

Opinion: Leaving a legacy on the South Shore

By Nancy Kerry

Leaving a legacy is often described as passing something down from one generation to another; in other words, what impacts will remain after a lifetime of service and actions?

Recently a broad group of South Shore community leaders came together to consider what our shared legacy for the community would be as a result of our collective actions. This group of nearly 40 leaders included elected officials and staff from both counties, city staff, college board members, business owners, community leaders and chief executive officers from local employers, as well as nonprofit and agency leaders. We discussed the benefits we could achieve if we developed and agreed upon shared legacy principles that we would utilize to guide our decision-making and strategic planning.



We sought to develop principles upon which we collectively agreed should be the legacy goals of our community. In designing these principals, we agreed they should convey our community's interests in an exceptional quality of life and also address impacts on the economy, environment and social equity. We discussed how legacy principals should demonstrate environmental stewardship, economic diversity and contribute to a sustainable and vibrant community.

We shared what we collectively understand and what we have learned from our community, which included these concepts: our community should be inclusive of all members; our community comes together in times of crisis and supports one another; and ours is a community of individuals striving to make a living in one of the most beautiful places on Earth. The group

developed an initial list of more than 50 ideas, which were paired down to those with similar themes resulting in the nine proposed “legacy principles” listed below.

Now it’s your turn to provide input about our shared legacy. After reviewing the proposed principles below, choose three or four principles you think are the most important for the South Shore. Consider how these principles might be utilized by private businesses, nonprofits and public agencies in their decision-making.

Proposed Legacy Principles

Collaborative Leadership – we recognize and incorporate a collaborative approach to leadership at the South Shore; we collectively represent a diverse group of residents, businesses and agencies and recognize no one particular private, public or non-profit agency or company is solely responsible to lead the South Shore community; we value our collective resources and by adopting a collaborative leadership philosophy we will leave a valued legacy for the South Shore.

Gratefulness – we are a community that expresses our appreciation for all that is the South Shore, which includes Lake Tahoe’s unparalleled natural environment, our community pride, neighbors helping neighbors, grateful for the opportunity to live, work and play in Lake Tahoe; we are a community investing in our shared successes grateful for the opportunity to leave a legacy for the next generation.

Environmental Integrity – we are a community that invests time and resources toward environmental stewardship; we believe it is our shared legacy that we have been entrusted to care for the outstanding natural resource of Lake Tahoe; we believe our built environment should closely mirror the natural environment and as a result, the natural and built environment will demonstrate our environmental integrity.

Shared Experience – we recognize residents and visitors may share a wide variety of experiences at the South Shore; we share experiences ranging from those valuing nature to those celebrating festivals and concerts.

Vitality – we are a community representing a belief in the health and wellness of individuals; we encourage a healthy lifestyle as well as neighborhood, community and economic vitality.

Inclusiveness – we are an inclusive community; we welcome new residents to the community as well as long-time residents; we are inclusive of all sectors, organizations, points of view from residents and visitors alike.

Culture and Recreation – we are a year-round community comprised of indoor and outdoor cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Bold Innovation – we are a community that embraces innovation in our approach to community challenges; we are supportive of innovators and entrepreneurs including those with big, bold ideas for we recognize bold innovation will enable us to leave a legacy of entrepreneurship.

Thank you for taking the time to help identify the principles that should be our shared legacy for the South Shore. Please share this opportunity with your friends and family and weigh in at Speak Up South Lake Tahoe a new civic engagement tool to collect community comments, share and discuss ideas and develop a collective understanding of the views in the community. A few weeks from now, the leadership group will meet again and assess the level of community agreement about these principles and develop a list of Legacy Principles to share with the community.

Nancy Kerry wrote this in collaboration with members of the South Shore CEO Round Table, which includes a large group from the public and private sectors.