

Judge settles traffic mitigation fee debate

Loomis petition for writ of mandate against Rocklin's Lowe's project is granted

BY JOYIA EMARD
LOOMIS NEWS STAFF WRITER

A Superior Court judge has ordered the City of Rocklin to work with the Town of Loomis on traffic mitigation fees.

Loomis' battles with Rocklin over developments along their shared borders continues, but the two are beginning to come together on some matters. Especially after a judge granted

Loomis' Petition for Writ of Mandate on traffic mitigation fees for the Rocklin Lowe's Project.

According to a report given to town staff from Special Counsel Donald Mooney, "The court remanded the matter back to the City of Rocklin for Rocklin City Council to amend."

At issue is how the mitigation

fees for "the cumulative impact on Sierra College Boulevard" would be paid to Loomis. The court held that the mitigation measure provided too much uncertainty as to whether Loomis would be paid for impacts.

Mooney said he will work with Rocklin's attorney "to come up with language that would be suitable to both

Rocklin and Loomis."

Pat Taylor, owner of Taylors burger stand on Taylor Road near Sierra College Boulevard, said traffic improvements are desperately needed in the area.

"The roads definitely need improvement with the number of cars and the size of the trucks. On Friday afternoons in snow season it's insane. Taylor Road backs up a quarter of a mile and people are trying to

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cut around. I'd like to see two lanes each way."

The court directed Rocklin to file a return on the writ by Jan. 15, 2010.

According to Mooney's report, the court ruled against Loomis on issues of greenhouse gas emissions, urban decay and cumulative traffic impacts threshold:

Since June 2007, Loomis officials have tackled Rocklin developments with legal aplomb and have spent approximately \$123,000 in legal fees. According to Perry Beck, Loomis town manager, those legal fees could end up saving Loomis \$2.5 million in road construction related costs if the courts agree with Loomis.

Loomis officials are concerned that traffic, pollution and urban decay issues have not been properly addressed when Rocklin projects are reviewed. The town also said the City of Rocklin didn't address the increase in traffic and usage of Loomis roads.

Proposed parkway on table

BY: JON BRINES
SPECIAL TO THE PRESS TRIBUNE

Placer County transit officials are getting ready to choose a final route alignment for a new area expressway, the proposed Placer Parkway.

"Even with the improvements, I-80 will suffer congestion and slowdowns," said South Placer Regional Transit Authority Director and Rocklin Mayor Peter Hill. "The Placer Parkway will offer an alternative to I-80 and another way to get to Sacramento, I-5 north, the airport and the Bay Area."

The proposed 14- to 16-mile route would jut off of I-65 just north of Sunset Boulevard and run along the edge of West Roseville and southern Placer County before meeting up with Highway 99 just north of Riego Road in Sutter County.



"The goal has always been to pick the least environmentally damaging alternative and the one with the smallest inducement to future growth."

Peter Hill, Rocklin mayor

SPRTA is meeting Thursday in Auburn to consider the Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement. It is the next step in the lengthy process before construction can begin. The public is invited to comment on the five proposed routes that would take the parkway through various farmland, wetland and Swainson's Hawk and White-Tailed Kite habitat.

Mayor Hill said he supports the fifth alternative that would take the road about three miles northwest of the Roseville Electric plant before heading

due west through open fields.

"I think Alternative 5 offers the least damaging alternative," Hill said. "The goal has always been to pick the least environmentally damaging alternative and the one with the smallest inducement to future growth."

Alternative 5 is also the shortest route with a no-access buffer.

If the SPRTA board approves a route, it will lay the groundwork for acquiring the land and the second environmental review, known as "Tier

2," before construction can begin.

Hill said all cities involved will benefit from the new road.

"The Parkway will also support industrial and commercial development along Highway 65, including large areas in Rocklin," Hill said.

Of the estimated \$660 million cost, only \$55 million has been secured. Construction was expected to begin in 2011 but the slowdown in the economy could push the groundbreaking until after 2030. Rocklin Vice Mayor Scott Yuill said the developer fees that fund the road could hinder economic growth.

"The fees that you agree to, directly affects the builder and eventually the person or entity that buys that property. That's a tax to them," Yuill said. "That is a real problem."