

Tahoe City making plans for the future

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – As Tahoe City celebrates its 150th anniversary this weekend, it's not just one big party. Some serious philosophical discussions about the town's future are going on.

Tahoe City was once the gateway to Lake Tahoe. It was the transportation hub. It used to have an active nightlife.

Now it is full of rundown buildings, with many of them empty. Tourists tend to stay in Truckee, Northstar and Squaw instead. And the nightlife, well, it's lacking.

Bright spots, though, are the increasing number of bike-pedestrian trails and the excitement of what the now-city owned golf course could evolve into. Think cross country skiing and other winter recreation.



A rendering by Design Workshop of what Tahoe City could look like in the future.

A vision. That is what Tahoe City is creating. For about a year people have been meeting to define this area's future. On

Aug. 28 a group gathered at Granlibakken to find out where the plans are and to offer more input.

A concern many have is the height of future buildings. They don't want the charm of the town to be eroded with high-rises or for tall buildings to further prohibit views of Lake Tahoe. Many people are concerned that future development would obscure views of the lake.

Some are also worried things are being done for tourists only – like the idea of putting a hotel along the water. While this keeps surfacing as an idea, it was also brought up that the beach could remain public.

An issue with doing anything – development or redevelopment – is that like Kings Beach many of the parcels are small. It will take adjoining property owners working together to have a significant impact.

But it was also noted that the majority of land is owned by a small number of people.

Integrating the golf course with other recreation was brought up.

Incorporating the Truckee River into the city is an idea. This could be done with a trail or promenade. And some would like to see the river and lake tied together in a manner that is easy for people to experience both.

With the rerouting of Highway 89 because the bridge over the river is no longer seismically safe, it may make the river-lake idea more of a possibility. The realignment of the highway is being studied now.

Design Workshop, which with Placer County planning officials has been leading the vision process, foresees creating side streets so it's not just Highway 28 people are on, as well as having walkways so the golf course would be one of the views

as people stroll.

Stephanie Grigsby with Design Workshop said at meetings people have talked about creating a world-class recreation-visitor center of a resort destination quality that locals and visitors would use.

Besides commercial interests, there is the realization of the need for housing, especially for young families. Truckee has done a good job in capturing that segment of the population.

Key obstacles to doing any of these things are all the agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Tahoe City residents feeling like their voices aren't heard because the county seat is off the hill.

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Notes:

- There will be a town hall meeting Sept. 11 at 6pm at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach that will be about the Tahoe City and Kings Beach plans and Placer County's community plan for the areas.
- The Placer County Planning Commission will hear the Tahoe City vision in October.