

Final EIS outlines future planning regs for Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – On a blustery day where Lake Tahoe seemed to have the energy of the ocean, it set the stage for what could have been a combative, boisterous day. Instead, those who came out to discuss the final environmental documents of the TRPA Regional Plan update remained civil.

Oct. 24 was the first of two days to discuss the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's revisions to the documents that were first released in April. This morning the Governing Board and Advisory Planning Commission meet at Harveys in Stateline starting at 9:30.



The final environmental impact statement for the TRPA Regional Plan update is out. Photo/LTN file

Board members Mara Bresnick (California Assembly speaker appointee) and Byron Sher (California Senate Rules Committee appointee) are expected to introduce changes to the Regional Plan update at today's meeting. Sher was not at the Wednesday meeting. It was possible for Bresnick to have brought her

concerns to the table sooner, as she was asked to be part of the committee to hash out the update. She declined to do so.

Eight members of the public voiced their opinions after staff gave a brief overview of what the differences between the draft and final EIS are. Arlo Stockham, TRPA regional planning coordinator, outlined the changes. None of the changes is the law of the land until the Governing Board takes action.

One difference between the draft and final EIS is the ability to appeal decisions to TRPA. More procedural safeguards are in place when it comes to permitting area plans. Those are the plans local jurisdictions will create. They come with more flexibility and less microscopic analysis from TRPA.

The increase in height allowances to bring the Stateline casinos into compliance will be granted just for those structures and any buildings on those properties that would replace what exists today.

Increased building height for areas outside the town centers was scrapped.

With about 4,300 development rights left, a maximum of 2,600 allocations would be released in the next 20 years. And those would be doled out in four-year intervals.

The final EIS lists "resort recreation" areas as Edgewood's property and Heavenly's California Base Lodge. Additional recreation development may be possible in area plans. Transfer of sensitive property must be within hydrologic areas.

Property within 300 feet of Lake Tahoe would have different coverage rules than other locations. Americans with Disabilities Act exemptions would be in place in regards to coverage, too.

Businesses have five years after the building was shuttered before mitigation fees would have to be paid. Currently, it's

two years. A pilot program to see if a drive-through pharmacy impacts air quality will be allowed.

While the inadequacy of the noise threshold was brought up in the peer review of the threshold document, no substantive changes are in the works to make it more logical.

The Governing Board will be asked to come up with a list of priorities after the first of the year for things to work on after the update is finished. Noise could be on that list.

When it came to public comment, Jennifer Quashnick with the Tahoe Area Sierra Club, said she believes the document focuses more on development than thresholds.

Laurel Ames, also with the Sierra Club, raised doubts about enough being done regarding scenic issues, said pervious pavement is problematic, and soil needs to be addressed further in relation to coverage.

Bob McKay with Tahoe Beach Club believes the plan is good.

In addition to the EIS, the other updated documents released this week include the Threshold Evaluation, Regional Transportation Plan and final EIR, and Code of Ordinances.

Notes:

- TRPA's website has the documents. TRPA staff will also have USB thumb drives available for \$15 each at the Oct. 25 meeting.
- The final environmental impact statement was released Oct. 24. Because of this, more input will be taken next month to give people an opportunity to review the information. The Nov. 14-15 meetings (in Incline Village and Stateline, respectively) will be another joint meeting of the APC and Governing Board.
- A vote by the Governing Board is expected on Dec. 12.

