

Greenbelt in South Lake becoming more defined

By Kathryn Reed

It's like a trove of trails is hiding in broad daylight.

South Lake Tahoe wants to open up the area behind the commercial buildings on the southeast corner at the Y to turn it into a desirable walking-biking network.

Known as the Tahoe Valley Greenbelt, this swath of land will also be reworked so drainage is better.

It's going to take cooperation with the California Tahoe Conservancy and private property owners to make the city's vision become a reality.

On Wednesday night about 20 people gathered at City Hall to discuss the greenbelt – to offer opinions about the proposed trails, signage, open spaces, stormwater elements, play concepts and other aspects of the project. For people who were not at the Dec. 14 meeting, a survey is **online** to give input.

The city has money via the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act to produce the environmental review and 30 percent of the planning. The CEQA document should come out in the spring.

Construction dollars would then be sought. At the earliest, construction could start in 2018.



The area in green will be a scenic corridor in South Lake Tahoe.

Dilapidated paved trails already exist behind what was called the Factory Stores at the Y (now The Crossing) and McDonald's. The plan is to upgrade what is there and create new trails – some class 1, some smaller and more interpretive in nature. They would tie into the neighborhood.

The potential to connect to Barton Health offices exists. And down the road a connector to the Greenway Bike Trail is possible when that gets built.

Plans laid out by the Design Workshop show a major connector coming out on B Street at Highway 50. Caltrans still needs to give its OK to have this be a highway crossing. Otherwise it would mean the nearest crosswalk is at the Y. For people heading west, they would be more apt to be on the wrong side of the street or jaywalk to get to the other side.

The paths won't lead right through The Crossing because that could be dangerous to have people walk/ride into and through a parking lot. However, the trail will border the back of the

center where outdoor seating for a restaurant is planned.

This area behind the commercial center has gradually been thinned by the city to open it up a bit. A creek runs in the area and a meadow of sort exists. The plan is to return some of land to more of its natural setting even though part of it will be paved for trails.

This is also where the bulk of the stormwater improvements will go. The extent of the work to treat runoff will depend on property owners. McDonald's owns some land beyond its footprint because of how coverage used to be calculated. With the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency changing its coverage calculations, the restaurant could sell that "extra" land to the city or grant an easement to the city. If this occurs, a more robust stormwater plan could be built. That aspect could be smoothed out as the franchise owner comes forward with his plans to renovate the existing eatery.

The intent is to also have art and play structures along the greenbelt. Some renderings showed logs that children could scramble on instead of traditional playground equipment. Art could blend in with the natural environment.