

North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance

PO Box 289, Tahoe Vista, CA 96148

Office: 530-546-8125

www.ntcaa.org

Jerry Wotel, Newsletter Editor

NTCAA Newsletter – January 2010

Expert Concludes Kings Beach Roundabouts Designed to Fail

Roundabout and Traffic Engineering (RTE, www.roundabouts.us), a nationally recognized roundabout design firm, completed a capacity analysis of the single-lane roundabout at the Coon Street/Hwy 28 intersection which is one of two roundabouts proposed in Placer County's "3-lane alternative." Scott Ritchie, president and chief designer for RTE, has designed over 300 roundabouts nationwide, including the very successful one at Neil Rd/Keitzke Lane in Reno. He is on the project team charged with rewriting the USDOT Federal Highway Administration's Roundabout Guidelines due out in 2010. RTE was also recently awarded a four state contract to write design guidelines for trucks in roundabouts.

Using the traffic counts directly from the EIR/EIS Traffic Study Mr. Ritchie's firm input the data into the software model RODEL (Roundabout Delay), which is a more sophisticated and detailed model enabling analysis to occur at a much higher level of confidence than the SIDRA model used by Placer County. The results were an immediate Level Of Service (LOS) rating of 'F' in today's traffic conditions. Placer County has assumed a LOS 'B' that translates into only 5-10 days per year of congestion. The four-lane roadway alternative operates at LOS 'A' today, enabling redevelopment to occur over the long term with careful consideration of cumulative traffic impacts.



RTE provides the technical detail that seriously questions reducing the highway to LOS 'F' immediately with traffic queues to 3225' (0.6 of a mile) because the roundabouts are "under-designed" and "inadequate" for the specific application in downtown Kings Beach. Coming from the west on SR 28, the traffic backup will be past SR 267 and beyond the Safeway store. Much has been discussed on the cut-through traffic in the Kings Beach Grid coming from Incline Village. With this backup onto SR 267, there will also be cut-through traffic coming from Tahoe Vista and Truckee. This traffic will be forced to either enter the Coon Street roundabout or cross the backed up traffic from Incline Village.

Do Placer County and the TRPA seriously expect to receive Federal funding for reconfiguring a State Highway that constricts capacity and reduces the level of service from 'A' to 'F'? SR28 in Kings Beach is part of a regional highway system providing alternate access when Interstate 80 is closed between Truckee and Reno and when Hwy 50 is closed to Placerville. SR28 is also a designated emergency/evacuation route for Incline Village with a population of 10,000 rising to 30,000 during the summer. Creating a bottleneck on the only critical regional roadway on the North shore of Lake Tahoe by reducing four-lanes to single-lane roundabouts does not sound like a prudent expenditure of Federal funds.

Tahoe Transportation District Survey

A random telephone survey of voters was conducted in the North Lake Tahoe area September 14 through 16, 2009 and September 21 through 24, 2009 by the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD). It involved 400 registered voters (residents 18+) living within the 22 voting districts that comprise the Tahoe Basin portion of eastern Placer County, including Kings Beach. One focus of the survey was the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, in the planning and development process for well over ten years. Of the respondents, 53 percent said they had heard of the project; 47 percent said they had not. Of the 53 percent who were aware of the project, only 40 percent were in favor of the three-lane road with roundabouts and 39 percent in favor of the four-lane configuration. This means that only 21 percent of the survey respondents, or 84 people out of 400, were in favor of the Placer County recommended three-lane alternative design, far from a majority claimed by the three-lane alternate proponents.

In addition, the responses in favor of the three-lane alternative were more favorable outside of Kings Beach than inside Kings Beach.

This survey, as well as other related correspondence, was recently released to the public only after a request filed under the Freedom of Information Act. The related correspondence reviewed suggests that Placer County intended to suppress the survey results from the public realm, because it did not support their persistent claims that "a majority of the community" wants their roundabout alternative. One TTD Board member, who also is the CEO for the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, suggested to Carl Hasty (Executive Director of the TTD) that "he put it (the survey) in a locked drawer."

Supervisor's Election Not a Referendum on Kings Beach Roundabouts

Many supporters of the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Program "3-lane" alternative with single-lane roundabouts have vehemently claimed at every occasion that the majority of the community supports that approach. (As shown previously, this is far from the truth). They have gone so far as to claim that Supervisor Montgomery won the majority of Kings Beach's vote in November 2009 because she campaigned in favor of the "3-lane" alternative.

Even when previous Supervisor Kranz won the County seat in 2004 he lost handily in Kings Beach to his predecessor Rex Bloomfield. Supervisor Montgomery's vote count exceeded Bloomfield's count in Kings Beach as it did in all precincts throughout District 5. Montgomery's local campaign manager would like you to believe her election was a referendum on the lane reduction because she is one of the primary advocates of the lane reduction. Supervisor Montgomery won the election from popular support of much more than the Kings Beach SR 28 design alternate.

In the Tahoe Transportation District survey 47% of the 400 registered voters contacted had never heard of the Kings Beach Core Improvement Project. The voters were living "within the 22 voting districts that comprise Tahoe Basin portion of eastern Placer County." Since nearly half of the registered voters had never heard of the project, this indicates again that Montgomery was not elected because of her pro "3-laner" position.

TRPA Governing Board Meeting

On Wednesday, January 27, at 12:30 pm, at the Chateau in Incline Village the Governing Board will decide on the three-lane alternate for the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Program. Be there to voice your opinion

Upcoming Events/Key Dates

Agendas for TRPA Governing Board and APC, and also Placer County BOS are not available until a few days before the meeting. Therefore, it is difficult to provide a meaningful emphasis to the meetings. Other meetings/events not shown here, or changes, will be announced by email.

January 27, Wednesday	TRPA Governing Board	9:30 am, Chateau, Incline Village
February 3, Wednesday	NLTRA Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
February 9, Tuesday	Placer County BOS Mtg.	8:30 am, Auburn
February 9, Tuesday	NTPUD Board Meeting	10 am, NTEC, Kings Beach
February 10, Wednesday	TRPA APC Meeting	9:30 am, TRPA Stateline Office
February 11, Thursday	NTRAC Meeting	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
February 17, Wednesday	NTFPD Board Meeting	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
February 19, Friday	TCPUD Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
February 23, Tuesday	Placer County BOS Mtg.	8:30 am, Auburn
February 24, Wednesday	TRPA Governing Board	9:30 am, TRPA Stateline Office

TRPA – Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
NLTRA – North Lake Tahoe Resort Association
TCPUD – Tahoe City Public Utility District
NTEC – North Tahoe Event Center (NTCC)
BOS – Placer County Board of Supervisors

APC – Advisory Planning Commission
NTPUD – North Tahoe Public Utility District
NTFPD – North Tahoe Fire Protection District
NTRAC- North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman”..... Thomas Paine, December 19, 1776