

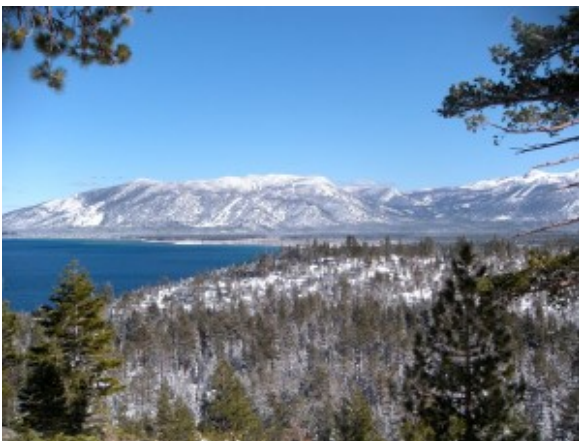
Consensus on TRPA Regional Plan elusive at this point

By Kathryn Reed

Sides are clearly being drawn as the clock ticks on the comment period on the environmental impact statement for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update.

TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta is making the rounds pitching her agency's views that are contained in preferred alternative 3.

Meetings are scheduled to gain input and disseminate info.



The future of Lake Tahoe is likely to be determined by TRPA's Regional Plan update.
Photo/LTN file

Conservation groups are sending out info saying why they believe the plan is flawed.

While most of those groups – with the League to Save Lake Tahoe being the largest – have been at the table as the process has been going along, they are not happy their entire proposal was not considered as one of the alternatives. Instead, alternative 2 is what TRPA calls the

conservationists' alternative.

"We provided a 256-page Conservation Alternative to the TRPA. That alternative was discussed with the staff over a number of months," Laurel Ames, with the Tahoe Area Sierra Club, told *Lake Tahoe News* at the April 26 TRPA meeting. "We were shocked to find our alternative eviscerated and allegedly replicated as current alternative No. 2. The EIS analysis of alternative No. 2 does not reflect our alternative."

At that meeting, representatives of conservation groups lobbied for a 90-day comment period, but the Governing Board chose 60. The reasoning by the groups was the volume of material that needed to be read would be time consuming. The board's reasoning was to meet the goal of voting on the measure in December, the shorter time period was ideal.

Friends of the West Shore on May 17 in an email newsletter said, "The TRPA has provided stakeholders with only a 60-day period to comment on these documents. FOWS wants to inform you that we are reviewing these documents with technical consultants and will keep you abreast of each new development."

However, that group and others have already sent a letter to TRPA outlining concerns. *Lake Tahoe News* was sent a copy of this letter on Mother's Day weekend by neither a member of TRPA nor one of the groups.

So, despite needing time – the groups obviously have enough knowledge to know what they don't like and to voice their concerns.

That letter in part says, "It appears to us that the agency is reversing many of the crucial regulations mandated by the Tahoe Regional Compact. We urge the TRPA Board to exercise prudence and do everything in its power to uphold, achieve, and maintain the environmental thresholds it is charged to enforce.

“It is our belief and concern that the proposed Regional Plan will neither restore nor protect the lake. Instead, it will open the floodgate one more time to rampant growth and high-density urbanization, thereby making more thresholds impossible to attain.”

The letter is signed by Laurel Ames – Tahoe Area Sierra Club, Darcie Goodman-Collins – League to Save Lake Tahoe, Susan Gearhart – Friends of the West Shore, David Hornbeck – Sierra Club-Toiyabe Chapter, Ann Nichols – North Tahoe Preservation Alliance, Scot Rutledge – Nevada Conservation League, Jerry Wotel – North Tahoe Citizens Action Alliance, Roger Patching – Friends of Lake Tahoe, and Ellie Waller – Tahoe Vista resident.

Marchetta, while speaking to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe on May 16, told the members to do their own research because a lot of misinformation is floating about.

She said TRPA’s goal to regulate growth worked so well that it has had the adverse affect of stagnating progress.

“The environment, economy and communities are inextricably linked. We are pursuing that goal through our Regional Plan update. Responsible environmentalism has to look at the whole system,” Marchetta said.

In the Friends of the West Shore newsletter, it states, “Preliminarily, FOWS is concerned that the RPU as currently written does not adequately protect the lake, and contains fundamental weaknesses that could prove to be the plan’s undoing. ... There is simply no way the TRPA can comply with its central mandate of achieving and maintaining environmental thresholds on the one hand and facilitating upland urbanization and unsustainable development on the other.”

Alarm bells are being raised about the prospect of increasing how tall a building can be and the density of development.

Marchetta at the Soroptimist meeting said, “We are proposing modest changes or additional height and density in 1 percent of the land area. We are not proposing to grow the basin; we are proposing to fix it.”

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Dates to know:

- May 21, 5-8pm: Open house on the Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Plan, The Chateau, 955 Fairway Blvd., Incline Village
- May 22, 5-8pm: Open house on the Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Plan, TRPA office, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- May 23, 9:30am: TRPA Governing Board meeting public hearings, North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.
- May 24, 9:30am: TRPA Governing Board meeting public hearings, TRPA office, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- June 11, 9:30am: Advisory Planning Commission public hearings, TRPA office, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- June 27, 9:30am: TRPA Governing Board public hearings, North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.
- June 28, 9:30am: TRPA Governing Board public hearings, TRPA office, 128 Market St., Stateline.

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Other vital info:

The public comment period runs through June 28 for the environmental impact statements for the draft Regional Plan update and Regional Transportation Plan. Send comments to regionalplancomments@trpa.org or to

mobility2035comments@trpa.org for the Regional Transportation Plan.

All of the documents are on the TRPA website.