

The

BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

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www.basslakeaction.org

HIGHWAY 50 AT HEART OF MEASURE B VOTE

The parties on both sides of Measure B will be courting voters until the March 8 election day, when the fate of the new General Plan will be decided. A vote of "Yes" affirms the Board of Supervisors' adoption of the 2004 General Plan. A vote of "No" rejects the 2004 General Plan, effectively directing the Board to adopt a slower-growth plan. No doubt rhetoric will be flying up to the voting day. But what really lies at the heart of the battle?

The fight centers on how much traffic Highway 50 will be required to carry as the county adds more homes in the western part of El Dorado County. Residents of El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park are already aware of the traffic problems that are encountered daily on Highway 50 during the commute period. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that adding more homes to El Dorado County will increase the congestion on Highway 50. The issue is what to do about it.

The only plan in place to widen Highway 50 is a currently unfunded Highway 50 HOV lane Caltrans project that would add a commuter lane in the current medial strip from just west of El Dorado Hills Boulevard to the Ponderosa Road interchange. Construction is proposed to begin in spring of 2007, with completion in 2008. The project contemplates that sound walls will be erected along the route. The total cost is estimated to be \$32.8 million, but the plan is currently only funded to complete the development of the design plans, cost estimate, and specifications, and construction may be phased in over time. Critics of HOV lanes claim they are of little use in eliminating congestion. See a critical analysis of HOV lanes at the Bass Lake Action website.

The Highway 50 roadway provisions of the 2004 General Plan are essentially the same as were in the 1996 General Plan.

In general, under General Plan Policy TC-Xa the supervisors are required to limit growth that would produce Level of Service F (stop and go traffic, or gridlock) on Highway 50 through 2008, except for some portions of Highway 50 in Placerville and points east. This provision sunsets in 2008, and Policy TC-Xc provides that starting in 2009 any portion of Highway 50 may be allowed to go to gridlock by a majority vote of the county supervisors.

In other words, in three years the provision linking growth to the required service level of Highway 50 may be overridden by a simple majority vote of the supervisors. The General Plan goes on to set goals of working with state and local agencies to widen Highway 50, but in general, no Highway 50 widening project is mandated or funded in the General Plan. Given the current and foreseeable fiscal condition of the state and the county, any actual widening of Highway 50 over the next 20 years would probably be the triumph of hope over reality.

Proponents of the new General Plan (Yes on B) include local business and civic leaders. A list of plan supporters can be found at the website of the El Dorado County Taxpayers for Open Roads and Quality Neighborhoods at www.protecteldoradocounty.org on the Internet. As is proper, business people and civic leaders are proponents of growth, because growth stimulates business and generates taxes. However, any specific discussion of the status and future of Highway 50 is noticeably absent from their website.

Opponents of the plan (No on B) point to the county growth allowed under the 2004 General Plan, and the negative impact of that growth on the condition of Highway 50. They assert that the growth element of the present plan could be easily fixed, noting that the supervisors tossed out the general plan proposed by the county Planning Commission and replaced it with the present General Plan in

a little over two months. The No Gridlock position may be accessed at www.nogridlock.org on the Internet.

Looking out over the next 20 years, it is conceivable that if the growth contemplated under the current plan occurs, traffic problems will inevitably result, the answer to which may be a sales tax increase to fund road improvements, much like what happened in Santa Clara County in the 1990s. There, voters fed up with snarled traffic reluctantly embraced additional sales taxes to fix the highways. The same fate may be in store for the citizens of El Dorado County. *✍*

BALLOT LANGUAGE OF MEASURES B AND D

Here are ballot measures A and B as they will appear on the March 8, 2005 ballot:

MEASURE B

"Shall the resolution adopting a general plan for El Dorado County, entitled 'Resolution No. 235-2004 of the Board of Supervisors of the County of El Dorado Adopting the El Dorado County 2004 General Plan, a Plan for Managed Growth and Open Roads, a Plan for Quality Neighborhoods and Traffic Relief,' be adopted?"

MEASURE D

"Shall Measure D, which would amend the County Charter to add sections: (1) prohibiting Highway 50 west of Placerville to reach level of service F during peak-hour commute periods at build-out using a specified basis for determining traffic capacity, and (2) requiring the Board to postpone approving single-family residential subdivisions of 3 or more parcels until Highway 50 is widened to 8 lanes between Cameron Park and the Sacramento County line, be adopted?"

Be sure to vote on March 8th!

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LOCAL ROAD PROJECTS STATUS REPORT

Road improvements in the Bass Lake region are on track to relieve congestion, according to information we have obtained from the county Department of Transportation (DOT).

As reported in the January Bulletin, the connection of Serrano Parkway to Bass Lake Road is under construction with completion anticipated this summer. The connection hopefully will improve circulation between the Bass Lake area and El Dorado Hills.

