

EDC supes approve Meyers Area Plan

By Susan Wood

The recreational hamlet west of South Lake Tahoe took another step toward flexing its individual muscle and identity Tuesday, when the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors approved the recreation-oriented concept of the new Meyers Area Plan.

It was approved 4-0, with Tahoe Supervisor Sue Novasel recusing herself. She later told Lake Tahoe News she was pleased with the stepping-stone outcome.

The proposed plan will head over to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency as one of four more meetings before it returns to the county board for final adoption early next year.

Following a marathon of community meetings, environmental improvement reports and agency hearings, county planner Brendan Ferry took his show on the road to Placerville to tout the concept that initially began with turmoil years ago and continues with massive nods of approval.

The EIR comment period ended in early October, resulting in only five comments. The plan, which was debated at length, once packed meeting rooms with a multitude of expressed opinions ranging from the types of businesses zoned to the height of structures.

Dec. 12 was no exception with respect to recent heightened agreement. The only commenter was Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Steve Teshara, who commended the revamp proposal of the village as “enhancing the definition” of Meyers.

“I think balance has been achieved,” Teshara said, adding chamber members in the community support the plan.



Meyers Area Plan had not been updated since 1993. Photo/LTN

As it stands, the proposal consolidates three existing commercial and community services zoning districts along Highway 50. It loosely covers a 669-acre area between Pioneer Trail and Highway 89.

Ferry explained to the supervisors the plan retained “the values” of Meyers, including recreation being its “key priority.” This means many bike and pedestrian trails are due to go in, with landscaping, benches and planter boxes enhancing the aesthetics. Another value focuses on Meyers as a historic gateway to the Lake Tahoe Basin. Its roots are deeply planted in keeping it a walkable community with a north-to-south, east-to-west view of “world class amenities.”

Of course, there are bugs to work out such as relocating the U.S. Agricultural Station. There are also considerations to be made like beefing up broadband in the area, which can be spotty at best.

Another key priority is elevating the level of safety for pedestrians. That’s why the community is up for a complete

street format designed to slow down traffic so walkers may safely cross busy Highway 50.

Take Apache Avenue. "We'd like to improve that intersection," Ferry said.

Also keeping Meyers' unique profile, the county planner told the board the proposal calls for a building-height threshold of 42 feet, even though TRPA would allow 56 feet. Currently, no structure stands over 36 feet. When coming up with this number, the planners offered a rendering of a 45-foot building that didn't impede visibility.

"I feel we've landed in a middle ground as we met with the stakeholders a number of times," Ferry said.

A middle ground can be an ideal place to be – especially in an area debating the finer and not-so-fine points of vacation home rentals. Supervisor John Hidahl asked Ferry if the home-sharing phenomenon was considered in the concept. Currently, Meyers has no hotel, with other aspects up in the air such as Tahoe Paradise Golf Course being for sale.

Ferry replied in no uncertain terms that all life in Meyers was covered.

So with that, the county formally adopted the Meyers Area Plan, approved the California Environmental Quality Act and TRPA environmental documentation, amended the General Plan, revised county zoning and directed staff to analyze costs.