

The Valley Springs News



Plans to improve the State Route 12/26 intersection commute-time traffic flow are moving forward and construction could begin by next spring.

SR12/26 intersection improvement project moving ahead slowly

By Nick Baptista

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Rush hour traffic woes have returned at the State Route 12/26 intersection in downtown Valley Springs with the resumption of Calaveras Unified School District classes, but a solution is on the horizon.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors in October extended a professional services agreement with Dokken Engineering to continue working on the engineering portion of the State Route 12/26 Intersection Improvement Project.

District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli says the project is “creeping along.” However, if things move forward as anticipated, construction could begin next spring.

The county is waiting for Caltrans, Tofanelli said, and he’s “still optimistic” much of the preliminary work can be done by the end of this year to keep the project on a timeline for construction to begin by at least the middle of next year with completion in early 2013.

The county is pursuing an intersection improvement plan brought forward last year by Tofanelli.

Instead of earlier suggested solutions such as a traffic signal, or roundabout at the busy intersection, the Tofanelli proposal calls for improvements on the south side including a right turn lane from northbound State Route 26 to eastbound State Route 12 heading toward San Andreas, and a longer right turn lane from eastbound State Route 12 to southbound SR26 heading toward Rancho Calaveras.

Businesses, buildings and parking spaces on the north side of the intersection would remain the same, although a left turn lane from westbound State Route 12 will be added at the intersection.

The one business seriously impacted by the proposal would be the Century 21 Tri-Dam Realty office at the southeast corner of the intersection. It would either be removed or moved further back from the intersection.

Preliminary budget costs of the intersection improvement project have been pegged at \$1.2 million, much less than estimates of \$4.1 million for a traffic signal and \$2.5 million for a roundabout.

In addition, the extended right-turn proposal being pursued by the county would maintain many of the buildings and parking spaces that would have been eliminated in the signal or roundabout alternatives.

"I think this will work for a number of years," Tofanelli said about the project proposal being pursued.