



Caltrans District 9

Lee Vining US 395 Rehab Project

Public Engagement Summary

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US 395 Lee Vining Rehab Project

Purpose of this Document

Caltrans District 9 is planning a resurfacing, restoration and rehabilitation project to improve safety and accessibility along the US 395 corridor through Lee Vining. Caltrans committed to conducting a robust community engagement process during 2018 to involve the community in early identification of issues and concerns and desired improvements prior to initiating the engineering and design activities for the project. This report describes the outreach process, the outreach activities conducted and the findings from these efforts. Caltrans will use these results to develop the alternatives for the project which are anticipated to be shared with the community in mid to late 2020.

Key Areas of Agreement

The following findings summarize the key themes that emerged across the outreach tools. Participants were reminded that Caltrans has direct control and influence the improvements proposed within the Right of Way (ROW). Any desired improvements that are located outside of the ROW will need to be led by the County, private land owners, or other interested parties. Participants were also reminded that all improvements need to be integrated into an overall design that addresses stormwater drainage, roadway slope, and accessibility as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Caltrans will use the key issues and concerns to identify the specific problems the improvements should address and incorporate the input into decisions made to inform the identification of project alternatives.

Community Issues and Concerns

- Vehicles are travelling at a high rate of speed when they approach Lee Vining. Many vehicles continue speeding through town making some users feel unsafe.
- Pedestrians feel unsafe and find it difficult to cross US 395.
- Bicyclists generally feel unsafe bicycling, especially along Mono Lake.
- Some sidewalk areas are incomplete and in poor condition.
- Some storm drains are clogged with debris leading to flooding of some businesses during storms.
- Some business owners desire more parking and do not like it



The project team speaks with two business owners on July 25, 2018.

when large vehicles block their storefront.

- The project creates opportunities for beautification efforts and providing amenities along the streetscape.
- Snow removal should be taken into account.

Potential Improvements

- There is significant agreement that the improvements should address the need for traffic calming so that vehicles slow down when they pass through town.
- There is significant agreement regarding the need for pedestrian improvements that create high-visibility crossings. Participants suggested multiple locations where they could be placed.



Lee Vining residents listen to the presentation at Community Workshop #2.

- Bicycle improvements are desired along the route. There is limited space for bike lanes north of town. In the community, the width of the available right of way will determine if and where bike lanes are provided.
- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements should be done in a manner that makes it safe for youth to walk or bike to school.
- Some improvements can only be implemented in tandem; for example, additional parking and bike lanes can only be achieved through a lane reduction.
- Back-in angled parking is one of the few ways that Caltrans could potentially increase parking within the ROW.
- Those in support of traffic calming through a reduction to 3 lanes were likely to be supportive of back-in angled parking with bike lane.
- There is mixed opinion on the value and benefits of a roundabout at 120.
- Additional signage for drivers and bicyclists and wayfinding for pedestrians could help improve safety and mobility for all modes.

Project Description and Location

Lee Vining is an unincorporated community at an elevation of 6,781 feet in Mono County, situated on the southwest shore of Mono Lake surrounded by the Inyo National Forest. Located on US 395 approximately 20 miles south of Bridgeport and immediately north of the junction with SR 120. The community is a gateway to the Eastern Sierra and Yosemite National Park. US 395 serves as a “Main Street” for Lee Vining, with homes and businesses lining the corridor.

The project area extends along the US 395 corridor from the intersection of SR 120 to Cemetery Road.



Figure 1. Project Corridor Map

Key project components include:

- Replacing or enhancing all drainage to account for the new pavement slope; a Hydrology Study will be conducted to determine the actual infrastructure required
- Replacing all features to provide accessibility for people with disabilities, including curb ramps and driveways
- Rehabilitating the pavement and correcting the slope; the existing cross slope of the roadway will be reduced to meet standards
- Filling pavement where needed

In addition, Caltrans will work with the community to identify improvements that will respond to community concerns related to US 395 and identify the improvements that will increase safety and mobility options for all modes of travel. The outreach results will help inform the project description that will be included in the Caltrans Project Initiation Document (PID).

Goals for Public Outreach and Engagement

The District's overall goal for engaging the public in this process is to inform them about the needs of the project and provide opportunities for the public to share their issues and concerns and suggest the types of improvements to all modes of travel they believe would be most beneficial to the community.

The goals for the Public Engagement and Outreach Process are:

- Educate the public about the need for the proposed improvements along US 395
- Discuss existing conditions and current travel patterns along US 395
- Develop an understanding of the community's issues, concerns, and improvements desired to address them
- Provide example improvements for the public to consider
- Provide input to help inform the development of the PID for US 395



Stakeholders discuss key issues and potential improvements for the project corridor.

Outreach for the US 395 3R project was conducted in two phases. The first phase focused on working with Caltrans, County staff, and the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) to identify the outreach needs and approach, develop the public engagement plan, and create initial materials including a project fact sheet.

The second phase focused on implementing the outreach plan. At the recommendation of the RPAC, outreach activities were conducted between June and August to reach local residents, area visitors, and seasonal and year-round workers.

The Public Engagement Plan provided a range of methods and tools to reach diverse audiences. Methods were based on research conducted for state and regional transportation agencies and were designed to make it easy, convenient, and fun for people to participate. The project team held multiple internal sessions, conducted a site tour, and facilitated meetings at the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) to identify outreach strategies, tools, and stakeholder groups to engage in the process.

Key audiences and stakeholders included regional agencies and officials, residents, business owners, Spanish-speaking community members, employees, youth and families, visitors, seniors, people with disabilities, local advocacy groups, and hard-to-reach populations. The public outreach tools and engagement activities include RPAC meetings, project fact sheets in English and Spanish, press releases, a community preference survey, graphics and visualizations, door-to-door outreach, a public intercept event, community workshops, and small group discussions.

RPAC Meetings: The project team attended the January 10, 2018, RPAC meeting to give an overview of the project and brainstorm strategies for community engagement. The project team met with the Committee twice more over the course of the project to provide updates and to solicit Committee members help in conducting outreach within their networks.

Project Fact Sheet: The project team developed a print and web-friendly Project Fact Sheet to convey key elements of the 3R project, including goals, benefits, potential improvements, and a project schedule. Caltrans staff assisted by providing necessary source material and guidance on inclusion of specific components. The Fact Sheet also contains information about how to participate in the planning process and was distributed to Lee Vining community members and business owners, as well as other relevant stakeholders to help inform the public about the effort. The Fact Sheet was made available in both English and Spanish.

