

Douglas County's master plan not waiting for TRPA

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Douglas County is tired of waiting for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to update its Regional Plan, so it is revising its master plan to reflect what citizens want – not necessarily what the bi-state regulatory agency dictates.

“Everyone is worried the Regional Plan won’t get updated or it will take too long so we are pushing now for this transect planning,” Brandy McMahon, the county’s senior planner, said.

TRPA officials are saying the plan that was supposed to come out in 2007 will be released late 2012.



Douglas County is making plans for how to improve Stateline.

Photo/LTN

Although the county is not proposing any major projects, it does want the community’s input in regards to vision for the future.

At a meeting Thursday night at Kahle Community Center, nine people turned out to give McMahon ideas about what they want

to see going forward.

Steve Teshara, who has his hands in all things transportation related in the Lake Tahoe Basin, sees this as “a chance for the county to take some leadership.”

Douglas County reviews its master plan annually and more substantially every fifth year. The original plan was adopted in 1996, with a 10-year update done in 2006.

“With TRPA’s rules, it’s hard to put something together that is economically viable,” Gary Midkiff of Midkiff and Associates said. He pointed to density and height issues.

These are some of the same issues being brought up in South Lake Tahoe in regards to its General Plan update, which is likely to be voted on May 17. South Tahoe also wants to be a leader and not just do what the bi-state regulatory agency says.

Although no one from the League to Save Lake Tahoe was at the May 12 meeting, this advocacy group has threatened the city if it approves a plan that does not comply with the Regional Plan.

“People need to understand when they put money into the League to Save Lake Tahoe, that is not money to save the lake,” Midkiff said. “Their sole function is to block everything.”

He particularly singled out the Sierra Colina project that is proposed to be built in Stateline but has been in litigation for nearly two years because the League has filed a lawsuit.

“If we keep doing nothing, we will have a worse situation than we have, which is hard to imagine,” Midkiff said.

Recently the South Tahoe Alliance of Resorts was formed to create a vision for the Stateline area. This group wants to cooperate with South Lake Tahoe so there is continuity between Ski Run Boulevard on the California side down to the Kahle

Road area and up Kingsbury Grade.

This group, along with the master plan, will keep working on what reconfiguring Loop Road around the casinos might entail and how the casino corridor could be more pedestrian friendly.

With the transportation component last revised in 2007, Teshara intimated most of his comments would be transit related.

It was also brought up that the Van Sickle Bi-State Park, that is still proposed to open this summer, is not in the county's master plan and will need to be added.

Recreation components are part of the plan – like the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail. It's still possible the demo site on the South Shore could break ground this summer, though the original May 15 start date is off the books.

McMahon also said the county, which owns the old Kingsbury Grade, is looking at turning that route into a mountain biking area. She also touched on how the Carson Valley Trails Association wants to put in a trail along Foothill Road, and how there will be a trail built from Walley's Hot Springs to Genoa.

Comments will be accepted until Sept. 1. Send them to bcmahon@co.douglas.nv.us. More information can be found online.

The next public meeting is May 25 to discuss the Carson Valley and Pinenut planning areas. It is from 9am-5pm at 1602 Esmeralda Ave., Minden.

The goal is to have the Planning Commission review the master plan in October and have commissioners take action in November.