



TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION OUTREACH

A Newsletter by: Lake County/City Area Planning Council (APC)

Issue V

Summer 2007

What's Next for Dangerous Kit's Corner?

In late May, a tragic accident at the intersection of State Route 29 and SR 281/Soda Bay Road claimed the life of a teenage girl. This is just the latest in a long history of accidents, including other fatalities, at the location over the last several years.

The location, known locally as Kit's Corner, is where SR 29 and SR 281/Soda Bay Road, and Red Hills Road come together.



Northbound SR 29, SR 281 to the right

Over the past seven years, this location has seen a total of 42 accidents. This is higher than the statewide average for similar intersections on a two-lane conventional State highway. These statistics then beg the question, "What can be done to fix Kit's Corner?"

Caltrans believes that a temporary answer to that question may be a traffic signal and left turn lanes. An agreement was recently approved to install a standard traffic signal at the intersection. A contract was awarded on June 20, 2007, to Steiny & Company out of Vallejo for construction of the project, which is expected to begin by early August. The project will provide for com-

plete signalization of the intersection, including signalization of the left turn movements, and left turn lanes on both SR 29 and SR 281/Soda Bay Road. Caltrans anticipates that, weather permitting, the project will be completed this fall.

The signalization, combined with the vertical curve improvement project that was completed a few years ago, is considered by Caltrans to be a temporary operational and safety improvement for the intersection. According to Caltrans project manager Mike Yancheff, the "permanent and best solution is a grade separation." This is something that would be provided by the interchange which has been



Westbound on SR 281

proposed as an element of the Lake 29 Expressway project (see below). Until that happens, Caltrans, and undoubtedly all of Lake County, hope that these temporary improvements will bring relief from accidents at this site and prevent yet another tragic loss.

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Open House Planned for SR 29 Project

For several years now, Caltrans, in cooperation with the Lake County/City Area Planning Council have been working on developing alternatives for improving and widening State Route 29 in Lake County, between the communities of Lower Lake and Kelseyville, to a four lane expressway. Widening of the highway will accommodate growth in population and traffic, improve traffic flow, and increase overall safety. The project will also help divert interregional traffic from the communities along the north shore of Clear Lake, where heavier traffic poses more of a threat to pedestrians and bicyclists, and traffic noise is of concern in communities where the State highway serves as "Main Street."

Four alternatives, plus a "no-build" alternative, have now been developed for consideration and will be presented for public review and comment at an open house. All of the alternatives will control access to SR 29 through driveway modifications, connector roads, and inter-

section improvements. Frontage roads will be used to collect traffic from multiple roads and driveways, and direct it to intersections.

Alternative C1 maintains the existing highway centerline, but will include upgrades to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the highway, widen shoulders, remove fixed objects, and add a 46-foot median.

Alternative C2 is the same as C1 except the roadway will be shifted 30 feet to the north of the existing highway centerline.

Alternative C3 is also the same as C1 except the roadway will be shifted 30 feet to the south.

Alternative D is similar to the first three alternatives, but was developed to avoid endangered plant species and to reduce project costs by minimizing large cuts. This is considered the "least environmentally damaging project alternative" with costs ranging from

about \$140 million to \$170 million, depending on the type of interchange proposed at the SR 29/281 junction (Kit's Corner).

The public open house and scoping meeting, will allow interested residents and public officials to attend on a "drop-in" basis to exchange information, review the project alternatives, and provide their input and comments. Project maps and handouts will be available at the meeting. A draft environmental impact report (EIR) has just been completed and is now available for public review on the APC's website.

The open house, which will be held at Konocti Harbor Resort, is scheduled for Wednesday, August 8, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. For additional information, please check the Lake APC website, www.lakeapc.org, or call the Caltrans public information line, 707-445-6444, or Caltrans project Manager Mike Yancheff at 707-441-2097.

Special points of interest:

- ◆ Lake 29 Open House to be held August 8
- ◆ We're on the web: www.lakeapc.org
- ◆ Temporary improvements planned for Kit's Corner
- ◆ Improved accessibility planned for LTA bus stops
- ◆ Welcome new APC staff member Terri Persons

Bond Money at Work in Lake County

In November of 2006, voters approved Proposition 1B which authorized the State to sell approximately \$19.9 billion in general obligation bonds, for state and local transportation improvement projects. Of the bond proceeds, \$2 billion was committed to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The STIP is a semiannual funding program managed by the State which provides capital funding for projects on local roads, the State highway system and for transit. The last funding cycle took place in 2006 with the next regular funding cycle due in 2008.

Due to the new bond funding, the California Transportation Commission conducted a special STIP cycle—the 2006 STIP Augmentation. For this special funding cycle, the Lake County region, which includes the cities of Lakeport and Clearlake and the County, was given a funding target of \$12.4 million. Of that funding target, nearly \$11 million was available for street and highway projects, while \$1.4 million was available for transit purposes.

In order to program the funds available to the region, State law requires the Lake County/City Area Planning Council (APC) to adopt a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) which specifies how the

funds are to be used. The 2006 Augmentation Regional Transportation Improvement Program was adopted at a public hearing of the APC on March 7, 2007, then submitted to the State for adoption by the California Transportation Commission.

