

Kings Beach trying to evolve and stay funky

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – Lake Tahoe communities have the same vision – look pretty; be functional in terms of accessibility and the diversity of offerings; if there is a sense of community, don't lose it and if there isn't one, try to establish one; focus on recreation; have adequate tourist accommodations; and improvement the environment and economic vitality.

Kings Beach is the latest area to go through the visioning process. A three-day charette concluded Thursday with about 40 people perusing the various images created by Design Workshop.

While this area is already in the process of improving its streets, this larger vision encompasses the beach, the buildings, neighborhoods, transit, recreation and more. It will also be incorporated into Placer County's Tahoe Basin Community Plan update.



Top photos reflect Kings Beach today and below are renderings by Design Workshop of what it could become. Photo/LTN

Although work on the Kings Beach plan has been under way for a year, July 18 was the first time people's visions were captured visually.

"The term funky was used quite a bit," Stephanie Grigsby with Design Workshop said. And people want to keep that feel.

Her team's goal was not to create a regulatory plan, but instead transform aspirational ideas into what could be Kings Beach's future reality.

Making the beach into even more of a central location, with promenades and potential winter recreation amenities were ideas that came forward. Restoring the sand dunes that were leveled in the 1940s and addressing sand retention were brought up.

Extending the public pier to accommodate water transit was broached.

Height of buildings is a contentious issue. Proposed is to have lakeside buildings be no more than 36-feet tall and mountain side be a maximum of 48 feet.

Density is an issue that was not addressed in the charette process, but will be as the community plan goes forward.

An idea that has been talked about in some circles for more than a decade was brought to life on canvas – that is to close Brooks Street and create a series of uses for that area.

Kings Beach has a problem with sediment reaching Lake Tahoe. This is a large contributor to declining lake clarity. Redevelopment and roadwork could address some of those issues.

Through the charette much discussion was centered on what other uses the events center could have, but Design Workshop officials said the final outcome will be found in future meetings the community will need to lead.

Members of the community team that worked with the county and Design Workshop had mostly positive things to say about the process – saying they were listened to and didn't feel like something was crammed down their throats.

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Notes:

- Placer County supervisors will be given an update on the plan July 23.
- Aug. 28 there is a workshop on the Tahoe City vision plan from 5-6:30pm at Granlibakken.
- Sept. 11 at 6pm is a town hall meeting on the Tahoe City and Kings Beach plans at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach
- In mid- to late September plans go to the county Planning Commission.
- More info will soon be on Placer County's website.