

Opinion: Plenty of time for Meyers to be involved

By Norma Santiago

In the early '90s, the Meyers community established a committee whose primary task was to create a community plan that was reflective of the Meyers community's vision. The plan concept, as stated in the Meyers Community Plan, "is to enhance the identity and image of Meyers as a community center and a gateway to Lake Tahoe." During the course of the plan's development 20 years ago, concerns were expressed that the community plan would allow for large development or create policy that could impact the scenic character of Meyers.



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As was then, today we are having the same expressions of concern, and today we are allowing a very public discussion of the new Meyers Area Plan.

Unfortunately, the misconceptions are being labeled as fact, creating fear within the community, that a large development called a "catalyst project" is waiting in the wings ready to be developed as soon as the new plan is adopted.

There is no catalyst project. There is no large development.

What can be built in Meyers is up to the community of Meyers. This two-year public process allows for input and discussion

of what the Meyers Community wants to create for itself. And, that discussion continues as we approach another community meeting on Feb. 26. From more than 30 meetings, a new vision was created; something that reflects the community's unique character. That vision states:

“Meyers is an ideally situated, spacious, historic, and walkable mountain community that values sustainability, health, wellbeing and the natural environment. Uniquely concentrated with year-round outdoor sport and recreational opportunities, the Meyers mountain culture is the hallmark of our thriving local-based economy boasting a diverse commercial and retail environment, welcoming visitors and providing residents with an extraordinary place to live, work and play.”

This effort, like the visioning workshops 20 years ago, helps to guide the community toward its future, created the vision by which a plan can be drafted, and proposes reasonable expectations within the plan.

Like the Meyers Roundtable 20 years ago, the Meyers Community Advisory Council (MCAC) was created to represent a broad spectrum of interest. Council members are Meyers' residents and neighbors, business owners and recreation enthusiasts, who have volunteered their time to represent the community and this unique mountain town they call home. An enormous amount of input from all interests, business, recreation, education, and community members came in after numerous public meetings, with first hand access to county and TRPA supplying detailed responses.

The TRPA's recent Regional Plan update provided a much-needed update to the rules for our communities, but there is a tremendous amount of misunderstanding as to how those rules are applied in individual town centers like Meyers. TRPA moved away from a “one-size-fits-all” approach, limiting things like height and density, to give each community specific input and

help define or maintain a community's unique character. Meyers now has the opportunity to choose what it wants to be in the future.

What has been expressed to the MCAC and the county by the community is protection of Meyers' rural character and the surrounding sensitive lands along the Upper Truckee River, safer ways for all of us to get across Highway 50, connectivity of bike trails, a welcome sign, and simplified processes for smaller projects, to name a few. The draft plan proposes height and density limits similar to those that have been in place for years, and sets those limits significantly lower than what could have been pursued under the new Regional Plan. These elements of the plan are not final. The MCAC and the county are always accepting input.

On Feb. 26 at 6pm, a public workshop will be held at the California Conservation Corps dining hall to specifically compare the existing 1993 Meyers Community Plan with the current draft of the Meyers Area Plan. The draft plan is on the El Dorado County website.

Comments, questions, and suggested revisions to the draft Meyers Area Plan can be submitted to MeyersAreaPlan@edcgov.us.

In the coming months, there will be a formal comment period, an additional community workshop, and several public meetings at the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings, as well as, the TRPA Governing Board and Advisory Planning Commission meetings.

I am proud to be a part of this dynamic, public process to help mold the future of Meyers. It's an incredibly exciting time for the Meyers community and I invite everyone to take part in this great purpose.

Norma Santiago represents Meyers on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.