

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE TAHOE VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN

This draft community plan for Tahoe Valley has been prepared by the Tahoe Valley Community Plan Team in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 14 of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA's) Code of Ordinances.

1.1 PURPOSE

The Land Use Element of TRPA's Goals and Policies document provides for the development of specific Community Plans for designated commercial areas. Community Plans are developed in order to be responsive to the needs and opportunities of defined areas of concentrated commercial uses, or where commercial uses should be concentrated, and guide development within its boundaries. Chapter 14 of the Code of Ordinances provides the necessary implementation steps, including enabling adopted Community Plans to replace certain standards with equal or superior measures to satisfy the environmental thresholds. These replaceable standards include: parking requirements, sign rules, snow storage provisions, landscaping requirements (other than erosion control), scenic design standards, density rules and temporary uses/activities regulations. Conversely, Regional Plan direction prohibits land coverage and best management practices requirements from being replaced.

In order to proceed with this community planning effort during the sun-set years of the TRPA's 1987 Regional Plan, this Draft Community Plan (with limited exceptions in Housing and Transportation Elements) is intended to conform to existing TRPA Code of Ordinances. Similarly, it is intended to conform to existing CLUP implementation of airport requirements. However, none of the restrictions, limitations, requirements, pre-conditions, incentives (or disincentives) in the Draft Community Plan for Tahoe Valley should be interpreted as validating the necessity or preference for the existing rules, policies, ordinances, or regulations sourced by parties other than the City of South Lake Tahoe. Many elements of this Draft Community Plan are derived, in whole or in part, from these external controls on land use (or assumptions that flow from such controls), which apply within the City. Even for land use topics adopted or integrated into the City's code of ordinances, it should not be presumed from any statement in the draft community plan that any restrictions on land use are locally sourced or locally preferred land use requirements.

The Land Use Element of the 1999 General Plan for South Lake Tahoe includes the expectation that, through community planning, "villages" will be created and

open spaces and stream environment zones will be restored. It anticipates development of a Scenic Plan to establish a sense of community for the Tahoe Valley (50/89) entry to the urban portion of the City. It also includes a theme of relocation of commercial land uses from outside of Community Plan areas into Community Plans through enticement with incentives in order to encourage a high level of commercial compactness (as compared to strip commercial development) within commercial areas. Its goal is to improve shopper convenience and area drawing power. Incentives would also be used to eliminate nonconforming/incompatible residential land uses from the commercial areas, unless the residential strategy identified.

Consistent with these goals, the South "Y" area, now referred to as Tahoe Valley, was designated a Preliminary Community Plan area. Community planning in the Tahoe Valley area was initiated to:

- Encourage the concentration of commercial development within portions of the Tahoe Valley area;
- Discourage the maintenance or exacerbation of strip commercial development in order to eliminate isolated areas of commercial or tourist accommodations unrelated to this central commercial area.
- Provide locals an area where their shopping, dining and entertainment needs can be met in an environment that creates a sense of community by encouraging hanging out in public spaces and meeting with friends for activities; and
- Provide a new option for urban living within the city, where residential and commercial uses blend into an active living community; and
- Create a "WOW factor" at the Y, providing visitors a positive first impression and sense of arrival to South Lake Tahoe.

Community planning provides a citizen-driven mechanism to facilitate area-wide change within the parameters of the land use planning regulations of the City of South Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe Region. Upon adoption by the South Lake Tahoe City Council and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Governing Board, the *Tahoe Valley Community Plan* (TVCP) will serve as the mutual plan for the Tahoe Valley (South "Y") area for both City and the TRPA. It will supersede Plan Area Statement #110 for the purposes of land use regulation and zoning for both agencies, providing management direction for all projects proposed within its boundaries. The TVCP will be a mixed use land use plan that works to implement features of TRPA's Regional Plan and the City's General Plan. As an integrated land use plan, it addresses physical design, commercial growth, traffic circulation, the environment and restoration, and public services.

This plan establishes goals and objectives, special policies, and programs. It also encourages specific types of new development and provides incentives for its

implementation in order to revitalize the area. A pool of commercial floor area has been reserved from the regional allocation for implementation of certain projects within the area. Through Community Plan adoption, land coverage incentives will be made available to properties within the area that are unavailable outside of Community Plan boundaries. Elements of the plan address land use, housing, transportation, public services, recreation and conservation, including fire prevention.

Community planning provides the framework and parameters for the possibilities and potential of the Tahoe Valley area. It's about what the area can be, but alone it is not action-forcing and thus the ability of the area to meet its potential is dependent upon the will of its property owners, business owners and decisionmakers.

Note that TRPA's 1987 Regional Plan was a 20 year plan. The effort to create the Regional Plan to serve the next 20 years is underway. "Pathway 2007" is a \$20 million collaborative planning effort to "chart the unified vision for the Tahoe environment for the next 20 years" by jointly modifying the TRPA *Regional Plan*, the Forest Service's *Forest Plan*, and Lahontan's *Basin Plan*. The City is a participant in Pathway's local government and Forum processes. It is the intent of both agencies that the adopted TVCP be incorporated into the Pathway products.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND COMMUNITY PLAN LOCATION

This TVCP was prepared as the product of a joint effort between the TRPA and the City. The intent is to provide the impetus for changes that will revitalize South Lake Tahoe's "gateway," the "Y" intersection. Important to achieving economic development goals, the renovation of the gateway will revitalize area infrastructure by incorporating water quality and aesthetic improvements while diversifying the local tax base, as well as provide increased shopping opportunities for area residents (and result in commensurate air quality improvements through reduction of vehicle miles traveled).