Community Preference Survey: The project team developed and distributed a survey in both online and paper formats. The survey collected information about current usage of the corridor, key areas of concern, and ideas for improvement. The survey featured images of potential improvements for consideration by the respondents. The survey tool also collected demographic information to help determine who was successfully reached. The survey ran from May 2018 and remained open through July 30, 2018, collecting a total of 286 responses. The community preference survey was available in both English and Spanish.

Business Outreach: The project team reached out in-person to local businesses to inform them about the process and outreach opportunities during the June 15-16 Chautauqua and then again in July the day following the first community workshop. The project team was available for business owners to

meet with on a drop-in basis. The team hosted a table outside a local coffee shop from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., allowing business owners to meet with the team when it was most convenient for them. It also provided a setting where they could comment on their needs honestly, without being overheard by customers.

Pop-Up Event: The project team engaged stakeholders during the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua Festival over June 15 and 16 to gather a diverse range of opinions from residents, visitors, employees, business owners, and community groups. A key focus of the outreach aimed to foster participation in the Community Preference Survey. The Chautauqua Festival offered a unique opportunity to engage visitors, among other groups unlikely to participate in more traditional workshops. The pop-up event included a table, display posters, and other eye-catching features.

Community Workshops: The project team hosted two interactive community workshops at the Lee Vining Community Center on July 24 and August 8, 2018. The workshops provided an opportunity for the project team to interact with interested stakeholders, share information about the planning effort, and hear from the public about their issues and ideas for improvements. The workshop format included a presentation to inform the audience about the project, breakout groups exercises, interactive mapping exercises with activity posters, and a large group discussion to capture feedback.



Two workshop participants discuss potential improvements with Caltrans staff.

Publicity Methods

The project team utilized established Caltrans channels as well as supplemental outreach efforts to publicize each of the engagement activities described above. The project team worked with the District 9 Public Information Officer to identify the timing and content for outreach efforts. Publicity methods deployed to spread the word about the planning process and foster participation include website updates, E-Blasts, social media engagement, press releases and local media relations, flyers, and local events.

Website Updates: The Caltrans D9 and Mono County website are key platforms for posting information and updates about the US 395 project. D9 staff and Mono County staff were encouraged to keep these websites up to date as project materials were developed.

E-Blasts or E-Newsletters: E-blasts are short, regular communications intended to keep people engaged with brief snippets of information at key project milestones. The project team established an email list by utilizing existing listservs and collecting additional email addresses through the community survey, at focus groups, during door-to-door outreach, and at community workshops.

Social Media Engagement: Regular posts on the Caltrans D9 Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to keep people engaged with the US 395 project.

Press Releases and Local Media Relations: Caltrans issued a press release to local media outlets at project milestones to help publicize the Community Preference Survey and upcoming community workshops. The Mammoth Times & Inyo Register published articles on the workshops on June 23 and June 28, 2018.

Flyers: A flyer was developed in both English and Spanish prior to each community workshop to help publicize the events. Several copies of the flyer were provided to each RPAC members as well as businesses located along the project corridor. Copies were posted on community bulletin boards. The flyers were also mailed to residents in the 93541 zip code using tax roll property addresses and to all of Lee Vining Post Office Box holders. The project team coordinated with the *Mammoth Times* to include the flyer as an insert within newspapers delivered to addresses in the 93541 zip code and sold at local stores. Digital versions of the flyer were posted on the *Mammoth Times* website, the RPAC website, and the Caltrans D9 website.

Community Preference Survey

Caltrans launched an online community preference survey in late May 2018 to solicit community opinion regarding potential improvements to US 395 in Lee Vining. The preference survey was also distributed in paper format to residents and stakeholders during public outreach events and engagement activities.

The purpose of the survey was to help identify key issues and concerns and potential improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers traveling along US 395 in Lee Vining. The online survey provided stakeholders who might not participate in a traditional workshop or other engagement activity an opportunity to share their concerns, experiences, and needs on their own time. The survey included 14 close-ended questions. Seven questions requested information regarding demographics and travel patterns to determine if the participants are reflective of the area's demographics and to ensure representation for key stakeholder groups including residents and visitors. The survey's demographic questions were clearly marked as optional.

The remaining seven questions asked participants about their comfort level when walking, bicycling, and driving along US 395 in Lee Vining and Mono Lake as well as their preference among potential

pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle improvements. There were 286 survey responses.

Pop-Up Event

The pop-up engagement event took place during the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua Festival on June 15 and 16, 2018. The pop-up was designed to gather a diverse range of opinions from residents, visitors, employees, business owners, and community groups. Participants provided high-level input about how they use US 395, as well as opinions about the types of improvements they would like to see along the corridor. A key focus of the event was to encourage participation in the Community Preference Survey.

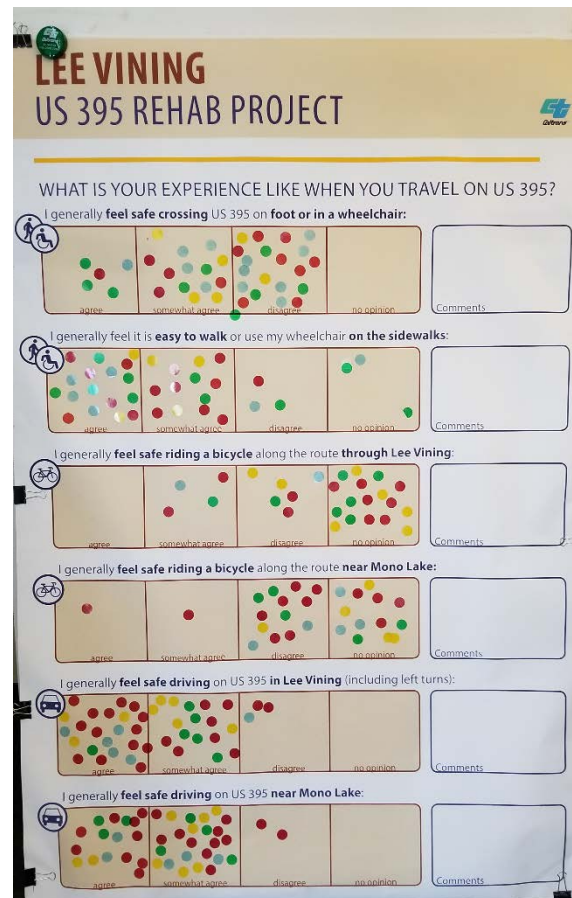
The project team set up a booth with copies of the Fact Sheet, Interactive Poster Boards, and the Community Preference Survey. Participants were encouraged to answer questions on the interactive posters and had the opportunity to win a gift card if they completed the Community Preference Survey. The outreach booth was located in different places on different days to maximize visibility.

