Kings Beach Western Approach Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated August 6, 2019

Project Facts

- Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and mobility by reducing the roadway to three lanes, providing better bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improving transit stops to create a complete street (similar to the Kings Beach Commercial Core)
- Establish a sidewalk connection from State Route (SR) 28 (N Lake Blvd) to Dolly Varden Ave along SR 267 (N Shore Blvd)
- Reduce lanes on SR 28 to one-lane in either direction for safety and consistency in the corridor
- Provide reduced length, high visibility crosswalks with lighting and signage
- Three alternatives are being considered: a roundabout alternative, a signal alternative, and a no-build alternative
- Selection of an alternative by end of 2019, with construction anticipated in 2022

Q: Why is the project needed?

A: The purpose of the project is to improve overall accessibility, mobility and safety for all roadway users while providing a continuous complete street corridor. The County desires to provide better connectivity between the downtown core and the west side of the community that extends to all transportation modes. The project is needed to provide safer facilities for cycling and walking. While the existing intersection has bicycle lanes, sidewalks and crosswalks along State Route (SR) 28, they are narrow, adjacent to traffic and are obstructed by the existing signal infrastructure and therefore need to be expanded to provide safer, dedicated facilities for local residents and visitors.

Goals and objectives of the project include: 1) improve safety and mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians; 2) provide a complete street corridor that connects to the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project (KBCCIP); and 3) consistency with local, regional and state planning.

Q: When will a decision between the two alternatives be made? What does the County consider when making this decision?

A: Based on the current project schedule, a decision will be made towards the end of 2019. As this project is located mostly within the Caltrans right of way, this decision is made by a Project Development Team which consists of County, Caltrans and Consultant staff members from various disciplines, including environmental, design, right of way, maintenance and more. The team makes the decision based on various items including public input, environmental impacts, impacts to adjacent properties, access to parcels, operations (vehicle and pedestrians), accommodation of all users (pedestrians, bicycle, buses, etc.), maintenance, adherence the to the projects purpose and need, adherence to planning documents, etc. All of these will be documented though a process called Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE). The

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ICE process is used to select the viable alternative(s) and will be summarized in a report format, which will be made available to the public.

Q: Why is the roundabout a viable option for this intersection?

A: An Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Screening was done specific to this intersection. The ICE Screening process looks at various alternatives including different types of roundabout and signal alternatives. In the ICE screening process the alternatives were compared based on the goals and need of the project while keeping traffic moving and minimizing impacts to adjacent properties and the environment. Based on the analysis done in the report, the roundabout improves safety for all users, improves mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians, provides a context sensitive, complete street environment, is consistent with local, regional and state planning, and operates within acceptable levels of service for motor vehicles.

Q: Has the traffic analysis accounted for the large amount of pedestrians and vehicles in Kings Beach during the summertime? Will the roundabout provide a pedestrian beacon to meter pedestrians across the street?

A: Yes. The traffic analysis was done for off-peak season (winter) and the peak season (summer). The traffic volumes used in the analysis are average volumes experienced in the summer peak season. We did not analyze holidays or peak events. Summer and Winter pedestrian counts were taken and they are included in the traffic analysis. The pedestrian counts showed in the peak hour, there are approximately 36 pedestrians crossing the north leg of the intersection (SR 267/SR 28 and Brassie Ave/SR 28) and 14 pedestrians crossing the west leg of the intersection (SR 28). There are 40 pedestrians walking past the intersection along the southern side of SR 28, however, this movement does not disrupt traffic. The analysis shows that traffic will still operate acceptably with the volume of cars and pedestrians. The pedestrian volumes at this intersection are anticipated to be significantly lower than the pedestrian volumes in the Commercial Core based on pedestrian traffic counts Caltrans conducted in July of 2019. Those counts showed that there are on average 5 times more pedestrians crossing SR 28 in the commercial core than at the project location..

With the roundabout alternative the County is currently proposing to install rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) at the crossings. The RRFBs are push button activated (meaning a pedestrian has to push the button and wait for the lights to flash. The RRFBs do not stop pedestrians from crossing. Other pedestrian signals that control pedestrian traffic are not being installed with this project because the pedestrian volumes at this intersection do not meet the Caltrans criteria for installation. However, the RRFB infrastructure will allow the crosswalks to be modified in the future with signals if pedestrian volumes warrant such a change.

Q: Has the County considered putting in flashing lights at the existing crosswalks to make pedestrians more visible to approaching traffic?

A: The implementation pedestrian activated flashing lights (RRFBs) will be considered during the design process. Even if flashing lights are not provided, the County will install clear signage warning drivers of pedestrians ahead.

Q: Why are there so many crosswalks in the roundabout? Can the design team eliminate the crosswalk on the east leg? Why are the crosswalks so close to the roundabout?

A: One of the stated purpose and needs of the project is to provide a complete street environment that makes biking and walking easier within the project limits. The goal of the roundabout crosswalks is to provide convenient and safe locations for pedestrians to cross traffic and best achieves this goal for not only pedestrians but also cyclists. The crosswalks serve a dual purpose, one for pedestrians and the other for cyclists who are not comfortable riding through the roundabout. These cyclists can exit the bicycle lane using the bike ramp and enter onto the shared use path/sidewalk to navigate around the roundabout. Not providing a crosswalk on the east leg may add time/length to the walking and biking route. Providing crosswalks on the east leg also provides better connectivity to the sidewalk proposed along SR 267 and provides connectivity for people coming off of the northern leg of Secline St. wishing to head to North Tahoe Beach or other designations on the south side of SR 28 a shorter and more direct route.

Q: How does the County reach out to the public to advertise project meetings?

