

South Shore Y comes alive

By Adam Jensen

Improvements made in the two years since the passage of the Tahoe Valley Area Plan are as diverse as they are abundant.

The redevelopment of several parcels, storm water treatment, transportation upgrades, and plans for additional open space are all taking shape following the passage of the area plan, a key step in implementing the 2012 Regional Plan. The plan, approved in 2015 by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board, covers 337 acres near the intersection of highway 50 and 89, known as the Y, in South Lake Tahoe.

The vision for the area creates commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family development that is pedestrian friendly, transit oriented, and harmonious with the natural environment.

Since the plan's adoption, proponents have submitted 22 applications for projects located within the area plan boundary. Ten of the projects are complete, 11 have been issued permits and/or are under construction, and one is under review.

"We're seeing a lot of environmental redevelopment on the land within the Tahoe Valley Area Plan," said Brandy McMahon, local government coordination program manager for TRPA. "The environmental and community improvements happening around the 'Y' will provide long-term benefits to the lake, residents, and visitors."

Barton Memorial Hospital broke ground on its facilities master plan, which includes the Robert Maloff Center of Excellence. The facility, a 25,000-square-foot orthopedic, sports performance, rehabilitation, and wellness center, is under construction. The project includes the retirement from future development of more than 33,600 square feet of land coverage

previously removed from a stream environment zone (SEZ) at Lake Tahoe Airport. The city also approved two mixed-use projects near Barton Memorial Hospital.

The facelift and full remodel of the Factory Stores at the Y transformed a dated shopping mall into The Crossing at Tahoe Valley. A former hardware store was turned into the South Lake Brewing Company. The tear down and rebuild of the McDonald's near the Y is complete and the city has approved Blue Granite Climbing Gym nearby on Emerald Bay Road, which is scheduled to open in the spring.

"The city is excited to see major improvements to the built environment in the Tahoe Valley area since the adoption of the Tahoe Valley Area Plan," said John Hitchcock, planning manager for South Lake Tahoe. "All these projects directly benefit the community and visitors with increased options for dining, retail, and recreation opportunities. They also directly benefit the environment with the implementation of water quality best management practices."

The Tahoe Valley Greenbelt, a project that includes SEZ restoration, storm water improvements, and installation of pedestrian-bicycle pathways and amenities, is also being designed and engineered.

In addition to these projects, Caltrans began work on the Highway 50 to Trout Creek project in spring of 2017. Another lake-saving project within the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, it is expected to continue from Winnemucca Avenue to Sierra Boulevard in 2018 and Sierra Boulevard to Trout Creek Bridge in 2019. Benefits of the project include collecting storm water runoff to protect and improve Lake Tahoe's clarity, as well as roadway improvements like curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and 6-foot shoulders for bike lanes.

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