The funds were distributed to the County and cities by formula, with certain amounts off the top for previous reserves held by each agency. A total of \$5.18 million was granted to the County of Lake, \$3 million to the City of Clearlake and \$1.8 million to the City of Lakeport. Another \$500,000 was placed in reserve for future improvements to State Route 29, and \$411,000 was programmed for planning activities of the Lake County/City Area Planning Council and the County and cities.

A large part of the available funding will be used for new projects on local roads. Some of the funds will also be used to supplement existing projects. A smaller portion of the funds will be placed in reserve for programming at a later time in order to allow adequate time for project development.

The following summarizes how the funds will be used:

New Streets & Roads Projects:

- State St Reconstruction/Widening (County)

\$850,000

- Clearlake Arterial Rehabilitation Project \$3,046,000

Additional Funds for Existing Projects:

- South Main Street Rehabilitation (County) \$423,000
- Soda Bay Road Rehabilitation (County) \$744,000

Reserves:

- Countywide Rehabilitation Project \$2,886,000
- County of Lake Projects \$275,000
- Lakeshore Boulevard Walkway (Lakeport) \$201,000
- City of Lakeport Projects \$1,665,000
- State Route 29 Expressway \$500,000

In addition to these funds, the APC awarded a total of \$1,438,000 to Lake Transit Authority (LTA) for vehicle purchases over the next few years. These vehicles will replace ageing vehicles in LTA's existing fleet as they come to the end of their useful service life.

Thanks to voters, residents in Lake County will begin to see these projects taking shape over the next couple of years.

LTA Plans Bus Stop Improvements

Lake Transit Authority (LTA) has been successful in obtaining grant funding from the newly introduced "New Freedom" federal grant program. This Federal Transit Administration grant program aims at improving access to transportation for the disabled, and awards funds on a competitive basis. Lake Transit Authority has been awarded a total of \$115,000 in the initial round of grant funding from this program. Although improvements are targeted at the disabled population, all of LTA's riders will benefit from these improvements.

LTA plans to utilize the grant funds to improve accessibility at high priority bus stops. Improvements will include wheelchair landing pads, accessible pathways, and benches or

shelters. The specific bus stops that will be improved have not yet been selected, but priorities for improvement include:

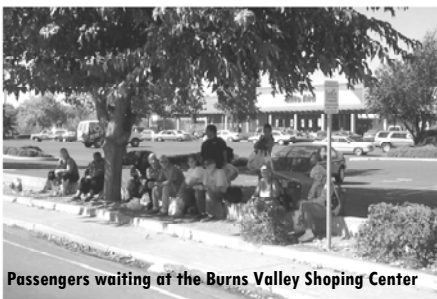
- SR 20/Tower Mart, Clearlake Oaks
- SR 20/High Valley Rd, Clearlake Oaks
- SR 20/Oak Grove Avenue/Lake Street, Clearlake Oaks
- SR 20/Country Club Drive, Lucerne
- SR 20 westbound – 9th Street, Lucerne
- SR 20 westbound – 5th Street, Lucerne
- S. Main St/K-Mart Access Dr, Lakeport
- People Services, Lakeshore Dr/Walnut, North Lakeport
- Burns Valley Shopping Center, Olympic/Old Hwy 53 (westbound), Clearlake
- Clearlake Apartments, Old Hwy 53, Clearlake

Development of accessible bus stops was identified as a high priority by the Lake County Transportation Coalition, a coalition of 34 human services or transportation agencies in Lake County aimed at organizing and coordinating transportation opportunities for social services recipients.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that LTA provide accessibility for disabled individuals at what are considered "key" locations, which they have done. The sites identified in this project are in addition to those key locations, and will take transit accessibility above and beyond ADA.

Construction of these bus stop improvements

is anticipated to begin in early 2008, as weather permits. LTA has applied for additional grant funds that would fund improvements at additional locations. If funded, improvements proposed in the pending grant application would be constructed at the same time.



Passengers waiting at the Burns Valley Shopping Center



**For
Information
or
Reservations
Call:
263-3334
or
994-3334**

Why and Where Lake County Travels

A study was completed in December by staff of the Lake County/ City Area Planning Council and Mendocino Council of Governments to look at traveler characteristics and travel patterns on certain key cross-county routes between Lake, Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma Counties. This study was a second phase of the Wine Country Inter-regional Partnership (IRP) which was formed between Lake, Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma Counties to study the jobs and housing imbalance and its impact on the transportation system.

Five locations, representing primary cross county routes, were selected for the study: Petrified Forest Road, between Napa and Sonoma Counties; State Route 20, between Lake and Mendocino Counties; State Route 29 between Napa and Lake Counties; State Route 121, between Napa and Sonoma Counties; and US 101, between Mendocino and Sonoma Counties.

Many residents of Lake County received a survey in the mail last fall asking for information about trips made across these selected study locations. The surveys asked for information such as beginning and ending points for trips, trip purpose, trip frequency, vehicle type and vehicle occupancy. Recipients were asked to return the completed surveys in the postage paid envelopes that were sent with the surveys.

