

Questioning land swap and land use in South Tahoe

Dear California Tahoe Conservancy Board members,

The Conservancy may eventually make two important decisions regarding the city's request to become the owner of two Conservancy properties. The uses of these properties will consequently change.

First, the city wants to annex property along Barbara Avenue for the purpose of building affordable housing. I have been wondering why it would want to do so since logic suggests that affordable housing would more appropriately be built in one of the two contemplated transect nodes. There, shopping, employment, public transportation and recreation are all within walking and biking distance. Public housing situated in one of the two nodes will have a mutually strengthening effect on both, helping to create some synergy between the various uses and activities that will hopefully thrive in these concentrated use areas.



South Lake Tahoe would like to own and then pave this lot at Los Angeles and Harrison avenues.

Photo/Kathryn

Reed

The city's proposal to build affordable housing in the middle of town and on the periphery of it will have just the opposite effect. Most important for the future of our town is the importance of building some viable alternative to the car as the usual means of getting around. This goal is negated by city's proposal. If we are serious about building a public transportation system that works, the various involved agencies, the city and public must together give it consistent and solid support.

The second property that the city wants to purchase or use is adjacent to the *Tribune* building. It is a large parcel that has never been built on. Along with some large beautiful trees, it is covered with the biological diversity characteristic of this region. It is especially attractive since the Conservancy did such a sensitive job of thinning out smaller trees. The city wants to put a parking lot on this lovely parcel. Now, I have some sympathy for the city's parking lot predicaments and to some extent the Conservancy shares them. But is the appropriate use for this parcel a parking lot, especially since the Baily coverage limits for Al Tahoe have been well exceeded? And again, the question: Do we really want public transportation to have a fighting chance at South Lake Tahoe? Every additional parking lot and tiered parking structure undermines the effort.

Nor can we achieve an aesthetic balance, the sense of ourselves as a coherent town, when so much highway frontage is solid black pavement and parked cars.

I realize the Conservancy has many difficult and controversial decisions to make. I wish you well in having to make these two additional decisions.

Very truly yours,

Gloria Harootunian, South Lake Tahoe