

100+ weigh in on Meyers Area Plan

By Jessie Marchesseau

MEYERS – More than 100 people packed into the auditorium of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School on Wednesday evening for the Meyers Area Plan open house.

Large tables encircled the room offering seven workstations for attendees to visit. Each station represented a key topic related to the plan: design and implementation, transportation, land use, Meyers Advisory Council, recreation, California Tahoe Conservancy asset land, and conservation. The stations were staffed by personnel involved in plan development and offered presentation boards with insight into the particular topic in addition to copies of the original 1993 Meyers Area Plan alongside the most recent draft of the new Meyers Area Plan. Some stations showed colored maps, photos or sediment samples, all with staff to explain, answer questions and accept feedback.

This open house format was a change from previous meetings regarding the plan. It allowed for more direct interaction and conversation between residents and planners.



The Meyers Area Plan meeting May 6 brought out more than

100 people. Photo/Jessie
Marchesseau

Dave Defanti, assistant director of El Dorado County community development agency, greeted people as they came in, answered questions and encouraged attendees to pick up and fill out comment sheets. He said they chose this type of format because they wanted more interaction with community members and to encourage one-on-one conversation.

Residents' feelings on the meeting format were mixed. Jan Roman-Gonzales was disappointed there were no opening remarks from the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Chairman Brian Veerkamp or a breakout session with opportunities for public questions and comments as was advertised on the county's website and the postcard she received in the mail. She believed the open house format did not give her and other community members a chance to have their voices heard. (Veerkamp is supposed to be Meyers' point person on the board because District 5 Supervisor Sue Novasel has conflict based on her property she owns.)

Joseph Restaino, on the other hand, liked the one-on-one interaction. He told *Lake Tahoe News* it was a good way for him to really learn about the plan and to get excited about what's happening in Meyers.

At the open house, public input was encouraged in ways other than just speaking aloud. Poster-sized flip boards offered a place for attendees to write down suggestions and comments such as "community garden," "flashing red light at Apache," and "leave Park City in Utah." At another station, people were given stickers to place on a board with various transportation goals and design options to indicate which items were the most important to them. By the end of the night, the winners of the most stickers were buffered or protected bikeways, separated bike paths, economic viability, and pedestrian safety. The items with the fewest stickers were bicycle signals and in-

roadway signs.

Brandy McMahon, acting long-range planning manager for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, was staffing the design and implementation station. She said she answered a lot of questions on everything from bike paths to the bug station, but the overall feeling she had for the night's open house was positive, a change from the tension she felt at previous meetings.

Defanti, McMahon, and Brendan Ferry, principal planner for El Dorado County, all said input from the May 6 open house will be considered for changes to the Meyers Area Plan when the Board of Supervisors meets again next month and in the future. According to Defanti, it could be at least nine months before anything is voted on, so there is still plenty of time for residents to offer their comments either on paper, or online.

Ferry said that while people can't agree on every little thing, their goal is to please everyone as a whole. "I think the community in general is excited about getting the plan done and implementing something cool in Meyers."