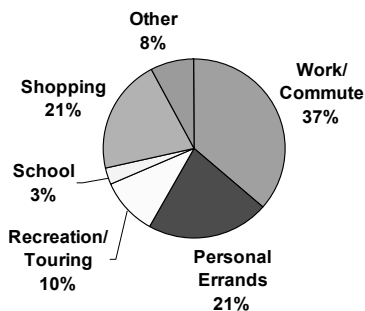
In addition to the survey, automated traffic counts and vehicle registration data were also used in the study. The results of the data analysis revealed some new information, and also confirmed some existing beliefs on patterns of travel between the counties. Some highlights of the data, specific to Lake County, are as follows:

Petrified Forest Road

Of all vehicles recorded at the Petrified Forest Road location, 20% were registered in Lake County. At this location, vehicles registered in Lake County made up nearly 30% of the westbound a.m. traffic and 36% of eastbound p.m. traffic.

According to the returned surveys, 78% of the trips on Petrified Forest Road that originate in Lake County end in Sonoma County.

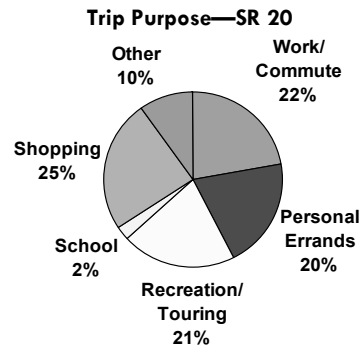
Trip Purpose—Petrified Forest Rd



SR 20

On SR 20, 49% of all vehicles recorded at the location were registered in Lake County. Lake County vehicles made up almost 60% of westbound a.m. traffic and 36% of eastbound a.m. traffic. Lake County vehicles made up 49% of eastbound p.m. traffic and 39% of westbound p.m. traffic.

According to the survey results, 70% of the trips on SR 20 originating in Lake County end in Mendocino County.

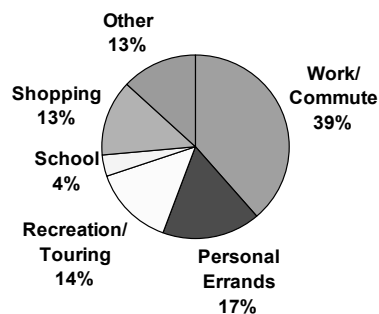


SR 29

On SR 29, vehicles registered in Lake County made up over 30% of all vehicles recorded. Vehicles registered in Lake County made up nearly 40% of southbound a.m. traffic and 43% of northbound p.m. traffic.

According to the survey, of the trips at the SR 29 location originating in Lake County, 53% end in Napa County and 19% end in Sonoma County.

Trip Purpose—SR 29



Next Steps

Further analysis is still needed on certain data sets gathered in this study. The data will then be used in future efforts of the IRP to develop a traffic model for the four county area. Data from this and future IRP phases will aid in highlighting highway and road improvement projects that affect cross county traffic.

Additional information on the IRP, including the complete Origin and Destination Study final report can be found on the APC's website, www.lakeapc.org.

Call Box Corner

The APC manages the call boxes along the highways in Lake County by administering the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) program.



Lake County SAFE recently contracted with Comarco Wireless to install 11

new call boxes on State Routes 20 and 175. Prior to these installations, Lake County SAFE maintained 34 call boxes throughout the county. Staff continues to maintain all call boxes and is looking forward to the development of several new installation sites in the foreseeable future. For additional information about the call box program, you may contact Alexis Pedrotti at 707-263-7799.



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Have a Great Summer!

Contact the APC office at:

367 N. State Street, #206
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 263-7799

Lake APC Office Staff:

Lisa Davey-Bates, Executive Director
daveybatesL@dow-associates.com

Phillip Dow, P.E., Planning Staff
dowp@dow-associates.com

Nephele Barrett, Senior Planner
barrettn@dow-associates.com

Terri Persons, Associate Planner
personst@dow-associates.com

Alexis Pedrotti, Administrative Assistant
pedrottia@dow-associates.com

Distinguished Service Award for LTA General Manager

Lake Transit Authority's General Manager, Mark Wall, has received a Distinguished Service Award from the California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT). Over his 25 years of service in the public transportation sector, Mark has made many outstanding contributions to the industry. For the last 11 years, Mark has served as the General Manager of Lake Transit Authority. Prior to this, he held positions as Project Director for the Fresno Metropolitan and Rural Fresno County Consolidated Transportation Service Agency, and Manager of Visalia City Coach for the City of Visalia.

Under Mark's management, LTA has grown into a stable and successful rural transit system. Mark was instrumental in securing a Rural Transit System grant that provided funding for replacement of LTA's entire fleet and funded construction of the Lampkin-Sanchez Transit Center.



Mark is extremely well respected throughout the transit industry in California. He is a founding member of CalACT and continues to be an active member, currently serving on the CalACT Board.

We at the Area Planning Council would like to congratulate Mark on receiving this much deserved award and to thank him for his continued service to Lake County and its residents!

We're on the Web!
www.lakeapc.org

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