

June 8, 2015

Steve Pedretti, Director
Community Development Agency, County of El Dorado
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667



RE: Black Bart repaving in South Lake Tahoe – Agenda Item #26 6-9-15 Board Meeting

Dear Mr. Pedretti,

The Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative (LTSC) includes over 100 volunteers living, working, and recreating in the Tahoe-Truckee region. The LTSC mission is to sustain a citizen-based effort to accelerate a shift toward a healthier Tahoe-Truckee community, environment, and economy. We understand that El Dorado County plans to repave Black Bart this summer. We view this as an opportunity to better address the unsafe conditions and suggest some recommended actions below.

In the past three years, the Community Mobility Workgroup of the LTSC has successfully worked with both the County and the City of South Lake Tahoe to make our community more bike and pedestrian friendly. We have identified streets, such as Apache, that could benefit from the addition of bike lanes and we requested that they be added, which they were thanks to County staff.

Similarly, we identified that Black Bart, a key arterial route through town and one of the few connections to Pioneer Trail, is dangerous for bikers. We requested that it be designated as a bike route, and signed and marked accordingly. Thanks to County staff, Black Bart was striped with fog lines and “share the road” signs were installed. However, this important route remains dangerous as cars continue to drive fast and the fog lines provide little to no shoulder space. We are hoping the County can take additional steps to improve safety.

Many communities (including our own South Lake Tahoe) are now choosing to narrow travel lanes from 12 feet to 11 feet, and even 10 feet, to make room for bike lanes and slow cars down. The 10-foot lanes with the fog lines add a sense of narrowing to the road and encourage cars to drive slower. They also create room for wider shoulders, which would make a considerable difference on Black Bart.

Therefore, we urge you to consider narrowing Black Bart road to 10 feet in order to accommodate wider shoulders delineated by fog lines as well as sharrows and more signage. Even if there is not room for official bike lanes after the car lanes have been narrowed, having 3 to 4 foot shoulders where possible with fog lines along that stretch would be a significant improvement and step in the right direction. We would particularly like to see the addition of sharrows and additional signage before the blind curve where Martin bridge crosses Trout Creek.

Two years ago, the City of South Lake Tahoe added fog lines to Glenwood, and it has helped to improve the unsafe conditions for cyclists and pedestrians. Families walking along the road say that it is easier to keep their children on the side of the road by asking that they stay behind the fog line. Drivers too have said that it helps them drive more safely – particularly at night along that dark and winding road.

We consider this request to be of urgent importance as the California Tahoe Conservancy is applying for an ATP grant for the Greenway project, which would fund the development of a bike path from the LTCC ball fields across Trout Creek into Sierra Tract. It would intersect right into Black Bart and would mean that many more bicyclists would be coming through this area and be likely to use Black Bart even more than they do now.

Additionally, as noted in TRPA's Lake Tahoe Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, any type of road construction triggers the need to consider and construct, where possible, pedestrian and Class II bicycle lanes. The specific language states:

1.16: Construct, upgrade, and maintain pedestrian and Class II bicycle facilities (bike lanes) meeting AASHTO standards where feasible along major travel routes when the edge of roadway¹ is altered or improved. Where bicycle lanes are not feasible due to environmental or land ownership constraints, provide as much shoulder area as possible for safe bicycle passage

We know the first round of bids for the planned improvements this summer were high. We urge the council to proceed with a second bidding process as soon as possible in order to create an opportunity to address some safety issues with better striping and signage. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures are shown in a row. The first signature is 'Gavin Feiger', the second is 'Steve Teshara', and the third is 'Rebecca Bryson'. Each signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Gavin Feiger (gavin.feiger@gmail.com), Steve Teshara (steveteshara@gmail.com), and Rebecca Bryson (rebeccabryson27@yahoo.com)

Chairs of the Community Mobility Workgroup

<http://sustainabilitycollaborative.org/how-we-work/community-mobility-cm>

CC:

Brendan Ferry, Storm Water Program Manager, El Dorado County Community Development Agency

Donaldo Palaroan, P.E., Senior Civil Engineer, El Dorado County

Bard Lower, Director, Transportation Division, El Dorado County

David Defanti, Assistant Director, Community Development Agency, El Dorado County

Members of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors