

Opinion: Parking an issue because of poor planning

By Bruce Grego

Milton Friedman, who in 1976 was awarded a Nobel Prize in Economics, once said, if you put the federal government in charge of the Sahara Desert, in five years there'd be a shortage of sand.

Well, in the last 50 years, local government in conjunction with the TRPA, and other regional and state agencies, has been controlling parking with every building permit issued with the result that we have a parking shortage and a transportation crisis – we have run out of sand.



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I have read your **recent articles** about the parking problems in Stateline and about **Harrah's** protecting its parking from Heavenly gondola skiers. Then, we have had two additional articles about parking published in last couple of weeks, one written by **Joanne Marchetta**, the executive director of the TRPA and the other council member by Austin Sass. Both Ms. Marchetta and Mr. Sass feel that we need more planning, workshops, and spending of more tax dollars to address these problems. No solutions, just lip service.

What can one conclude? First, that this parking mess is the direct result of the failure of planning, and the failure of

planning to plan for reality. We are spending millions of dollars on planning at every level of government in the basin, and with this spending, we should have never come to this point. When I think of planning, it should be a better method of solving anticipated problems, and solving those problems in advance so that life for the common person is better. However, as admitted by Mr. Sass and Ms. Marchetta, this problem with parking is not unexpected, but out of design. Governments in the basin seek to deprive us of our choice of transportation. They don't want us to drive our cars, they want us to use buses, and other means of mass transportation whether they work or not. Since, they cannot expect the public, the voters, to embrace their "transportation vision", they instead, through long term "planning", create a transportation crisis with the hope of "driving" us to their solution.

Second, it's not unreasonable to expect a private business, such as Harrah's, to protect its parking for its customers. What is not reasonable is the approval of these large projects in Stateline where the developers failed to accommodate the parking demands accurately that will be generated at their development site. For example, while the Marriott's hotel has parking only for its guests, the parking garage is clearly inadequate to accommodate the demands of the restaurants, theaters, and shops located within the Heavenly Village and the needs created by the gondola. To add to this problem, a number of years ago the city placed no parking signs throughout the Stateline area where off street parking had been allowed since the formation of the city.

It's wrong to expect adjacent smaller properties to carry the burden of unsupported parking demands of these large projects. Further, the public should not have to bear the costs of finding the solution to this parking problem. Also, our visitors should have a better experience in the Stateline area than trying to find parking, dealing with parking meters, and dealing with parking tickets.

What is the solution? Certainly, reviewing the condition for the issuance of the building permits for all these large projects, and the representations made by the applicants, to determine whether developers' obligation concerning adequate parking has been met and, perhaps, explore the suspension of the "occupancy permit" for such projects is in order until the direct beneficiaries of these projects institute an acceptable parking solution that can accommodate their current vehicle parking demand. Eliminating "no parking signs" in Stateline would help.

Make no mistake; public transportation has a role in our transportation needs. But despite heavy governmental subsidies, it loses money and has inadequate ridership in most places in California. It seems best used by employees going to and from work, not by tourists traveling by long distances by car or local residents dealing with life's daily demands.

Finally, we should challenge the planners in the basin, those in work at the TRPA, the TTD, and even those that work for the city, to stop using their vehicles for all purposes, and use only public transportation or private non-motorized vehicles (bikes) to go to work, take their children to school and after school activities, shop at Costco in Carson City, timely attend public meetings, purchasing 10 bags of groceries at Raley's (and bring them home), go to the movies, visit their family doctors, take their family to church, and, of course, go on vacation. Show us how it's done and show us that public transportation is the way of the future for our transportation needs. I bet if such a program would be instituted, realistic solutions to our transportation needs will soon be forthcoming.

Bruce Grego is a resident of South Lake Tahoe and former City Council member.