Approximately 40 individuals participated in the pop-up event. Almost three quarters of participants were visitors and nearly half travel along US 395 infrequently. The remaining participants were Lee Vining and Mono County residents. Almost one quarter of participants travel along US 395 daily. About three quarters of participants typically drive personal vehicles when traveling along US 395. The remaining participants typically walk or bike when traveling along US 395.

Community Workshops

On July 24, 2018, Caltrans hosted the first of two community workshops at the Lee Vining Community Center to discuss proposed improvements to US 395. The purpose of the first workshop was to solicit community input to help identify key issues and concerns and potential improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers traveling US 395 in Lee Vining.

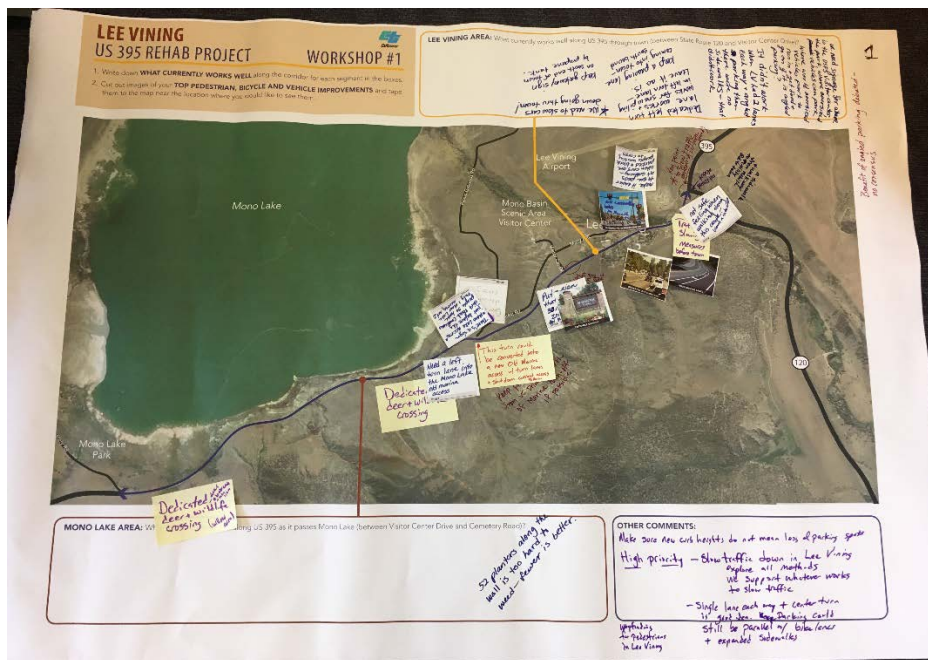
The workshop agenda was organized around three major components:



Participants placed stickers on this activity board to indicate their level of comfort when traveling along US 395 in different locations and using different modes of transit.

1. A presentation about the Lee Vining US 395 Rehabilitation Project, including current conditions, potential types of improvements, and a summary of the interim community survey results.
2. A small group mapping activity to identify the types and locations of improvements.
3. A large group report-back about each small group's ideas for the project corridor.

Twenty-one (21) individuals attended the workshop. The results of the workshop provided Caltrans with in-depth input about the types of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular improvements participants would like to see and potential locations for these improvements. Participants worked in small groups which allowed ample time for discussion and then each group reported back their results. The group was not expected to reach consensus or set priorities for the proposed improvements. Participants were asked to identify existing elements that work well along US 395 as well as unmet needs and potential improvements. Many of the suggestions for improvements would expand upon the existing elements that work well.



Community Workshop #1 participants worked in small groups to complete a reporting template which identified issues and preferences. Results were transcribed for easy reference by the project team.

On August 8, 2018, Caltrans hosted a second community workshop at the Lee Vining Community Center to discuss proposed improvements to US 395. The purpose of the workshop was to present the community input received to date; provide additional information about some of the suggested improvements to US 395 at Lee Vining and allow for more in-depth discussion. Thirteen (13) stakeholders participated in the workshop and worked in small groups to further discuss the potential improvements. The group was not expected to reach consensus or establish priorities.

The results from the previous engagement activities revealed there was a wide variety of opinion on six topics and the related potential improvements, including angled and back-in angled parking, pedestrian

crosswalks, bicycle improvements in Lee Vining, bicycle improvements north of Lee Vining, three lanes with a center turn-lane, and the proposed roundabout at the US 395-SR 120 intersection.

Key Findings from Each Outreach Activity

The following table provides the key findings extracted from the body of findings learned from the various public engagement activities. The key findings provide a summary of comments expressed throughout the process. However, the number of statements on a specific topic should not imply a vote or priority on that issue or improvement.



Joan Chaplick of MIG speaks with two business owners on July 25th, 2018.

Table 1. Key Themes by Engagement Activity

Engagement Activity	Key Findings
RPAC Meeting #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian crossing safety is a major area of concern. The elementary school and high school are on opposite sides of US-395, and students cross the highway daily. • Crosswalk visibility is an issue. • Sidewalks are often narrow, uneven, and uncomfortable for pedestrians. • Cars often speed through the corridor, and there is a need for traffic calming. • Parking is a key concern along the corridor. • Certain intersections pose safety issues. The intersection with SR-120 made users uncomfortable • Left turns from side streets have limited visibility. • Cyclists experience challenging conditions due to poor visibility in town and a lack of bike lanes. • Lee Vining Creek Trail is an important asset, but currently faces drainage issues along US-395, and limited visibility at the trailhead. The trail is often washed out because of drainage issues. Signage should be improved to increase trail usage. • Roadkill, particularly collisions with deer, pose serious safety hazards along the northern part of the project area. • General signage and wayfinding could help reduce traffic and improve safety, particularly with the increase in international tourists and visitors who are not familiar with the area. • RPAC members were concerned over the maintenance of landscaping or other improvements in the media because of snow removal during the winter, which could damage these features.

