

# SLT-EDC eager to resolve land dispute

By Kathryn Reed

It looks like South Lake Tahoe may soon be the landowner where the senior center, museum, art building and visitors center sit in the middle of town.

“It’s a good idea to transfer it to the city and get out of the middle,” El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This month, just not tomorrow, Novasel expects the county electeds to vote on how best to have the city take over that land. Whether this involves the transfer of money or land, or changing property lines remains to be seen.

“We hope there is no money exchanged. We hope there is a lot line adjustment,” Mayor Hal Cole told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This conversation has gone on for decades, but not until this year has any real progress been made. Timing and new players at staff level and elected positions are part of the reason a resolution is apt to be found.

“We are not coming in with any predisposed biases about what to do with property. We are looking at how to make it work, not how to stop it. That seems to be the spirit of everyone at the table,” Novasel said.



The land where these entities do business may be transferred from El Dorado County to South Lake Tahoe.  
Photo/LTN

The other impetus is the seniors. Their complaints are finally being acknowledged by the city and county.

A big issue is that the county owns the land that houses all of these entities, while the city is responsible for the maintenance. In many ways it's like the organizations have two landlords who aren't always in agreement.

The seniors want to make repairs and expand, but the city doesn't want to say yes to a building it doesn't own and the county has essentially been an absentee landlord. Lingering disagreements are whether issues are maintenance or capital improvements. The former the city would be liable for, the latter would be the county's responsibility.

The City Attorney's Office did not provide *Lake Tahoe News* with what the actual lease agreements are between the city and the seniors, Tahoe Art League, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Lake Tahoe Historical Society.

All of the property is part of what is known as the 56 Acres, which includes the \$65 million Lakeview Commons site.

The county owns a slice of land no more than 100 feet by 100 feet near the old Alta Mira building site that the city would

like to acquire in order to get the bike path there built. That, too, is on the table for discussion.

Moving the county's vector control is also being considered. It's possible that department could be relocated to the industrial area when the city takes its fleet there.

The larger parcel of the 56 acres includes Campground by the Lake and undeveloped areas on that side of the highway.

"We expressed our desire to take that land and add it into our recreation master plan, possibly improve the campground and bring it up to standard like the rest rooms and possibly RV hookups to make it more desirable," Councilman Austin Sass told *Lake Tahoe News*.

What to do with this bigger parcel, including the campground, is not expected to be resolved this year.

Once the Board of Supervisors votes on the senior center property et al, the City Council will take up the issue. The goal is to have votes cast this calendar year. The city, though, only has one meeting left – Dec. 7.