

Area plan maps Placer County's future at Tahoe



An artist's rendering of the proposed Tahoe City Lodge.

By Kathryn Reed

If the preferred alternative is not selected, the developer of the Tahoe City Lodge said he would abandon the project.

Samir Tuma spoke before the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board on Wednesday about the hotel he wants to build near the lake. This would be the first new lodging facility in Tahoe City in decades.

Tuma wants to build 40 traditional hotel rooms. An additional 31 one-bedroom and 47 two-bedroom suites are planned. The suites would be sold; with the idea most of the time owners would have them in the rental pool for tourists. They would be deed restricted.

Tuma estimates \$43 million will be pumped into the economy during construction, with another \$8.6 million annual contribution to Tahoe City-Placer County.

He owns 1.4 acres, which was the old Hendriksen site. The project, though, encompasses 3 acres. An agreement between Tahoe City Golf Course, which is owned by Tahoe City PUD, Placer County and Truckee Tahoe Airport, will need to be solidified to make the hotel come to fruition.

"I say we own the ugliest shopping center in Lake Tahoe and we would very much like to change that," Tuma told the board July 27.

The meeting in Kings Beach was an opportunity for the board to hear from the public about what it thinks of the draft environmental documents for the Placer County Tahoe Basin Area Plan and Tahoe City Lodge project. Written comments will be taken until mid-August.

Of the 24 people who spoke Wednesday, there was not consensus about the documents. Some people are still upset a project is being tied into the area plan documents because there is a sense the plan is written to accommodate the hotel.

Tahoe Marina Lakefront homeowners are upset about a bike-pedestrian path going steps from their property. The condo owners are worried about safety, trespassing and vandalism, as well as losing privacy.

Some question the true environmental impacts, such as whether stream environmental zones will really be improved.

Placer County and TRPA staff acknowledged traffic would get worse.

The area plan encompasses all of Placer County's acreage in the basin.

It allows for a second unit to be built on certain properties.

There had been talk of deed restricting it for workforce housing and saying it could not be a vacation rental. Board member Shelly Aldean told staff she was disappointed this use for those units was removed from the preferred alternative. The Truckee-Tahoe Contractors Association is also an advocate for the secondary dwelling being deed restricted.

Many see the lodge being a welcome addition to town, especially with the upgrades to Tahoe City Golf Course. A partnership with Tahoe City PUD would mean a new clubhouse that would also be available to the hotel to use as meeting space.

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Notes:

- The deadline to comment is Aug. 15.
- Final environmental documents should be out in the fall.
- The TRPA Governing Board is expected to vote on it in January.