<p>Community Preference Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifty percent of participants agree or somewhat agree that they feel safe crossing US 395 on foot or in a wheelchair in Lee Vining. Participants comfort level walking on the sidewalks in Lee Vining is even higher, with 63% agreeing or somewhat agreeing that they generally feel safe while doing so. • More participants expressed they feel unsafe riding a bicycle along US 395 in Lee Vining than the number of participants who feel safe. Participants feel less safe riding along the route near Mono Lake than they do when riding through Lee Vining. • Participants expressed they feel more safe driving along US 395 than walking or biking. Like cyclists, drivers feel more safe driving on US 395 in Lee Vining than they do driving on US 395 near Mono Lake. • Participants responses indicate that improving safety for pedestrians is more important than adding aesthetic elements or additional amenities. Of the ten pedestrian improvements that were provided, the most popular were adding more crosswalks and making crosswalks more visible, improving sidewalks to make it safer and easier to walk and installing pedestrian hybrid beacons. • Responses indicate that cyclists prioritize improved bicycle lanes. Of the six bicycle improvements that were provided, the most popular were improving bicycle lanes and markings between Lee Vining and Cemetery Road, between SR 120 and Lee Vining, and through Lee Vining. Three times more participants felt that bicycle improvements were not important to them than the number of participants who felt similarly about pedestrian or vehicle improvements. • Participants responses were more evenly distributed among the potential vehicle improvements compared to the responses for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Of the eight vehicle improvements that were provided, the most popular were widening shoulders north of Lee Vining, reconfiguring lanes to make left turns easier and improving on-street parking through Lee Vining.
<p>Business Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a desire for additional parking, particularly for businesses that currently lack parking. Since many customers are visitors, they seek to park close to the businesses they expect to visit. • Most were favorable towards angled parking, although one individual noted that angled parking would not accommodate large trucks, which would further decrease the supply of parking for large vehicles. • There is a need for large vehicle parking, including parking for semi-trucks and RVs. Most drivers are respectful, but occasionally a large vehicle will park in front, blocking the view of the business from customers. • There is a desire for additional street lighting. • There is a desire for additional crosswalks; it is very difficult to safely cross US 395.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians are not visible to drivers, especially when the driver in the second lane is unaware or unprepared to stop. • There is a desire for signaled crosswalks and flashing pedestrian beacons. It is difficult to get drivers to slow down and stop especially when they have been traveling at a high speed before the entered town. • There is a need for additional sidewalks to provide complete walkways, fill in gaps and repair areas that are in poor condition. • The sidewalk area would benefit from beautification and related improvements. • The pedestrian area could be improved by adding greenery and landscaping, including trees. • There is a desire to have sidewalk trashcans. • Suggest adding a bike lane on the west side of 395. • There is a desire for traffic calming. Speeding is a key issue, particularly at night. • Visibility for cars is poor, especially when approaching turns and turning. • Some concerns were expressed regarding the proposed roundabout as it related to snow removal. • Drainage is a significant issue. Clogged storm drains have caused localized flooding to parking areas and buildings. Business owners are too busy manning their businesses to keep the storm drains clear. They should be cleaned regularly. • Consider using green infrastructure (i.e. landscaping features) to help address drainage issues. • Property owners gave up space and access for more parking, but the space was then used for drainage instead; this incident resulted in a loss of parking. • There is a desire for greater transparency and clarity from Caltrans regarding design standards and jurisdiction. • Improvements should be done in a manner that maintain Lee Vining’s character and sense of place. • Need to clarify easement conflicts and create plans for collaboration, especially as it relates to maintenance. • Design improvements should function and respond to the varying needs in each season; for example, design improvements must accommodate snow plows.
Pop-Up Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More participants feel unsafe crossing US 395 on foot or in a wheelchair than the number of participants who feel safe. • Most participants find it easy or somewhat easy to walk or use wheelchairs along the sidewalks. • More than half of the participants who bicycle along US 395 through Lee Vining feel unsafe while doing so. The remaining participants feel somewhat safe. • Participants generally feel safe driving on US 395 in Lee Vining and near Mono Lake.

<p>Community Workshop #1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants would like the proposed improvements to US 395 to help slow vehicle traffic as it moves through town. • Traffic Calming with pedestrian improvements will make it easier for people to cross US 395. • There is a desire for more and better located parking. • Providing truck parking at the north or south ends of town would free up parking in front of businesses. • There are opportunities for bicycle improvements closer to Lee Vining, however, it gets more difficult to accommodate these improvements as you get closer to Mono Lake where the road narrows considerably. • Improved and additional signage can play an important role in directing and attracting visitors to local businesses and area amenities. • Where possible, the County and other potential partners are encouraged to use this public input to inform the creation of bikeways and pedestrian pathways that are outside Caltrans Right-of-Way.
<p>Community Workshop #2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants held mixed opinions on back-in angled parking. • One participant noted that adding back-in angled parking would help create a sense of a “downtown” for visitors. • One group suggested concentrating back-in angled parking in front of Lee Vining’s cluster of businesses. • Participants liked that back-in angled parking helps to make bicyclists more visible to drivers. • Participants were concerned over the difficulty of back-in angled parking but stated the potential safety and economic benefits outweighed the potential challenges. • Pedestrian, parking, and bike improvements offer an opportunity to create additional amenities in Lee Vining and attract new customers, thereby creating economic benefits. • Participants support using a combination of pedestrian improvements to improve safety and visibility of pedestrians by drivers. • Participants were particularly supportive of flashing beacons. • Participants supported adding bulb-outs in strategic locations. One group suggested adding bulb-outs near 4th street, as drivers enter Lee Vining and approach the town’s primary commercial corridor. These participants noted that bulb-outs could assist in visually marking the downtown area to alert drivers of upcoming traffic changes. • Provide a walkway from the Mono Market to Mobil. • Bike improvements in Lee Vining should support children’s safety as they bike to and from school. Participants suggested designating bike lanes and/or routes for kids to bike to school.

