

# Editorial: Measure P good for everyone

**Publisher's note:** *The following endorsement is from Lake Tahoe News after a team of seven community members gathered to discuss the merits of Measure P.*

Recreation is what the South Shore is all about. And while the natural environment provides ample opportunity to play outdoors, that isn't sufficient. For many athletic endeavors there needs to be a built environment.

This includes swimming, basketball, hockey, tennis, pickleball, as well as soccer, football and baseball. Even cyclists need defined dirt or asphalt to ride on.

It's no longer good enough to say, "We live in a forest, therefore we don't need to spend money on recreation."

Not only is it time, but we're overdue. That is why *Lake Tahoe News* enthusiastically supports Measure P on the South Lake Tahoe ballot. It will increase the hotel tax from 10 to 12 percent for most properties, while those in the redevelopment area will pay 14 percent instead of the current 12 percent.

We recognize there is going to be a limit as to what tourists will pay. But on the flip side we need to assess some of the reasons they are not coming.

A big reason is that the athletic facilities are subpar for tournaments. Those tournaments – for a variety of sports – could bring thousands of people a year to the area. Collectively, the smaller events already do. The sporting community and hotel operators believe the larger event organizers would bring their teams (along with fans and money) to South Lake Tahoe if they could play here.

Those people also need some place to sleep. And the local lodging association is excited about that prospect, which is why that group is behind this tax proposal.

In many ways the tourists will be paying for the facilities they will be using and the locals will reap the rewards.

What *LTN* likes about this tax is that the money raised must go to recreation and cannot be squandered for some other use. We like that rebuilding the 1970's era recreation complex is the first item on the to-do list. It's a relic from the past. The maintenance costs are staggering. It's like duct tape is holding the facility together.

The city would be able to borrow money against the projected income from the additional transient occupancy tax so the improvements could start almost immediately instead of waiting to collect enough TOT to proceed. The city's debt ratio is rather low and bond rating is high, so this should not be difficult to do.

We know those using the pool – including the community swim team – are apprehensive about the pool being closed for a significant period. We hope the talks with the Tahoe Keys to fill the gap will be realized so there is no interruption in aquatic activities.

We also like that Regan Beach is part of the mix when it comes to upgrades. That is an underutilized piece of property that could offer locals (and others) so much more.

South Lake Tahoe deserves to have state-of-the-art facilities – first for locals, second for tourists.