

# Opinion: Public should contribute to loop road alternatives

***Publisher's note: This letter was read at the Aug. 21, 2012, South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting by the author, longtime South Lake Tahoe resident Gloria Hartoonian, and is reprinted with permission.***

At the very end of the Aug. 21 City Council meeting, I heard Councilman [Hal] Cole suggest that our Tahoe Transportation District representative, Miss [Angela] Swanson, return to this council with five additional options for the loop road project. Out of the five, a subcommittee of the City Council would narrow the choice to three alternatives. And of these three, participants of a public workshop would then consider and choose the alternative that would be implemented by the TTD.

In this way Mr. Cole suggests that the city can reassert ownership of the loop road process on behalf of its citizens.

We should remember, however, that among the 50 alternatives, all but one was discarded by the TTD, so we will be considering already rehashed and discarded ideas. And by asking the TTD to send us five of these already discarded alternatives, the TTD, not you and the community, retain ownership of the loop road project.

The TTD could send back five ideas all unacceptable except the best of the bad that being the one our community has already rejected.

I don't know what the solution to this problem is, but several council meetings ago many business and homeowners came forward and offered new possible ideas for the implementation of the

road. To my mind these citizens were already trying to take ownership of the process by offering new ideas.

The upcoming workshop should be open to fresh possibilities from the community or else a subcommittee of this City Council – two of you – will have already narrowed the choices the rest of us may or may not want.

How this council shapes the public workshop – the openness and flexibility it allows – will determine its outcome.

Please avoid making the workshop manipulative, delivering a loop road alternative that pleases perhaps not even the majority of yourselves.

– *Gloria Hartoonian*