



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0197, **Version:** 1

Department of Transportation recommending the Board adopt and authorize the Chair to sign Resolution **038-2022** sanctioning temporary right turn restrictions from Sawmill Road and North Upper Truckee Road onto Highway 50 from May 2022 through October 2022.

FUNDING: Road Fund (100%).

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. On September 5, 2019, a proposal was presented at the South Lake Tahoe Traffic Advisory Committee (Committee) meeting. The Committee requested Transportation perform an Engineering and Traffic Study at one or two locations for potential turn restrictions. Transportation determined the focus needs to be on a) whether or not tourist traffic is being successfully relocated back onto U.S. Highway 50, b) whether or not emergency vehicle response time is improved c) if there are any other unforeseen issues or traffic safety issues that would be made worse by the proposed turn restrictions.

The limited scope provided 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, 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 onto 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 onto westbound U.S. Highway 50. There were 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 resulting 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 onto U.S. Highway 50 as a result of the right turn restrictions. Transportation recommends signage be placed in advance, advising drivers of the right turn restrictions to reduce vehicles making left turns, thus enabling drivers to find alternate routes back onto U.S. Highway 50.

The purpose of this proposed limited-term 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. The turn restriction pilot program was approved and implemented from May 2021 through October 2021. However, the pilot program was interrupted due to the Caldor Fire and Highway 50 being closed from August 20, 2021, through September 21, 2021, preventing data from being collected. The turn restriction program, if approved, will be implemented again in May 2022 until October 31, 2022. If the study determines the right turn restrictions can successfully reroute traffic from residential roadways, a permanent year-round 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, traffic conditions, or other unforeseen issues affect the traveling public's safety.

Transportation worked collaboratively with Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol to implement the turn restrictions at these two locations previously and intends to continue this collaboration moving forward.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

#20-1162, 10/6/20, #15

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 \$3,500 for labor costs only. Material costs will not be applicable as the signs in the previous pilot program will be utilized. Funding 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