

Cyclists plot South Shore path improvements

By Kathryn Reed

The South Shore cycling community has big plans for this year that involve allocating money for trails and signage, as well getting jurisdictions to coordinate improvements to better leverage the limited dollars that are available.

Shay Navarro, head of the Bicycle Advisory Committee for the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Joint Powers Authority, on Jan. 29 presented her group's goals for the year to the board.

The three-member board is comprised of reps from South Lake Tahoe (Austin Sass), El Dorado County (Sue Novasel) and Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District (Victor Babbitt). The men are new to the board, with this being their first meeting. The board is tasked with overseeing the expenditure of Measure S/R funds.

Last year's pilot program to remove snow from the city's class 1 trails barely happened because of lack of white stuff, so the money is being used this season.

With \$22,000 left over from the Sawmill bridge decking project because the bid came in lower than expected, the bike committee is recommending that money be used to plow paths in the county that go from Viking Way to Meyers.

Novasel said the county's department of transportation has questions about whether that path meandering through the woods (paralleling Lake Tahoe Boulevard) could sustain a vehicle regularly on it without damaging the asphalt, as well as questioning the need for snow stakes. She said a resolution won't happen this winter.

It is estimated there will be \$65,000 from the measures for bike-related improvements this year. While the board agreed with the committee's priority list, final adoption will come in the summer when the exact figure is available. The preliminary list is necessary so committee members may work with city and county staff to get the projects on their calendars. Much of the this will be ironed out between the committee members and staff from the city and county at the March meeting of the bike group.



El Dorado County officials have concerns about plowing the path that parallels Lake Tahoe Boulevard. Photo/LTN

The list in order of the bike committee's priorities include:

- Adding money to ensure completion of the class 1 segment along Rufus Allen Boulevard from the library to vector control and from Rufus Allen to the senior center. This includes the planned rehabilitation of paths between the bridge east of Meeks Lumber and Edgewood Circle and between Lakeview Commons and the Alta Mira site.

- To decrease user conflicts, painting a yellow line down the Linear Park and Harrison Avenue paths is recommended. Widening Linear Park is also a suggestion.

- Improve the pavement on paths at 15th Street, community playfields, and boardwalk by Lake Tahoe Golf Course.

- As the city does work on Sierra Boulevard, create an extension from there to the class 1 trail behind Scusa restaurant and Fitness Evolution. "This is perfect timing because they plan to rip out the entire parking lot after the snow season," Sass said.

- Add green paint in the area of Eloise Avenue and Dunlap Street in the city when crews are striping the area to improve bike safety. This would be a pilot program. Green paint is a growing trend to help vehicles and bikes coexist on the same roads.

- Increase signage where appropriate. They could give directions and mileage to key areas, as is the case with other signs the committee has funded.

- While Measure R/S funds cannot be used to repave a street, the committee is urging the city to fix the dilapidated Eloise Avenue because it is a major route for cyclists and the surface is more suitable for a mountain bike than a road bike.

- The committee wants to ensure intersection improvements included in the Tahoe Valley Area Plan are sensitive to the needs of cyclists.

- The county is asked to realign the Pat Lowe trail for better access to Pioneer Trail and Highway 50 with funds from the On-Our-Way grant.

- It is suggested the city extend a path from Melba Drive to Lake Tahoe Airport so cyclists have an alternative to

getting to that facility, which doubles as city hall, without having to ride on Highway 50.

- The group wants the city to apply for bike-friendly status, with the goal of getting a higher rating than bronze as has been awarded in the past.

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In other action:

- Babbitt brought up the likelihood the park in Meyers will need more money than the \$50,000 it currently receives via the voter-approved measures. Bike committee member Chuck Nelson pointed out this is not what voters approved and believes it would be illegal to do so. Novasel said the matter can be further investigated and discussed at the next meeting.