LEMMON DRIVE
PROJECT

Lemmon Drive Traffic Improvements & Resiliency Project

FACT SHEET | FEB-MAR 2026

The Lemmon Drive Traffic Improvements & Resiliency Project aims to realign and reconstruct the roadway above the 100-year floodplain, ensuring safety and connectivity. The project proposes to realign a portion of Lemmon Drive from its existing location to the west over the existing berm along Swan Lake. The berm alignment would elevate the roadway and allow equalization of floodwaters to either side that would help maintain neighborhood access during extreme weather events. The project would not increase flooding, but would increase safety and mobility of the community during flood events by ensuring an accessible roadway.

The project is in the ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL phase, shown in the timeline below. The RTC is working to provide the preliminary project design and secure approval from the Federal Highway Administration to allow the project to move forward.

THIS PROJECT WOULD:

- ✓ Provide safe and reliable access to Lemmon Valley area during flood events
- ✓ Rehabilitate existing multi-use path for walking and biking
- ✓ Build the road in a way that doesn't cause more flooding
- ✓ Provide mitigation basins to mitigate embankment and impervious surface impacts
- ✓ Allow first responders to access homes more quickly during flood events

THIS PROJECT WOULD NOT:

- ✗ Have adverse effect to the mapped floodplain
- ✗ Provide additional land for development
- ✗ Impact emergency-response times for medical emergencies/structural fires

Timeline

01 — ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS AND NEPA STUDIES
- Refine agency-endorsed alternatives.
- Establish Area of Potential Effect (APE)
- Conduct field surveys and environmental studies.
- Conduct tribal and resource agency consultations.
- Develop preliminary cost estimates.
- Conduct additional outreach.

SEP 2023 - SEP 2024

02 — PREPARE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT
- Identify preferred alternative.
- Identify potential environmental impacts and associated mitigations.
- Identify right-of-way impacts.
- Identify potential phasing.
- Develop 30% design plans for the preferred alternative.

SEP 2024 - MAY 2025

03 — ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL
- Conduct Public Hearing.
- Submit and/or secure resource agency permits.
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) determination
- Provide preliminary design for preferred alternative.
- Allows project to continue moving forward.

MAY 2025 - MARCH 2026

WE ARE HERE

04 — FINAL DESIGN AND RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION
- Conduct right-of-way setting.
- Conduct right-of-way and easement acquisitions.
- Final permitting.
- Prepare final plans, specifications, and estimate.
- Advertise for construction.

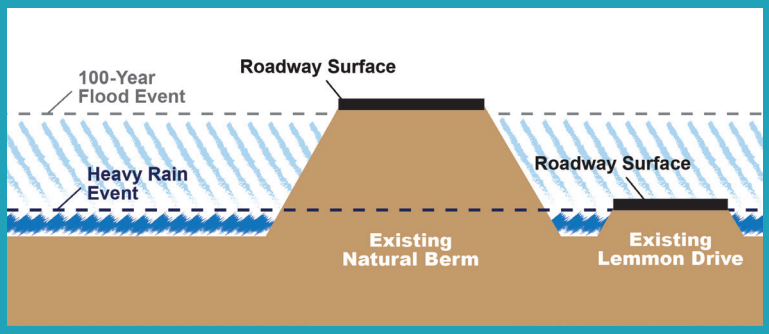
DEC 2025 - SEPT 2026

05 — CONSTRUCTION
- Finalize design packages.
- Begin construction.
- Provide environmental mitigations as identified in FONSI.