In its current form, the Tahoe Valley area serves the function of being the local's center for South Lake Tahoe; however, the key gathering places are informal, such as the post office, sporting goods shop, and the grocery store. The area does not meet the retail shopping expectations for locals, requiring trips "off the hill" or Internet shopping to fulfill their needs. Further, the area offers visitors an uninspired entry to South Lake Tahoe.

The City and TRPA initiated the Community Planning process for the South Y area by requesting self-nominations to the citizen participation team (the TVCP Team) by February 21, 2003. The agencies sought team members representing a

wide range of interests to make recommendations to the TRPA Governing Board and the City Council, the two decisionmaking bodies.

The TVCP Team was appointed by both the City Council and TRPA Governing Board and they held their first meeting on June 24, 2003. They were selected in order to represent a wide range of interests within the community. The team members and the interests they represent are:

Stacey Ballard	Member-at-large
Anthony Colombo	Small retail business
Jennifer Cooper	Member-at-large
Bruce Eisner	California Tahoe Conservancy
Pat Frega	City of South Lake Tahoe
Violet Gay	Housing
John Hitchcock	TRPA
Deb Howard	Member-at-large
Frank Jones	Large retail businesses
Steve Kosmides	Industrial Interests
Steve Leman	Medical community
Mark Lucksinger	Real estate Interests
Edward Orbock,III	Member-at-large
Darrell Schue	Commercial property owners
Nicole Zaborsky	Environmental Interests

Lisa O'Daly of the City of South Lake Tahoe Planning Department and John Hitchcock of TRPA served as staff for the plan team.

The TVCP Team has met twice monthly since June of 2003. The earlier meetings were devoted primarily to learning about the various constraints as well as opportunities inherent in the development of a community plan in the Lake Tahoe Basin and, especially, within the City of South Lake Tahoe. The last year was coming to consensus on topics to be incorporated into the TVCP. Meetings have been open to the public, and interested members of the community have been encouraged to attend and participate through the member representing their interests. The TVCP Team had their Preliminary Community Plan approved by the City Council and TRPA Governing Board in May 2005 (5/3 and 6/22, respectively).

The TVCP incorporates the area known as Tahoe Valley, including South Tahoe 50/89 intersection, Lake Tahoe Boulevard from Julie Lane to near the Upper Truckee River, Emerald Bay Road from Tenth Street to roughly D Street, the area around the hospital and the secondary industrial area in the vicinity of James and Eloise. It includes properties on all or portions of the following streets:

Eloise Avenue, James Avenue, Roger Avenue, Glorene, Tata Lane, Ruth Avenue, Dunlap Drive, Third Street, Helen, Barton, South Avenue, Lake Tahoe Boulevard, Emerald Bay Road, Melba Drive, B Street, C Street, D Street, E Street, Kyburz, Bonanza, Julie Lane, Fourth Street, Fifth Street, Seventh Street, Jean Avenue, Second Street, Tenth Street, Tucker and Bonanza Avenue

A variety of use types are represented within Tahoe Valley: residential, industrial, commercial, tourist accommodation and public service. These uses are housed within structures ranging in age and condition, from designated historic buildings to some of the newest buildings in the community. Many improved properties have legally existing, nonconforming levels of land coverage – in some cases, up to 100% -- and on-site best management practices to infiltrate runoff may or may not have been installed (required by October 2006). Stream Environment Zones are generally disturbed.

1.3 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The TVCP Team has articulated its vision as:

TVCP TEAM VISION STATEMENT (created June 2004)

We shall transform the Tahoe Valley area into a strong and vibrant business district, creating a community that includes more than just discontinuous developments. We shall embrace outdoor enthusiasts and provide a healthy balance of commerce, employment, entertainment, and livability. Our Community Plan will create smaller, pedestrian-friendly districts that encourage patrons to visit multiple destinations for each vehicle trip. Our plan shall encourage retail businesses and services that meet local needs, encourage local ownership, and appeal to visitors seeking to mix with the local community.

Architectural and aesthetic standards shall emphasize a mountain identity through sensitive building design that incorporate open public spaces, and a walkable environment emphasizing unifying elements. Quality building designs shall emphasize character through massing and articulation that are characteristic of a mountain environment. No blank walls would be displayed. Pedestrians, transit riders and cyclists shall be accommodated and encouraged. Parking areas shall be unobtrusive, and serve more than one property.

Project components shall strive to meet these ideals:

- *A compatible mix of shops and services*

- *Public plazas and gathering spaces*
- *Tree Preservation*
- *Building design that incorporates wood and rock and harmonious colors*
- *The use of native landscaping*
- *Minimizing curb cuts through shared parking facilities.*
- *Lively ground floor retail*
- *Large display windows*
- *Weather protection for pedestrians*

We shall re-knit the fragmented elements that isolate the Tahoe Valley neighborhoods through a network of sidewalks, trails and access to transit facilities. The transition between more intensive uses shall include design elements to ensure compatibility. The plan shall weave active and passive recreational staging areas, connecting to recreational opportunities located outside the plan boundaries. The Transit Centers shall play a greater role, to include moving people locally and regionally within and outside of the Tahoe Basin.

Visually prominent and attractive design features shall welcome visitors entering the city from scenic corridors (Highway 50 and 89). Through the use of environmentally conscious development techniques and restoration activities, the Tahoe Valley Community Plan will be considered a contributing component of the regional ecosystem. Private and Public development shall contribute to the creation of indoor and outdoor public spaces within these districts.

(End, Ch 1)