

Function, looks part of Meyers road plans



Jerry Champa, Caltrans traffic safety liaison and engineer, discusses the possible Pioneer Trail roundabout with Meyers residents on July 21. Photo/ Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

MEYERS – A roundabout at the Pioneer Trail intersection, another one at the Highway 89 intersection, frontage roads flanking Highway 50 in between, and sidewalks and a bike path all the way down Apache Avenue. These are a few of the ideas planners had on display at Thursday's Meyers Corridor Project public meeting.

On July 21, planners from El Dorado County, Tahoe Regional

Planning Agency and Caltrans hosted the meeting at the California Conservation Corps building to present and gather input on preliminary concepts for improving the main transportation corridors through Meyers.

The goal of the project is to improve vehicle circulation on the roads, improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, manage traffic during peak times, create a Main Street concept and enhance operations such as snow removal.

For the sake of this project, Meyers is being loosely defined as the area between Pioneer Trail and the intersection of Highway 89. As such, planners have identified three main areas as the focus for major improvements: the intersection at Pioneer Trail, the intersection at Highway 89, and Apache Avenue.

Planning for this project began when TRPA awarded El Dorado County an On Our Way grant to improve pedestrian and bicycle alternatives, the streetscape and water quality along the Highway 50 corridor through Meyers.

For Thursday's meeting, John Kahling, deputy director of El Dorado County Community Development Agency and Transportation Division, and Brendan Ferry, principal planner with El Dorado County, spoke briefly about the project before opening up the room for attendees to mingle about viewing schematics and talking with planners one-on-one. The two-hour meeting concluded with an open question and answer session.

Four stations were set up where attendees could interact directly with planners and view computer-generated pictures depicting what areas would look like if the proposed plans were put into place. The stations were for the Pioneer intersection, the Highway 89 intersection, Apache Avenue from Highway 50 to San Bernardino Avenue and the overall Highway 50 corridor, which displayed three options.

Planners stressed that the project is still in the early

stages of planning and these are just preliminary ideas. However, they wanted to gauge how residents are feeling about their ideas so far and obtain feedback.

Kahling said the reactions he has received at this and other recent public presentations has been mixed, but overall seems pretty positive.

“People are generally receptive to the idea of improving Highway 50 through Meyers,” he said.

He has heard comments and concerns regarding drainage, private property and traffic spilling over onto the residential streets.

One Meyers resident expressed concern the project might be focused more on making the streets look pretty than helping traffic. She would rather see the residential streets fixed. However, a FAQ flyer available at the front door addressed the second part of her concern, explaining how the residential streets are maintained and funded by a different entity, and this project would not take any manpower or funds away from those projects.

John Garofalos, who lives on Apache Avenue, said he has no objections to improvements happening on his street. However, he believes the current plan may be a little short sighted and could be designed better. He would also rather see three timed stoplights installed instead of roundabouts; one each at Highway 89, Apache and Pioneer Trail. This was not one of the proposed options.

Presenters announced Meyers resident David Reichel is acting as the Meyers community representative for the project, offering local insight to planners. It was explained that this is not a political position, nor does he have authority to make decisions or design any plans. However, one attendee still expressed concern that Reichel had not been elected to the position.

In all, about 30 residents attended the meeting, and numerous questions and concerns were discussed. The overall impression seemed to be a positive one with residents embracing the idea of improving their small community.

“Like all of human nature, every person likes certain things,” Ferry said. “So, what we’re trying to do is find what is best overall for the community.”