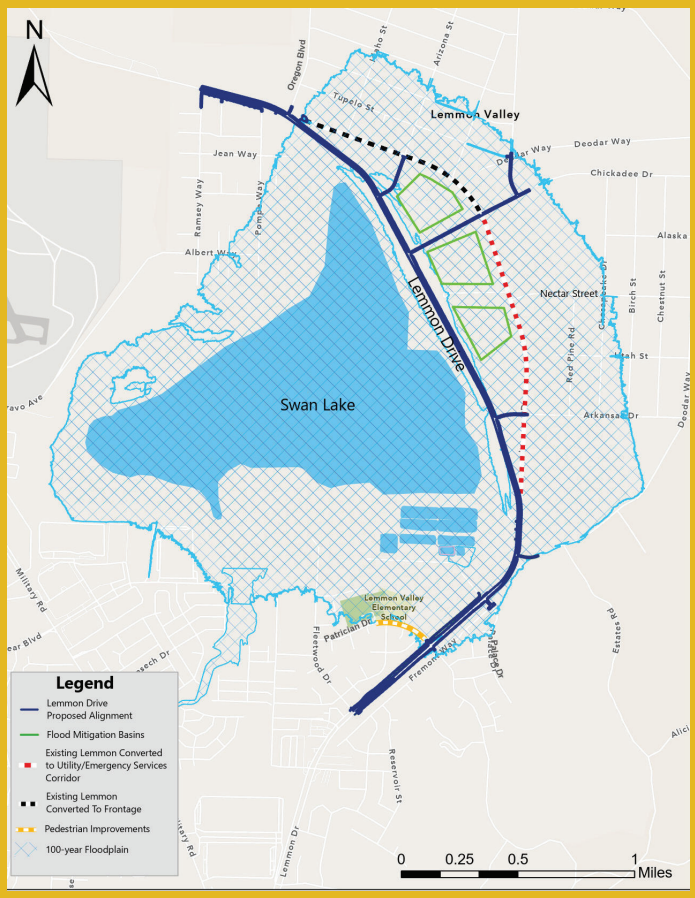
FALL 2026 - FALL 2028

Why is a new roadway needed?

During potential future flooding events, it is important to have reliable access to neighborhoods in our community. The RTC's goal is to construct a safe roadway above the 100-year floodplain to ensure that when it floods again, neighborhoods are still accessible from Lemmon Drive. The adjacent image shows the floodplain with the proposed natural berm roadway still accessible during a flood event.



Note: Image not to scale and is exaggerated for emphasis



Where would the new roadway go?

This project would realign a portion of Lemmon Drive from its existing location further west and place it over the existing berm near Swan Lake. The shift would begin near the intersection of Deodar Way/Lemmon Drive and continue to the intersection of Pompe Way/ Lemmon Drive. An existing berm alignment means that the road would be built on existing elevated land that blends with the naturally occurring landscape.

An example of a road built on a berm in our community would be Veterans Parkway between Sparks Boulevard and South Meadows Parkway, also known as the SouthEast Connector.

Photo: Veterans Parkway (SouthEast Connector)

Why can't Lemmon Drive just be raised in its current location?

Raising the existing Lemmon Drive alignment was evaluated early in the alternatives development process, but was eliminated from further consideration due to the additional impacts to flood mitigation and costs. In response to comments received from the community, the project team revisited raising the existing Lemmon Drive alignment. To stay above the floodplain, the current Lemmon Drive would need to be raised approximately 2 feet to 10 feet. This would affect properties next to Lemmon Drive because their driveways would need to be adjusted to a suitable slope and could result in potential right-of-way impacts. Additionally, constructing the project while maintaining traffic on the roadway would be very difficult and expensive, and the construction duration would be longer than the Proposed Build Alternative. Raising existing Lemmon Drive would also have significant drainage impacts, resulting in additional mitigation needs between Oregon Boulevard and Waterash Street, requiring approximately 10 times greater volumetric earthwork mitigation than the Proposed Build Alternative.

Community Question: Moving the roadway closer to Swan Lake doesn't make sense. Wouldn't that mean it would increase the chance of flooding?

Relocating Lemmon Drive to higher existing ground closer to Swan Lake will make the new Lemmon Drive higher than the current roadway and above the 100-year flood level. Constructing roads on poor soils related to dry lake beds is not uncommon. Special geotechnical design and recommendations may be required such as soil-mixing or use of engineered geotechnical materials. An extensive and detailed geotechnical exploration will be conducted once initial environmental clearances are received.

Additional Concerns

- **Access:** We heard concerns about access and revised the proposed Berm Alignment to include extending Arizona Street to connect with the new Lemmon Drive. Additionally, existing Lemmon Drive between Waterash Street to Chickadee Drive would be reconstructed as a frontage road. A connection to Nectar Street was evaluated but is not included. Discussions with the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District indicates that the Nectar Station is a volunteer station used only for wildfire events. Emergency services are provided from the Stead Station and those emergency response times would not be impacted. Residents who currently use Nectar Street to access their homes would use Arkansas Drive or Chickadee Drive.
- **Traffic Rerouting:** The project team looked at how traffic rerouting may occur to gain a perspective on the change in traffic volumes along the roads that would maintain access to Lemmon Drive. The evaluation resulted in the following results for additional traffic in the existing afternoon peak period (4-6 pm).

