

Opinion: Transit officials not acting in public's best interest

By Kathryn Reed

On the same day the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board is scheduled to discuss the Regional Plan update there will be a community presentation on the loop road project.

But they will be separate, likely overlapping meetings. That means people have to decide which meeting to attend. How stupid is this? What are people thinking? Are they trying to cram the loop road through without scrutiny and due diligence? Oh wait, the diligence is met even if no one is there.

And it's an afternoon meeting. How many people affected by it – positively or negatively – could make it?

The transportation meeting was announced Friday. Yes, yesterday.

When the dual meeting was pointed out to Tahoe Transportation District officials by *Lake Tahoe News*, their flak Phil Weidinger responded, "TRPA will also be holding the RPU discussion at South Shore the following day.

"TTD has several meetings and various project deadlines approaching, including a presentation to the City Council on May 1, a board meeting on May 11 [to include the results from Wednesday's public meeting], plus other public forums and outreach to keep assignments moving, on track and to ensure deadlines are met."

Really?

The loop road has been talked about since the 1980s and now

there is a rush? When has the South Shore ever cared about deadlines? After all the Regional Plan was supposed to be updated in 2007.

LTN pointed out via email to Weidinger, TTD staff, South Lake Tahoe Mayor Claire Fortier (who is also on the TRPA Governing Board), Councilwoman Angela Swanson (who is also on the TTD board) and the TRPA flak, that the meetings on April 25 and April 26 do not have the same agenda items even though both pertain to the Regional Plan update. At least that is what TRPA has told *LTN*.

On top of that, the Wednesday TRPA meeting is in Incline Village and the transportation meeting is in Stateline. It's not possible to jump between the two meetings. TRPA officials have said to expect both of their meetings to be all-day events.

Considering the TTD and TRPA offices are in the same Stateline building on Market Street, better communication would be expected – unless of course, the transportation folks don't really want anyone to comment on taxpayer dollars being used to reroute traffic on Highway 50, or the uprooting of California residents to the benefit of mostly Nevada businesses.

Here is information about TRPA's meeting schedules.

As for the TTD meeting regarding the displacement of renters to the benefit of Stateline area businesses, the meeting is April 25 from 2-3:30pm at Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe.

The agenda says the meeting will include:

- Accurate updates, facts, information
- Impacts on neighborhood residents
- Impacts on businesses in the Village Shopping Center, Heavenly Village and along the Highway 50 corridor

- Current status of project
- Other issues like safety, economy, environment.

South Shore residents deserve better from transportation officials. Don't make residents and power brokers decide which meeting to attend. Both are important. We deserve better.