The Bass Lake Road improvements between Serrano Parkway and US Highway 50 are in the final design, contract document review and right-of-way acquisition phases. Construction is slated to begin this spring and continue into the summer and fall. The improvements will include construction of a portion of new Bass Lake Road (on a new alignment), from Serrano Parkway south to approximately Stone Hill Drive. The project also includes improvements to the remaining roadway south of Stone Hill Road, with the addition of shoulders from that connection point to Highway 50.

Looking north from Bass Lake, the new alignment of Bass Lake Road south of Green Valley Road is in the final design phase. The developer of the Silver Springs subdivision will construct this roadway south from a point just east of the Pleasant Grove Middle School to the southern boundary of the subdivision. Efforts are being made to construct an extension of the new roadway from the subdivision to south Madera Drive, although those improvements are dependent upon right-of-way acquisition and obtaining other regulatory permits. The Green Valley Road intersection will have signals installed as part of the project. The construction of the new extension and the connection to existing Bass Lake Road is anticipated in the summer of 2006.

The new ministorage facility at the corner of Cambridge Road and Green Valley Road is committed to installing signals at that intersection in 2005.

Though the extension of Silva Valley Parkway under Highway 50 is finished, the connecting link to White Rock Road

remains to be completed. The new and upgraded connecting roadway will provide for a standard travel lane in each direction, turn lanes at intersections, and bike lanes. The western portion between Latrobe Road and Valley View Parkway is complete, and the remainder of the project, including the connection to Silva Valley Parkway, will continue as weather permits over the winter with completion anticipated this spring.

Further afield, work on the El Dorado Hills Boulevard interchange with Highway 50 has begun. The sound walls along the back of the residential properties northwest of the interchange have been completed, and the next phase of this project, the realignment of Saratoga Way to Park Drive, is currently under construction. Interim improvements to the westbound freeway ramps and intersection are in the final design stage, with construction scheduled for this summer. These improvements promise to enhance traffic flow. Major reconstruction of this interchange is planned in future years to accommodate the anticipated increase in traffic.

The installation of signals at the intersection of Green Valley Road and Silva Valley Parkway was a topic at the January Area Planning Advisory Committee meeting. The project is in the design phase, and the environmental analysis will examine the impact on the oak woodlands and a potential wetland habitat. If these environmental impacts are deemed insignificant or easily mitigated, construction could commence this summer.

Signals are also slated to be installed at the intersections of Silva Valley Parkway and Harvard Way, and at Silva Valley Parkway and Serrano Parkway. The construction documents are essentially complete, and the county will advertise this winter for construction bids. Construction is anticipated to begin in this spring.

Longer term projects include an interchange at Silva Valley Parkway, and Highway 50 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV or diamond) lanes along Highway 50.

The 1991 EIR prepared for the Silva Valley freeway interchange project is out of date and must be revised. Project plans will be developed concurrently with the environmental process in

anticipation of a proposed construction start in late 2006 or early 2007.

Also on the drawing board are the HOV lanes on Highway 50 between El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Ponderosa Road. Caltrans has completed an environmental document and a project report to extend the existing HOV lanes eastward to Ponderosa, using the highway's center median strip. County DOT staff is working with Caltrans to finish the necessary surveying and to get the design work completed for a phased project. It is anticipated the first construction phase would extend the HOV lanes from the current termination of the lanes near El Dorado Hills Boulevard to approximately Bass Lake Road. County DOT staff plans to have a project out to bid in Summer 2006. *✍*



THE HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY

The history of Valentine's Day—and its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. So, who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men—his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were

(continued next page)

discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl—who may have been his jailer's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today.

Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

(Courtesy of The History Channel)



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

– John F. Kennedy

Happy Valentine's Day to you all!

As the foggy, rainy days of January fade into the longer days of February, we anticipate another spring in beautiful El Dorado Hills. Our daffodils have already begun to show some signs of coming to life and the trees are beginning to bud. The finches appreciate the bird seed supply at the feeder, since the days are still cool and the food supply not as plentiful.

During the Christmas Holidays I had the opportunity to visit Redding (in the rain!) and view the site of their Big League Dreams Park, which is in the southeast section of the city. The sports park is in an area of mostly light industrial businesses with very few residences nearby. It backs up to the Redding City Corporation Yard and Transfer Station and is near freeway access.

Since we were unable to walk around the active Sports Park because of the rain, we viewed it from outside the gate. It is very nicely appointed with adequate parking and access. There are plans to further enhance the 100-acre Sports Park with indoor soccer fields, trails, etc., which will be an additional asset to the development. As I stated previously, an individual with close knowledge of the planning of the Sports Park stated there was no opposition to the proposal to build a sports park in this area.

El Dorado County Park Department has asked the Board of Supervisors to extend the contract for ESP (the company assembling the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Bass Lake Regional Park) through the end of 2005. The latest information we have indicates there are several items that need to be addressed by the Park Department before the DEIR can be finalized. We understand the Park Department, as the developer, is probably responsible under Measure Y for the needed road improvements between the EID driveway and Madera Road, as part of the park construction.

Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed eliminating obstacles to the building of affordable housing by cutting controls on development set by State Law. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is expected to be the target of legislation because it is often the basis for lawsuits to slow or stop approval to develop residential land. The California Building Industry Association (no fan of CEQA) wants to require municipalities to identify a 20-year land supply for growth, not the current seven years. The builders would also like to see a tougher rule requiring municipalities to prove a link between development and community impact.

SBC will soon offer a bundle of broadcast services that includes television, movies and music to its customers,

all delivered through a single control box over the telephone wires. Planned to be introduced this summer to SBC's Sacramento customers, the roll-out is complicated by the unresolved local regulatory question of whether or not phone companies providing cable service must pay franchise fees to the local Community Service Districts like cable companies do.

Since SBC service will originate as a satellite signal before flowing to homes through the telephone lines, SBC claims it isn't cable TV, while cable competitors and the local cable commission say it is. In Sacramento the Metropolitan Cable Commission regulates cable TV, and the Commission will be meeting January 27 with Verizon, SBC and the cable industry to determine whether phone companies offering cable TV services should pay franchise fees, and will discuss other options.

In the next couple of weeks, we anticipate having a map loaded on our website (www.basslakeaction.org) that shows the proposed realignment of Bass Lake Road from Hollow Oak Road (the old Stone Hill Road) to the Serrano Parkway extension intersection. The County is still working hard to obtain the easements necessary to construct the realigned road, and Pulte Homes has put the project out to bid. The Silver Springs development, which is responsible for the northern realignment of the road from Madera to Green Valley Road, still anticipates beginning their housing development by this summer.

Thank you for your generous support during this past year, and we all look forward to a great 2005!

Kathy Prevost

President

Bass Lake Action Committee



PROPOSED COUNTY ASBESTOS REGS DRAW FIRE FROM PUBLIC

The recent meeting of the asbestos advisory group at the Community Services District facilities on Harvard way revealed the contentiousness that continues to plague efforts to strike a balanced approach to what some residents and some health experts consider the health threat of naturally occurring asbestos in El Dorado County.

County Air Pollution Control Officer Marcella McTaggart outlined a new county asbestos regulation currently being drafted with the help of the local El Dorado County Association for Surveyors, Architects, Geologists & Engineers, an organization which is a part of the Business Alliance.

The draft regulation reportedly calls for using the Polarized Light Microscopy (PLM) method to test for the presence of asbestos in suspected soil. Residents attending suggested that the county should consider also require the use of the more sophisticated Transmission Electronic Microscope (TEM) method, which was recently used at the Lago Vista high school site in Folsom, but Ms McTaggart said the county considers TEM as being too costly.

Readers will recall that at the Lago Vista site, the testing of soil samples revealed contaminated soil far exceeding the state minimum of .001 percent of asbestos fibers. Geologists found nearly six percent asbestos of the total weight of dirt sampled using PLM. Using the TEM method, the state investigators Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) found an asbestos weight of .10 percent to 2.07 percent. As the result of testing, Folsom city officials are working together with the DTSC and local residents to mitigate the perceived asbestos hazard. Such cooperation has been noticeably absent in El Dorado county.

Ms McTaggart reportedly was unwilling to furnish a copy of the draft regulation to the attendees at the meeting. Local residents who attended the meeting said they came away with the impression that the new asbestos regulation was a "done deal" put together by the county and developers, and that public input was discouraged.

The group is to meet again in two months to continue discussions. ✍

EDITORIAL



TIM LESLIE SHOULD NOT DISPARAGE GENERAL PLAN OPPONENTS

Assemblyman Tim Leslie (R-Tahoe City) was recently quoted in the Mountain Democrat as saying that those who oppose the recently approved El Dorado County General Plan are "evil people." In the same article, Leslie is quoted as saying that the community should "kick a particular supervisor off the Board of Supervisors," no doubt a reference to Supervisor Charlie Paine, who voted against the plan.

The Bulletin, as a community paper, always seeks to present a balanced view of any issue to the residents of Bass Lake and the surrounding area. Like the famous Joe Friday, what we want is, "Just the facts, Ma'am." Denigration and personal attacks have no place in rational discussions, and when public officials say and do such things, the public should know about it.

A fundamental principle of this country and its laws is protection of the minority from the tyranny of the majority. That is, the majority may not trample on the

rights of the minority, or the opposition, when the majority is in power.

Assemblyman Leslie, as a member of the Assembly minority party in Sacramento, should know better than to disparage the opposition, to call them names, or to attack them personally.

We think Assemblyman Leslie owes the No Gridlock people and their supporters an apology. ✍

RENEW YOUR BLAC MEMBERSHIP TODAY

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The Bass Lake Action Committee is a group of concerned homeowners from the communities adjoining Bass Lake. Our purpose is to provide a voice for Bass Lake community homeowners in dealing with the county and other community organizations and agencies.

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