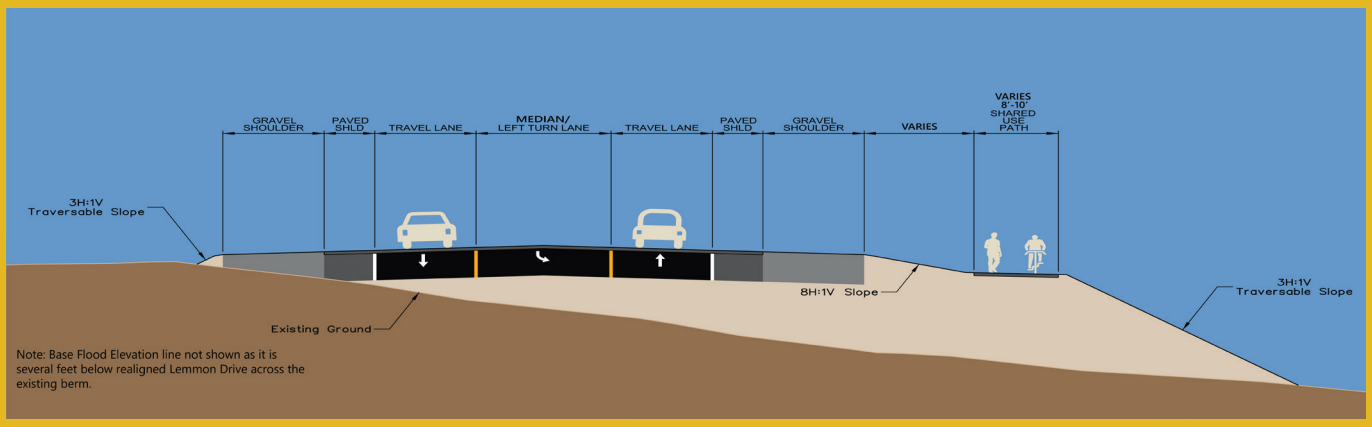
- Oregon Boulevard at Lemmon Drive: Less than one more vehicle per minute in peak hour
- Arizona Street at Lemmon Drive: 2 additional cars per minute in peak hour
- Chickadee Drive at Lemmon Drive: 2 additional cars per minute in peak hour
- Arkansas Street at Lemmon Drive: 1 additional car per minute in peak hour

Note: The figure to the left shows the existing total daily vehicle volumes.

- **Capacity:** We heard concerns about the desire to add more lanes to Lemmon Drive. The project evaluation includes conducting traffic forecasts out to the year 2050 based on current proposed land use and overall Washoe County growth model. This evaluation shows only one lane in each direction is needed to meet acceptable traffic operation standards. Adding unwarranted additional lanes could result in undesirable circumstances such as higher average vehicle speeds.
- **Emergency Response:** We heard concerns that changing the location of Lemmon Drive would alter the emergency-response times from the fire station on Nectar Street and to the neighborhoods. Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District has assured us that all emergency medical services and structural fire response responders are dispatched from the Stead Fire Station.

- **Environmental Impacts:** We heard concerns about environmental impacts on Swan Lake and the nature preserve, including concerns about waterfowl and other birds. We also heard concerns about the potential existing contamination of the soil and water at Swan Lake. As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, RTC has evaluated potential impacts of the project. RTC has consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding migratory birds. The project will avoid impacts to migratory birds by scheduling ground-disturbing construction activities outside the nesting season. An Initial Site Assessment will be prepared that will document potential sites of contamination and likelihood of encountering contamination during construction, and if applicable, mitigation strategies will be identified.

- **Safety:** We heard concerns about speeding. There are no plans to change the speed limits. We also heard concerns that the roadway would be constructed like a freeway. That is not the plan. The roadway would follow the existing berm. It would have paved shoulders that are projected to be about six-feet-wide on each side, along with a thirteen-foot-wide gravel shoulder on each side of the road. The proposed roadway would meet or exceed national safety standards.



Note: Base flood Elevation line not shown as it is several feet below realigned Lemmon Drive across the existing berm.

Community Comment: This project is going to increase flooding!

Lemmon Drive project would not change flood elevations or limits. The project is needed to provide safe and reliable access to the community during flooding events and better access for local agencies to address flooding issues. Project design will conform to Section 110, Article 438 Flood Hazards in the Washoe County Development Code. The project would have no adverse impacts to the 100-year FEMA floodplain. The project would enable Washoe County to focus resources on mitigating flooding on private property during flood events.

Community Comment: This project is being done to allow more development in our community that we do not want. Prado Ranch should be paying for this project. Moving the road opens up more land for development.

RTC does not control zoning, development, or entitlements. The realigned Lemmon Drive would require acquisition of private property from a major developer in the area; however, the project is not being altered to accommodate their needs. The land acquired would be used for flood mitigation basins and could not be developed in the future.

Stay up-to-date on the latest project information by visiting **NorthValleysImprovements.com** and signing up for email updates.