- Bicycle improvements should enable all riders, including tourers and commuters, to move through Lee Vining safely.
- Bicycle improvements should benefit other forms of active transportation, such as skateboarding.
- Participants would like to see bike racks installed in Lee Vining.
- One group recognized that bicycle improvements could provide visitors with an additional amenity and encourage more visitors to stop in Lee Vining and visit the local businesses.
- Participants supported improvements that would make bicyclists more visible, such as using colored asphalt.
- Bike improvements north of Lee Vining should be separated and/or buffered to protect cyclists.
- The County could consider creating an alternative (off US 395) to provide cyclists their own, dedicated road.
- Participants recognized that bicycle improvements throughout Mono County could serve as an additional economic asset.
- Route constraints: There is currently no room for a shoulder along US 395 for bicycles due to the road's configuration, including the temporary K-rails.
- Stakeholders would like bicycle improvements to accommodate projected population as tourism increases.
- Reducing the number of lanes would slow traffic down and increase safety for all modes of transit and be good for businesses.
- Reducing the number of lanes would reduce the corridor's capacity for vehicles, potentially causing traffic delays.
- Stakeholders are concerned that reducing the number of lanes could create obstacles for large delivery vehicles, particularly for semi-trucks and UPS trucks.
- There was mixed opinion on installing roundabouts. Stakeholders who support roundabouts recognize their ability to calm traffic approaching Lee Vining.
- Participants noted that the roundabout would define the entrance to Mono Basin and alert drivers to upcoming traffic changes.
- Stakeholders who oppose roundabouts expressed concerns about the ability of large vehicles to navigate the roundabouts.
- One group was concerned that the roundabout at the US 395-SR 120 junction would be far enough away from Lee Vining to allow drivers to speed back up before reaching the downtown area. This group suggested adding medians or bulb-outs between the roundabout and the town's cluster of commercial businesses to keep driving speeds low through the town center.

Findings by Engagement Activity

The full body of findings for the Community Preference Survey, Community Workshop #1, and Community Workshop #2 are presented below.

Community Preference Survey

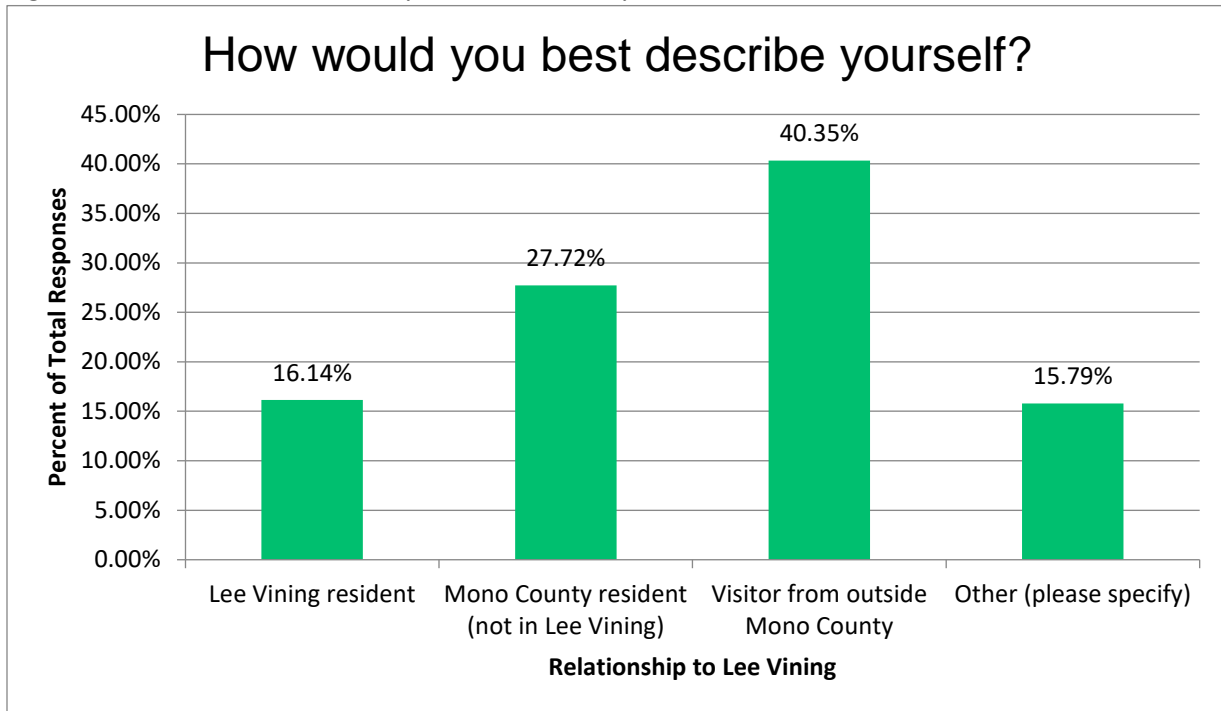
Participant Profile and Travel Patterns

Survey participants were asked to provide their gender, age, and race and to indicate whether their household includes children under the age of 18 and their relationship to Lee Vining. Approximately 52% of survey participants are female and 48% of participants are male. Participants are disproportionately aged 55-64 years old, with about a third of participants self-identifying as belonging to that age cohort. The next largest age cohorts to participate are 65 and older, 45-54 and 35-44, at 21%, 18%, and 15% respectively. Less than 12% of participants are 34 years old or younger.

About 75% of participants do not have children under the age of 18 in their households, while 25% of participants do. Most participants identify as white, at 90%. The next largest racial groups are “Other” and Hispanic and Latino, at 5% and 2.5% respectively.

Forty percent of participants are visitors from outside of Mono County. Twenty eight percent of participants are Mono County residents who live outside of Lee Vining and 16% are Lee Vining residents. (It should be noted that residents in nearby Mono City, which is located near the northern end of the project area included in the results for Mono County residents.) The remaining 16% of participants selected “Other”. These participants are included: employees who work in Mono County, Inyo County residents, Mono County residents, through-travelers and seasonal residents, or residents who own vacation- and second-homes in Mono County and others.

