

TTD puts promises about loop road in writing

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The Tahoe Transportation District board on Friday took action regarding the proposed loop road in an attempt to avoid creating more blight in an already blighted area.

In other words, board members don't want another Ta-hole as was created with the Chateau project when it went belly up because financing hadn't actually been secured and a consolidated parcel map was never filed.

The board, with little discussion, on May 13 unanimously approved what it calls principles.

Before doing so the board learned there is already money in the pipeline for acquisition of property. The district is promised \$1,109,333 through the Federal Transportation Improvement Program. This is nearly \$900,000 less than was requested, though it's routine to get less funding than desired.

Key principles include:

- Starting road construction after all rights-of-way are secured and replacement housing is established.
- Not demolishing anything until the project is fully funded.
- Keeping the current highway open until the new highway is finished.

The loop road is designed to route Highway 50 near the state line behind the casinos starting near Pioneer Trail and coming out at Lake Parkway. The current highway would then become a city-county street.

Some of the other principles are:

- Using eminent domain by the district only to complete the needed right-of-way. (Other jurisdictions like South Lake Tahoe and Caltrans could still use eminent domain.)
- Having new deed-restricted affordable housing constructed or acquired as deed-restricted, which means the amount someone may charge for rent or resale is limited by the deed and any buyers or renters must meet the financial criteria.
- The priority option for new deed-restricted housing will remain in the project area.
- The majority of funding for all project elements will come from federal and state sources.
- Utility location will be included as part of the project costs.

The draft environmental documents are expected to be released later this year.