

S. Tahoe moves forward with tourist core plan

By Kathryn Reed

What was designated a workshop on South Lake Tahoe's Tourist Core Area Plan turned out to be little more than a normal presentation by staff.

At the July 2 special City Council meeting the electeds were briefed by planner John Hitchcock about the process. The CEQA document and TRPA environmental checklist were supposed to be released today, but instead will be delayed until later this month.



Ski Run Marina is part of the new area plan in South Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

This in turn has pushed back the time line to get the document approved. It is slated to go before the Planning Commission July 11 and possibly again at a special meeting Aug. 22, to council Sept. 3, the TRPA planning board on Oct. 10 and then to the TRPA Governing Board Oct. 23.

Area plans are something that have evolved out of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's latest Regional Plan.

This particular one has the same boundaries as the current

Stateline-Ski Run Community Plan. It goes from the Stateline area, but does not include Lakeside, along Highway 50 and from both ends of Ski Run Boulevard.

It is designed to complement the city's General Plan and TRPA's Regional Plan.

The document says what can be done, but not will be done. Specific projects will go through scrutiny as they come forward.

City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting that with more local control it should spur revitalization in areas that need it.

There is now wiggle room with tourist accommodation units and commercial floor area – two items the TRPA has turned into commodities to regulate growth, but really stifle the free market.

"The Regional Plan update allows for conversion of equal TAUs to CFA," Kerry explained.

The abundance of hotel rooms in South Lake Tahoe was brought up by more than one of the five public speakers. The idea is owners of rundown motels could retire those TAUs and have them become commercial square footage to be used elsewhere. Then blight gets torn down and redevelopment begins.

Council members JoAnn Conner and Tom Davis have concerns about the height of buildings being allowed to be taller under the Regional Plan. While it is permitted, it does not mean the council or staff would have to approve it.

Laurel Ames, who has lived in town since 1947 and was on of the players involved with getting the city incorporated, is worried views will be blocked if buildings go up.

Conner also said she would like to see more than one tourist area, and not have everything concentrated in one spot.