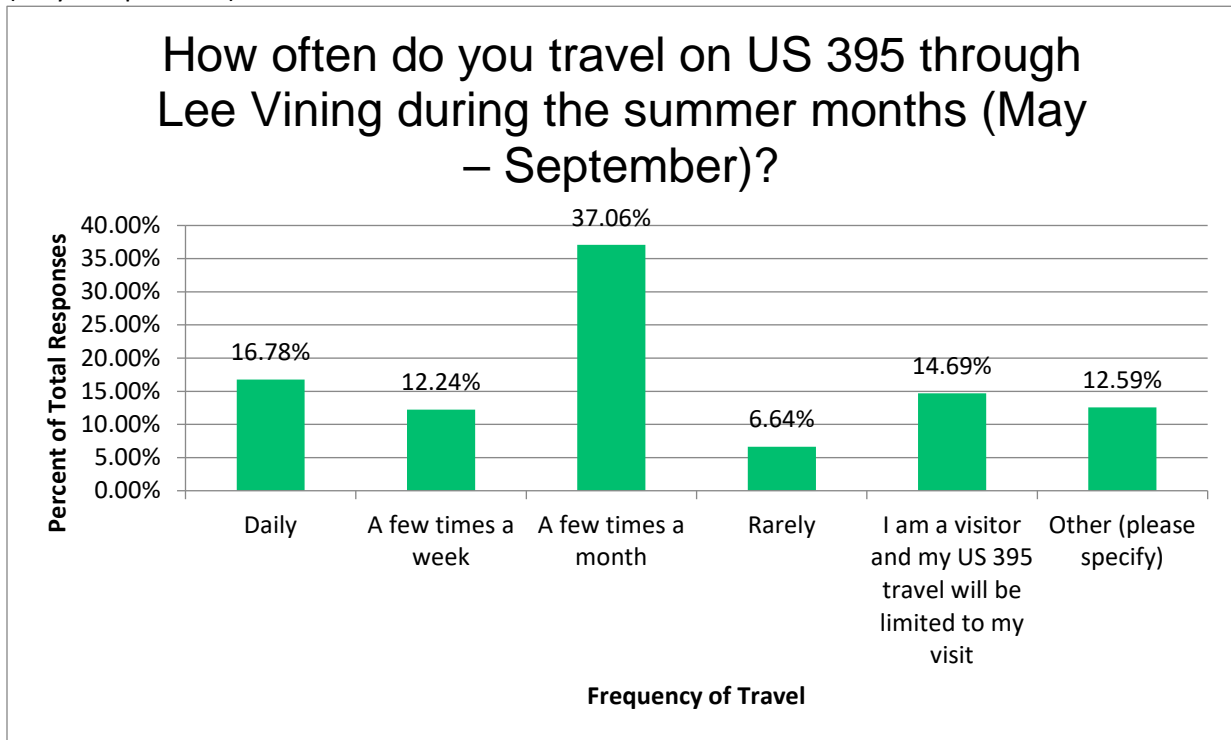
Figure 1. Question 1: How would you best describe yourself?



Among the participants who are Lee Vining residents, 28% are year-round homeowners and 17% are year-round renters. Seasonal homeowners and renters accounted for 6% and 7% of participating Lee Vining residents respectively. Retirees, local business owners, and students make up 5%, 2%, and 2% of participating Lee Vining residents respectively.

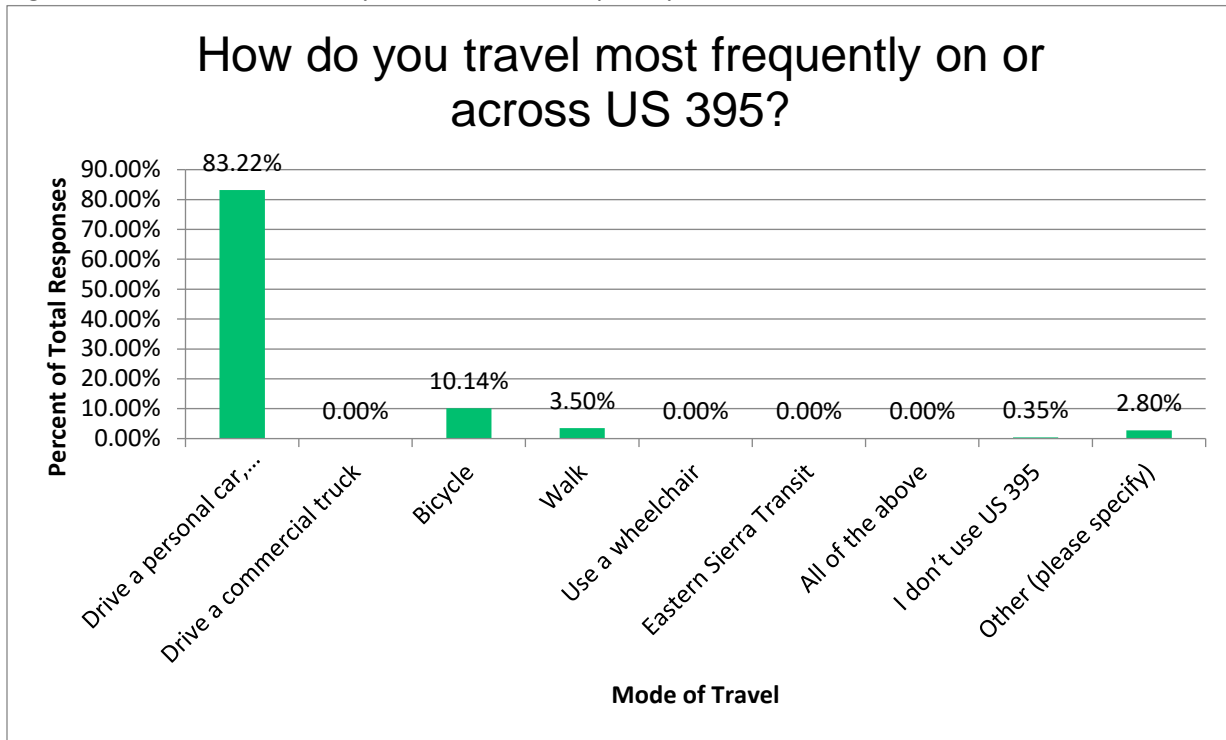
Only about a third of participants travel along US 395 regularly, with 17% of participants using the corridor daily and 12% of participants using the corridor a few times a week. Thirty seven percent of participants travel along US 395 a few times a month. The remaining participants use the corridor rarely, with 7% of participants selecting "Rarely" and 15% of participants selecting "I am a visitor and my US 395 travel will be limited to my visit." Of the thirteen percent of participants who selected "Other", the majority indicated that they use the corridor more than once a year but less than 12 times a year.

Figure 2. Question 3: How often do you travel on US 395 through Lee Vining during the summer months (May – September)?



At 83%, most participants typically drive a personal car, motorcycle or truck on US 395. Ten percent of participants cycle along the corridor and 4% walk. Less than 1% of participants indicated that they do not use US 395.

Figure 3. Question 4: How do you travel most frequently on or across US 395?



Detailed Findings by Question

What is your experience like when you travel on or near US 395 in Lee Vining?

Participants were asked to indicate their comfort level walking, biking, and driving along US 395 at different sections by agreeing or disagreeing with a given statement.

Eighteen percent of participants agreed that they feel safe crossing US 395 on foot or in a wheelchair, while 32% somewhat agreed. Thirty eight percent disagreed, indicating that well over a third of participants feel unsafe crossing US 395 on foot or in a wheelchair. Thirty two percent of participants agreed that it is easy to walk or use their wheelchair on sidewalks along US 395, while 31% somewhat agreed. Nineteen percent of participants disagreed.

