

Meeting Summary – Mt Rose Highway Corridor Safety Issues

May 16, 2018

6-8 pm

Tamarack Junction Meeting Room

The meeting was facilitated by Mike Lawson – Planning Commissioner representing District 2. Mike has 34 years NDOT experience conducting traffic safety studies and is therefore well-versed, as a Washoe County representative to assist in finding solutions to increased traffic in the corridor and attendant safety concerns. Thor Dyson, NDOT District Engineer for District 2 and Major Rob Stepien, Northern Command, Nevada Highway Patrol delivered information on the following topics:

SR 431 at Callahan Intersection

- A signal warrant study and speed study are currently underway from Upper Joy Lake to I-580. Currently 14,000 cars/day use Mt. Rose Hwy. Signal warrant study will be done in 1-3 months and the speed study in 3-5 months.
- Six total accidents at the intersection in the last 10 years (including the most recent fatal accident) and only 7 in the last 10 years (3 of those were rear-end on Callahan and not correctable with a signal). 1.4 crashes per 1 million miles traveled on Mt. Rose Hwy (average is 2.6). Additional data and information from Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) are being utilized.
- Data collected can be used to investigate a potential roundabout if NDOT also conducts an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) – this is being recommended by NDOT Safety but requires coordination with NDOT Traffic Operations.
- NDOT proposes to conduct a Road Safety Audit (RSA),. Results from the RSA along with the speed study will be used to evaluate each traffic calming option for each intersection along Mt. Rose Hwy. Signals and roundabout are not the only solutions to access control , mprove the safety or Operation of the intersection (MUTCD) – rear end vs angle/delay
- 3500 tickets have been issued in the last 2 years.

Road Safety Audit (RSA)

- Issues at Edmonton, Joy Lake Road, Thomas Creek, Fawn Lane and Timberline
- Road safety audits consider speeds, sight distance, restriction of turning movements, worm islands, offset intersections, pedestrian accommodations, bike paths, etc.
- An RSA for the Mt. Rose Corridor is proposed to be a topic for a future planning commission meeting. The last RSA was conducted in 2015, but an additional 5,000 car trips/day have been added since then.
- NDOT wants to include two citizen representatives in the RSA process

Ascente Development Issues and County Commissioners Role in Current Problems

- The Ascente Tentative Map was approved with flawed studies, including their traffic study, which were not independently reviewed for legitimacy
- Potential conflict of interest by some county commissioners left the Mt. Rose/Callahan/Fawn intersections with NO planned or financed upgrades to accommodate all CUMULATIVE increases in traffic in the corridor
- Planning commission - lack of understanding regarding staff “recommendations”

- The current traffic plan for Mt Rose Corridor may be in violation of Forest area plan but it is inadequate in any case
- NDOT District 2 traffic engineering sent a memo to County Planners strongly suggesting that Ascente be accessed via a new road intersecting at Thomas Creek. This was ignored by the County Planners and Commissioners
- It is imperative that Washoe developers be made to pay for road improvements rather than relying on increasing tax revenue from existing and future residents to pay for much-needed upgrades to roads and infrastructure

Steve Wolgast - Candidate for County Commissioner, District-2, Bob Lucey's seat (wolgast4washoe.us)

- Residents, homeowners, and taxpayers are not represented.
- Fight bad growth all over the county; issues of traffic, flooding, services
- Seek long term planning: traffic, water, flooding, wildfire, emergency services.
- Promote construction of less expensive housing
- The problems presented by the Ascenté development are all duplicated throughout the county.

Washoe Residents for Appropriate Development (WRAP, washoerap.com)

- WRAP is a PAC. It can collect and spend money for political purposes.
- Community organizer in opposition to Ascente as proposed
- Advocate for appropriate planning including ALL Washoe County infrastructure and services, roads schools, water supply, stormwater management, fire safety and sewage treatment in support of EXISTING residents
- WRAP is a NON-partisan organization committed to promoting development that is in keeping with Washoe County PLANS and regulations, and Does not negatively impact EXISTING residents.
- WRAP plans to follow up on Mt Rose Corridor safety issues and focus attention on finding solutions to the traffic safety issues on Mt. Rose Hwy.

Questions and Discussion

- The high grade (5-6%) on Mt. Rose Hwy makes traffic signals and roundabouts tricky particularly in winter. NDOT says that traffic signals are not necessarily the best option for the Callahan intersection.
- Speed limits may be lowered for all stretches of the highway.
- Speed cameras are not allowed by NV legislation
- NHP states that tickets and fines are the best deterrent to speeding
- A typical stoplight costs ~\$700,000.
- The question of who has the ultimate authority to decide on safety solution rests with Regional Traffic Commission. They have over \$166 million in planned and uncompleted projects and only \$3 million in available funds.
- Local traffic consulting engineer discussed various traffic calming options including "pork chop" concrete barriers, flashing lights, signage. Results of the traffic studies will be used to select the best solution based on current best traffic management practice.
- Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Authority (TMRPA) should promote collection of additional funding for Washoe infrastructure from developers – citizens are being ignored!

What can we do today?

- Let the professional NDOT and NHP engineers do their work and finish the studies.
- Make the best traffic control decisions based on RSA, speed study, corridor analysis and signal warrant studies.
- Continue to demand accountability from Washoe County Planners, Planning Commissioners and Washoe County Commissioners.
- Inform neighbors who missed the meeting about the issues and the efforts.

Comments and suggestions can be sent to:

Mike Lawson – District 2 County Planning Commissioner Michael.Lawson@atkinsglobal. Com

Thor Dyson – NDOT Engineer – District 2 TDyson@dot.nv.gov

Major Robert Stepian - Northern Command, Nevada Highway Patrol rob.stepien@dps.state.nv.us