



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1162, **Version:** 1

Department of Transportation, Maintenance and Operations Division, recommending the Board adopt and authorize the Chair to sign Resolution **151-2020** sanctioning right turn restrictions from Sawmill Road and North Upper Truckee Road onto Highway 50 on a temporary basis from May through October 2021.

FUNDING: Road Fund.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

In August of 2019, a proposal was presented to the Department of Transportation (Transportation) by a Meyers neighborhood committee to restrict twenty-one (21) different turning movements from County roadways onto U.S. Highway 50 and State Route 89. The purpose of these proposed restrictions was to increase public safety and facilitate the orderly movement of tourist traffic leaving the Tahoe Basin, in all weather conditions, during peak weekend and holiday traffic periods. The proposal was presented on September 5, 2019 at the South Lake Tahoe Traffic Advisory Committee meeting and ultimately the South Lake Tahoe Traffic Advisory Committee requested Transportation to perform an Engineering and Traffic Study at one or two locations for potential turn restrictions. Transportation determined the focus needs to be on whether or not tourist traffic is being successfully relocated back onto U.S. Highway 50, whether or not emergency vehicle response time is improved and if there are any other unforeseen issues that would be made worse by the proposed turn restrictions.

The limited scope provides two intersection locations where turning movement restrictions were studied. The first location was North Upper Truckee Road at U.S. Highway 50 and the second location was Sawmill Road at U.S. Highway 50. Currently there are not any turn restrictions at these two locations. A turning movement count was conducted by Transportation on September 15, 2019 at both locations. During the three (3) hour turning movement count on North Upper Truckee Road, it was noted during the peak hourly period from 11:45 am to 12:45 pm, 226 vehicles entered the intersection from North Upper Truckee Road and 162 of those vehicles made a right turn to westbound U.S. Highway 50. There were between twenty-three (23) to thirty (30) vehicles in queues, creating traffic for approximately six-hundred fifty (650) feet in length on North Upper Truckee Road and with the existing curves on the roadway there were two (2) near-miss rear end type accidents due to unsafe speeds and minimal stopping sight distances around the curves. Similarly, during the same peak hourly period on Sawmill Road, forty-six (46) vehicles entered the intersection from Sawmill Road and forty-three (43) of those vehicles made a right turn to westbound U.S. Highway 50. There was between five (5) to seven (7) vehicles backed up approximately one hundred (100) feet on Sawmill Road.

Based on the study performed at both locations, Transportation has concluded that navigation applications are increasingly diverting U.S. Highway 50 weekend and holiday tourist traffic to local County roadways which has resulted in a number of negative consequences. Restricting right turn movements on Sundays and Mondays between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm at North Upper Truckee Road and Sawmill Road at U.S. Highway 50 should prevent navigation applications from directing vehicles

to use the two roadways to bypass congested traffic on U.S. Highway 50. Transportation believes this could increase operational efficiencies and potentially reduce congestion on County roadways. Transportation also considers it likely that additional left turns will be made at the two intersections on to U.S. Highway 50 as a result of the right turn restrictions. To reduce vehicles making left turns, Transportation recommends advanced signage to be placed advising drivers of the right turn restrictions thus enabling drivers to find alternate routes back onto U.S. Highway 50.

The purpose of this limited term proposed turn restriction study program is to evaluate whether or not tourist traffic can be safely routed back onto U.S. Highway 50 during peak weekend and holiday traffic periods. In discussions with Caltrans, the turn restriction program is to be implemented in May 2021 until October 31, 2021. If the study determines the right turn restrictions can successfully reroute traffic from residential roadways, a permanent year around turn restriction program may be recommended. The turn restrictions can be rescinded at any time by the El Dorado County, Department of Transportation Director if safety, other traffic conditions, or other issues unforeseen, affect the traveling public's safety.

Transportation will work with Caltrans and California Highway Patrol collaboratively, for the implementation of the turn restrictions at these two locations.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

County Counsel, South Lake Tahoe Traffic Advisory Committee

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Installation of the right turn restriction signs on Sawmill Road and North Upper Truckee Road is estimated at \$6,000 and is available in Transportation's, Maintenance and Operations Division budget funded by the Road Fund.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

- 1) The Clerk will obtain the Chair's signature on one (1) original of the Resolution.
- 2) The Clerk will forward one (1) copy of the Resolution to Transportation, Maintenance and Operations Division, attention Ashley Johnson.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Public Safety, Infrastructure

CONTACT

Rafael Martinez, Director
Department of Transportation