Only 9% of participants agreed that they feel safe riding a bicycle along the route through Lee Vining, while 21% somewhat agreed. Thirty eight percent of participants disagreed. Participants feel even less comfortable riding a bicycle along the route near Mono Lake. Only 3% of participants agreed that they feel safe doing so, while 9% agreed somewhat. Fifty four percent disagreed, indicating that they feel unsafe riding along the route near Mono Lake.

Thirty seven percent of participants agreed that they feel safe driving on US 395 in Lee Vining, while 48% somewhat agreed. Fifteen percent of participants disagreed. Participant feel less safe driving along US 395 near Mono Lake, with 32% of participants agreeing that they feel safe and 44% of participants agreeing somewhat. Twenty three percent of participants disagreed.

What are the top three pedestrian improvements you would be most supportive of seeing on US 395?

Of ten potential pedestrian improvements, adding more crosswalks and making crosswalks more visible won the most votes, at 63%. Improving sidewalks to make it safer and easier to walk earned the second most votes, at 47%. Adding pedestrian “HAWK” signals, street and landscaping, and installing pedestrian bulb-outs were the next most popular, earning 39%, 26%, and 24% of the votes respectively. Improving street lighting, curb cuts (curb ramp), and signage as well as adding more sidewalk seating each earned between 15% and 20% of the votes. Adding artistic elements to pavement earned the least votes, at 8%. Thirteen percent of the votes went to “Other”, with most of these participants recommending improved speed enforcement for vehicles approaching, leaving, and passing through Lee Vining. The remaining participant votes indicated that pedestrian improvements along US 395 are not important to them.

Table 1. Question 6: What are the top three pedestrian improvements you would be most supportive of seeing on US 395?

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent of Total Participants (%)	Number (#)
Improve sidewalk to make it safer and easier to walk along the corridor	46.64%	111
Add more or make crosswalks more visible	63.03%	150
Improve or add attractive street lighting	15.97%	38
Add street trees and landscaping in sidewalk area	25.63%	61
Install bulb-outs to make it easier for pedestrians to cross US 395	23.95%	57
Improve curb cuts and features to make it easier for people with disabilities	15.13%	36
Add more sidewalk seating	16.81%	40
Add artistic elements to pavement	7.56%	18
Improved signage and wayfinding for pedestrians	18.49%	44
Install pedestrian "HAWK" signals	38.66%	92
None of the above: Pedestrian improvements along US 395 are not important to me	5.04%	12
Other (please specify)	13.03%	31

What are the top three bicycle improvements you would be most supportive of on US 395?

The most popular bicycle improvements were improving bicycle lanes and markings between Lee Vining and Cemetery Road, between SR 120 and Lee Vining and through Lee Vining earning 69%, 61% and 56% of the votes respectively. The next most popular improvements were improving signage for bicycles and adding bike racks throughout Lee Vining, at 21% and 12% of the votes respectively. The least popular improvement was installing bike repair stations, earning 8% of the votes. Nine percent of participants selected "Other," most of whom recommended a separated or buffered bicycle path. Sixteen percent of the votes indicated that bicycle improvements are not important to them.

Table 2. Question 7: What are the top three bicycle improvements you would be most supportive of on US 395?

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent of Total Participants (%)	Number (#)
Improve bicycle lanes and markings between SR 120 and Lee Vining	60.92%	145
Improve bicycle lanes and markings through Lee Vining	56.30%	134
Improve bicycle lanes and markings between Lee Vining and Cemetery Road	68.91%	164
Improve signage for bicycles throughout corridor	20.59%	49
Add bike racks throughout Lee Vining	11.76%	28
Install bike repair stations (air pump, stand, tools)	7.56%	18
None of the above: Bicycle improvements along US 395 are not important to me	15.55%	37
Other (please specify)	8.40%	20

What are the top three vehicle improvements you would be most supportive of on US 395?

The most popular vehicle improvements were widening shoulders north of Lee Vining, reconfiguring lanes to make left turns easier and improving on-street parking through Lee Vining, earning 52%, 44%, and 41% of the votes respectively. The next most popular improvements were making the roadway pavement even and consistent, narrowing lanes through Lee Vining to slow traffic and installing a roundabout at the SR 120 intersection, at 37%, 31%, and 22% of the votes respectively. The least popular improvements were establishing an entranceway or gateway to Lee Vining and improving signage and wayfinding for drivers, at 15% and 13% respectively. Eight percent of the votes went to “Other”. There was not any clear consensus among the “Other” votes, although many protested the installation of a roundabout. Five percent of the votes indicated that vehicle improvements are not important to them.

Table 3. Question 8: What are the top three vehicle improvements you would be most supportive of on US 395?

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent of Total Participants (%)	Number (#)
Reconfigure lanes to make left turns easier off of US 395	44.30%	105
Narrow lanes through Lee Vining to slow traffic	31.22%	74
Install a roundabout at SR 120 intersection to improve traffic flow between Yosemite and US 395	21.52%	51
Make roadway pavement even and consistent	36.71%	87
Widen shoulders north of Lee Vining along Mono Lake	51.90%	123
Improve on-street parking through Lee Vining	40.51%	96
Improve signage and wayfinding for drivers	12.66%	30
Establish an entranceway or gateway to Lee Vining	14.77%	35
None of the above: Improvements for vehicles on US 395 are not important to me	5.06%	12
Other (please specify)	8.44%	20

Do you have any other comments regarding future improvements to US 395 in Lee Vining?

Most of the write-in comments referenced the need to lower vehicle speeds approaching, leaving, and passing through Lee Vining; maintaining the area’s natural beauty, maintaining Lee Vining’s small-town charm, and improving safety for cyclists. Other comments requested that the construction time frame be kept short, that the budget be kept low, and that wildlife be better protected from vehicle traffic. Some comments opposed a roundabout, changes like those implemented in Bridgeport, and certain types of parking.

Community Workshop #1

Existing Elements that Work Well

Participants were asked to identify the features and elements of US 395 that they believed worked well. These included:

- **Pedestrian Infrastructure and Walkability.** Some participants described the area has having features to promote walkability including: wider sidewalks in some areas, street trees, and seating.
- **Roadway features that allowed for traffic flow:** The route includes turn lanes, turn outs/turn pockets, passing lanes, and 30 MPH speed limits that help keep traffic moving. A slope stabilization project also helped keep the roadway safe.
- **Participants commented positively on the signage that was available including:** gateway sign near propane tank, street name signs, speed feedback sign, and changeable message sign.

