stretch that will take one summer to do.

From Homewood to the Ward Creek area near Sunnyside is another project.

Each Caltrans project could be a 20-minute delay. During peak season the Homewood/Sunnyside and Tahoma jobs will have around-the-clock work during the week.

Bike paths will be built in the county and city. The Sawmill path should be completed this summer. It will then provide a continuous link from Meyers to South Tahoe High School.

In South Lake Tahoe, the path from the site of the old Alta Mira building, at the end of Lakeview Commons, to Ski Run Boulevard will be repaved. It will be a class 1 trail – meaning off the road, and 10 feet of pavement.

The hope is that work will begin mid-summer, but the city still needs to acquire property and/or right-of-way before going out to bid.

Marino, with the city, said the money – mostly grants – is in hand for what could be a \$4 million project for three-quarters of a mile. That figure includes acquisitions and planning, not just building the trail.

Some property owners want compensation and won't just grant an easement because parking spots will be eliminated.

“Being adjacent to the highway there are grade issues and restructuring; acquisition at several those commercial properties is driving up the costs,” Marino said. Water quality improvements will also be part of the bike path.

Work is also continuing on Highway 28 in Kings Beach.

—

#### **Notes:**

- April 21, 9am South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting will have a presentation about the Sierra Tract project.
- April 23, 6pm at Lake Tahoe Airport there will be a meeting

hosted by the city, Caltrans and Southwest Gas to talk about the project along Highway 50.

- Here is Caltrans information.