

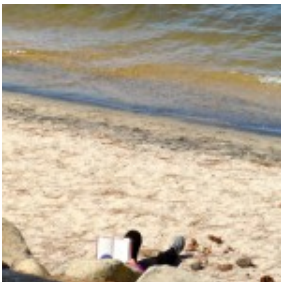
South Tahoe endorses TRPA zeroing in on lake clarity

By Kathryn Reed

Four years late, another 15 months before it might be approved and now a redirection at the eleventh-hour. That's where the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update is.

Instead of updating everything in the 1987 document, the bi-state regulatory agency has decided lake clarity and the California Sustainable Communities legislation should be the priorities.

The agency is taking its mission to the five counties and one city in the Lake Tahoe Basin to get their blessings, so to speak. South Lake Tahoe was the latest stop. While the council voted 5-0 to approve the narrowed scope, Councilman Bruce Grego did so reluctantly.



TRPA's Regional Plan update's primary issue is now lake clarity.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Grego has issues with emphasizing limiting vehicles miles

traveled as a way to improve lake clarity when public transit on the South Shore sputters at best. He also doesn't see cyclists using bike trails in winter.

Councilwoman Angela Swanson said some say "re-scoping is a failure in the process."

To that, Harmon Zuckerman said, "I think the failed effort was in the overly broad scoping plan in the first place."

He said between 80 and 85 percent of the Regional Plan is working. That's why fewer items need to be scoped – or changed. The idea is to make it a true update instead of a completely new document.

Zuckerman was hired away from Douglas County by TRPA to work exclusively on bringing the overdue Regional Plan to fruition.

He made a somewhat brief presentation to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Aug. 2, having made a longer one to the TRPA Governing Board on July 27.

A third issue city staff wants TRPA to address is streamlining the permitting process.

Zuckerman said that's possible. With so much built out, it may be logical to have local jurisdictions do all the permitting, he said.

Mayor Hal Cole brought up the issue about the historical designation criteria when most of the town was built more than 50 years ago. Zuckerman said instead of scrutinizing every 50-plus-year-old building, TRPA would look at the historic resources map for direction.

Councilman Tom Davis vented his frustrations about land use issues such as a new drive-through not being allowed.

"We want a paradigm shift to work with our partners," Zuckerman said.

While he wouldn't promise drive-thoughts would be allowed, he did say the discussion could be had for the first time in years.

In other action:

- The council waffled on what to do about taking the employee pension question to voters. With California moving the state primary back to June, this means no February election. That is the month the council wanted to ask voters their thoughts. The council individually chastised the employee groups – except the firefighter association – for not coming to the table. If by the Aug. 23 meeting concessions are not made to close a more than \$3 million budget gap, more staff will be added to the nearly 17 percent unemployment number in South Lake Tahoe, according to city officials.
- The council said at the Aug. 23 meeting definitive priorities will be laid out for the proposed capital improvement program. No vote was taken this week, but the council is leaning toward approving a \$10 million certificate of participation (which doesn't require voter approval) to fund two years of road and other improvements.
- Bids for Al Tahoe Erosion Control Project 2 were denied because the city admitted the documents it sent out were incomplete.
- The council members voted against three items related to work on the Upper Truckee River restoration because they would rather have the city resolve differences with the contractor than pay under protest.
- The Tourism Improvement District agreement was extended to Dec. 17, 2019.
- The city got out of the business of patrolling the Village Center parking lot, aka Crescent V.

- The council decided to revisit in six months the idea of becoming a charter city. The majority of those who spoke against the idea were carpenters because of the threat to the elimination of prevailing wage criteria.

- The workshop that ended about 8pm was about redevelopment. The consensus was to bring an ordinance to the Aug. 23 meeting to keep the Redevelopment Agency, with a special meeting five days later to approve it before the Sept. 1 state deadline. The Aspens project remains up in the air. At issue is the state wanting to dissolve redevelopment agencies. A lawsuit by the League of California Cities would stop that from happening.