Desired Potential Improvement

Participants reporting out the findings from the small groups identified the following requested improvements. *It should be noted that suggested improvements that fall outside of the Caltrans Right of Way will need to be addressed by the County, private landowners and/or other potential partners.* A complete transcription of the written comments provided on the map in each small group is provided in Appendix A.

- **395-120 Junction:** Add a sidewalk/walkway from Mobile Station to town.
- **Bike Infrastructure:** Add protected bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, and separated bike paths to increase safety for bicyclists. Provide permanent signage for bike routes and create the opportunity for future regional bike infrastructure to connect to Lee Vining.
- **Large Vehicles:** Create a parking area for out-of-town trucks and add parking for RVs and large trucks.
- **Mono Inn:** Improve striping to address concerns about the difficulty in making a left turn into the property
- **Old Marina Access:** Consider relocating the Old Marina entrance, add a left turn lane and/or pocket to enter the Old Marina.
- **Parking:** Seek ways to add more parking and address concerns regarding potential loss of parking spaces. Consider adding parallel parking with trees and add angle parking and add angle parking. Concerns were expressed regarding the difficulty of using back-in parking spaces
- **Pedestrian Infrastructure and Walkability:** Re-evaluate crosswalk locations and re-locate crosswalks to improve visibility of pedestrians by drivers. Add flashing pedestrian beacons, pedestrian signage, and wayfinding. It was suggested the County and property owners consider adding art features, pedestrian “bulb outs”, construct buffered sidewalks and landscaping.
- **Signage:** Add more MPH signage and add wayfinding for drivers. It was suggested the County consider adding gateway signing.
- **Roadways and Traffic Flow:** Traffic Calming to slow cars down when approaching and driving through town. Add features to slow traffic, pave turnouts, add colored asphalt, increase shoulder width, resurface shoulders, widen shoulders add center rumble strips and add dedicated left turn lanes.

- **Reduce to three-lanes:** Mixed opinion in the groups regarding the benefits and practicality of reducing the 4 lanes to 3, with a dedicated turn lane in the middle.
- **Wildlife:** Add multiple wildlife crossings.
- **Roundabout:** Mixed opinion in the groups regarding community acceptance of and the benefits of installing a roundabout near the intersection of 395 and 120 or at the Forest Service building or at both.

Community Workshop #2

Findings by Topic

Back-In Angled Parking/Angled Parking

Benefits

- Participants held mixed opinions on back-in angled parking. Those supportive of back-in angled parking thought it was “brilliant” and “good for business”.
- One participant noted that adding back-in angled parking would help create a sense of a “downtown” for visitors.
- One group suggested concentrating back-in angled parking in front of Lee Vining’s cluster of businesses.
- Participants liked that back-in angled parking helps to make bicyclists more visible to drivers.

Concerns

- Participants were concerned over the difficulty of back-in angled parking but stated that the potential safety and economic benefits outweighed the potential challenges. Some participants stated simply: “I don’t like it.”

Pedestrian Crosswalks

Benefits

- Pedestrian, parking, and bike improvements offer an opportunity to create additional amenities in Lee Vining and attract new customers, thereby creating economic benefits.
- Participants support using a combination of pedestrian improvements to improve safety and visibility of pedestrians by drivers.
- Participants were particularly supportive of flashing beacons.
- Participants supported adding bulb-outs in strategic locations. One group suggested adding bulb-outs near Nicely’s, as drivers enter Lee Vining and approach the town’s primary commercial corridor. These participants noted that bulb-outs could assist in visually marking the downtown area to alert drivers of upcoming traffic changes.
- Provide a wider walkway from the Mono Market to Mobil.

Bicycle Improvements in Lee Vining

Benefits

- Bike improvements in Lee Vining should support children’s safety as they bike to and from school. Participants suggested designating bike lanes and/or routes for kids to bike to school.
- Bicycle improvements should enable all riders, including tourers and commuters, to move through Lee Vining safely.

- Bicycle improvements should benefit other forms of active transportation, such as skateboarding.
- Participants would like to see bike racks installed in Lee Vining.
- One group recognized that bicycle improvements could provide visitors with an additional amenity and encourage more visitors to stop in Lee Vining and visit the local businesses.

Bicycle Improvements North of Lee Vining

Benefits

- Participants supported improvements that would make bicyclists more visible, such as using colored asphalt.
- Bike improvements north of Lee Vining should be separated and/or buffered to protect cyclists.
- The County should consider creating an alternative (off US 395) to provide cyclists their own, dedicated road.
- Participants recognized that bicycle improvements throughout Mono County could serve as an additional economical asset.

Concerns

- Route constraints: There is currently no room along US 395 for bicycles due to the road's configuration, including the temporary K-rails.
- Stakeholders would like bicycle improvements to accommodate projected population and tourism increases.



Florene Trainor, Caltrans Public Information Officer in District 9, answers questions about potential improvements.

Three Lanes with Center Turn-Lane

Benefits

- Reducing the number of lanes would slow traffic down and increase safety for all modes of transit and be good for businesses.

Concerns

- Reducing the number of lanes would reduce the corridor's capacity for vehicles, potentially causing traffic delays.
- Stakeholders are concerned that reducing the number of lanes could create obstacles for large delivery vehicles, particularly for semi-trucks and UPS trucks.

Roundabout at US 395-SR 120 Junction

Benefits

- There was mixed opinion on installing roundabouts. Stakeholders who support roundabouts recognize their ability to calm traffic approaching Lee Vining.
- Participants noted that the roundabout would define the entrance to Mono Basin and alert drivers to upcoming traffic changes.

Concerns

- Stakeholders who oppose roundabouts expressed concerns about the ability of large vehicles to navigate the roundabouts.

One group was concerned that the roundabout at the US 395-SR 120 junction would be far enough away from Lee Vining to allow drivers to speed back up before reaching the downtown area. This group suggested adding medians or bulb-outs between the roundabout and the town's cluster of commercial businesses to keep driving speeds low through the town center.

Conclusion

In late September 2018, Caltrans will begin the engineering and design work to achieve the project goals. The Project Initiation Document (PID) will be completed in Spring 2019. The PID will emphasize improved access for people with disabilities, improved storm water drainage, and correction to the road slope along with select improvements that respond to community issues and concerns. The selected improvements will be constructed to the specifications outlined by the Caltrans Office of Construction Contract Standards, which can be found online at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/des/oe/construction-contract-standards.html>. Caltrans expects to have project alternatives available for community review in 18-24 months when it begins the environmental review process. During that time, there will be numerous opportunities for the community to provide input on the alternatives.