A: Meeting dates and times are advertised on social media, local newspapers, the North Tahoe Business Association e-newsletter, postcards sent out in the mail, email blasts and flyers around the community. If you would like to be added to the email or mailing list, please provide your contact information to County Project Manager, Dan LaPlante at DLaPlant@placer.ca.gov.

Q: Why is the County proposing to reduce Route 28 to one lane in each direction?

A: The lane reduction will provide a safer roadway for both traffic and pedestrians. Since the intersection has one lane sections on either side, there will not be a significant impact on traffic backup in the area and will improve safety at the midblock crosswalk across from Safeway and help to reduce speeds. An added benefit of the lane reduction is that some seasonal on street parking can be accommodated, which will double as a snow storage area in the winter.

Q: What signage will be provided at the intersection?

A: Intersection signing must be compliant with the guidelines and standards set forth by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Typical signs that will be installed are roundabout ahead signs, yield signs, pedestrian crossing signs at the crosswalks, guide signs (roadway names) and the one way signs in the central island.

Q: How will the roundabout affect emergency response times throughout Kings Beach?

A: With both alternatives emergency access will be preserved. The traffic analysis indicates the roundabout alternative will reduce overall intersection delay compared to the existing signal, therefore the roundabout is not anticipated to impact emergency response times. The modified signal alternative will increase delay over the existing signal conditions and may impact emergency response, however the implementation of bicycle lanes will allow emergency responders to use the bicycle lane to bypass traffic if needed. Given the current location of the fire station just north of the intersection, the roundabout alternative will improve access for the fire station.

Q: What lighting will be provided at the intersection?

A: Lighting will be similar to lighting at the existing roundabouts and will be finalized during the design phase.

Q: Are there environmentally sensitive areas within the project limits?

A: The project is currently going through the environmental analysis to identify any environmentally sensitive areas (ESA). The ESAs will be clearly identified and fully evaluated in the environmental document. Any environmental impacts the project may have, including wetlands, will be analyzed and mitigated.

Q: How will Route 28 access be altered for nearby residents and businesses?

A: Access to SR 28 will remain the same as it is today with the exception of two locations. At Sweetbriar condominiums, the access into and out of the driveway will be restricted to right turns only. At Sierra Tires & Automotive, along SR 28, access will into and out of the driveway will be restricted to right turns only.

Q: Why include Brassie Ave as part of the roundabout? This will cause confusion for drivers visiting Kings Beach.

A: Brassie Ave is included as one of the roundabout legs to improve access to the local community and minimize adjacent impacts to properties and the environment. Alternatives were evaluated that did not include Brassie Ave. however in all of these alternatives, access from Brassie Ave to SR 28 would have to be restricted to right-in right-out due to the intersection geometry and would have impacted other properties as well. The roundabout will include signing and striping to ensure drivers know which exit they want to take.

Q: Why doesn't the roundabout provide a bypass lane for WB Route 28 traffic turning right onto Route 267? That way traffic will not have to yield at the roundabout.

A: Adding a bypass lane will significantly increase right of way impacts of the project. Also a bypass lane configuration also increases risk to pedestrians crossing the street since vehicles are not slowing down to yield at the roundabout. The right turn lane for westbound SR 28 was needed in order to minimize queueing and delay and provide acceptable levels of service at the whole intersection.

Q: Why does the project only propose one lane on Route 267 and one lane through the roundabout? Has traffic analysis been done on Route 267?

A: Traffic analysis shows queuing and delay on SR 267 within acceptable limits. Adding an additional lane to SR 267 would increase environmental and property impacts significantly while providing minimal benefit. The roundabout configuration prioritizes heavy movements to maximize capacity while limiting the number of driver conflicts. Additional lanes through the roundabout would increase the number of conflicts, increase environmental impacts, and increase the cost to build the project.

Q: What type of curbs will be used in the roundabout? The curbs at the existing roundabouts seem to get hit a lot.

A: Curb type has not been selected at this stage of the project and will be done in final design. However, curbs used in the roundabout will need to meet Caltrans Standards and will likely vary based on the application and will be finalized during design. The curb selection type will take into account snow removal operations to minimize the damage sustained to them during snow removal operations.

Most of the damage at the existing roundabouts is likely caused by snow plows. At the proposed roundabout, the circulatory roadway is significantly larger. The larger circulatory roadway will provide more mobility for snow removal operations with less potential to damage the curbs.

Q: What are the limits of the proposed sidewalk along Route 267?

A: The proposed sidewalk will connect Dolly Varden Ave to SR 28 along SR 267.

Q: Is the project team going to coordinate with Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART) for input on the project?

A: The project team will coordinate with TART since two bus stops will be impacted by the project, and in fact, the stops will be enhanced with improved access by the project.

Q: Due to the traffic backup, drivers will start to use shortcuts such as Tiger and Brassie where pedestrians are commonly walking on the street.

A: The traffic analysis shows that in opening year, with the roundabout alternative the operations will improve from the existing conditions. The Delay will be reduced by 1.5 seconds in the peak season. For the signalized alternative in the opening year the traffic delay will only be increased by approximately 8 seconds in the peak season. Therefore, with the reduction in delay with the roundabout and the minimal increase in delay with the signal, the project team does not believe the project will cause road users to take neighborhood streets rather than SR 267 or SR 28.

Q: Can the County retrofit the existing roundabouts with beacons and pedestrian timers?

A: The existing roundabouts in the commercial core area are beyond the scope of this project. However the County is working separately from this project to address this issue. For more information on the existing roundabouts please visit the Placer County website for detailed project information. You can also contact Dan LaPlante, Placer County Project Manager, at (530) 581-6231 or DLaplant@placer.ca.gov.