

Opinion: Time to do something about public transit

Publisher's note: *Gloria Hartoonian read this letter to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Feb. 8, 2011. It is being reprinted with her permission.*

Good morning Mr. Mayor and City Council Members,

Developing an attractive and efficient public transportation plan is essential to the future of South Lake Tahoe. If we do not, 20 years from now it will be clear to all that we are still a 1950s kind of a place. The center of town will still be a four-lane interstate crowded with cars; and just as we do not have enough parking now, so then, we will not have enough parking either.

Mayor [Hal] Cole is right: you never can have enough parking.

Visitors and locals should always be able to drive their own cars. For one thing, in case of fire, people need to get out of harms way and the city does not have the resources to do this. But affordable, reliable and attractive public transportation as an option has got to be developed and sold to the public. Other tourist destinations have accomplished this – including delivering families with kids and all their stuff to where they want to be.

Where the center of town is located should be our choice – a place, for example like Ski Run Boulevard – with all the potential that's there. The center of town, as it is now, has been imposed upon us: it is Highway 50 with its millions of cars. Twenty years from now will it still be so?

I am encouraged by Mr. [Bruce] Grego and Ms. [Claire] Fortier's willingness to tackle this vexing problem because our future depends on radically changing the transportation

scene as it has always been endured.

Gloria Hartoonian, South Lake Tahoe