

Little fanfare with TRPA approval of Meyers plan

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – One more vote and the Meyers Area Plan will be the law of the land, replacing the planning document from 1993.

The process to develop this plan started in February 2012. In these six years there have been a multitude of meetings, angry words levied between residents, at El Dorado County staff and electeds, misunderstandings, and finally compromise and resolution.

The fact that only one member of the public spoke at the Feb. 28 Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board meeting speaks volumes for how far things have come. It used to be the topic of this area plan would bring out the masses, with opinions all over the board.

It took four drafts to come to the plan that the bi-state regulatory agency approved unanimously. (Sue Novasel, who represents El Dorado County on the Governing Board had to recuse herself because she owns property in the plan area. CAO Don Ashton filled in for her.) Later this month the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors will review it one last time.

This most southwestern entrance to the Lake Tahoe Basin has more traffic and visitors than any other gateway. This is why transportation and traffic were critical elements of the plan.

“One key challenge to Meyers is that it has to operate as a ‘Main Street’ and as a highway,” Brendan Ferry, planner with the county, told the Governing Board. Highway 50 is 280 feet wide at most places, making it a challenge to cross.

The county has been working with Caltrans to make it safer for

pedestrians and cyclists. The intersection at Apache Avenue is one of the most critical points, especially for people trying to reach the elementary school and park on the north side of the highway. It's possible a yellow light to slow traffic could be installed there.

The lack of transit is another issue for Meyers. There was some discussion about this at the board level. Funding is the problem. Still, the county is pursuing state and federal grants to improve the physical corridor, and is working with the Tahoe Transportation District for bus service.

One item in the plan is to work to move the agricultural inspection station to Highway 89 or find a way to deem its existence irrelevant. This will not be an easy endeavor, as the state has the final say. The reason to get rid of it is that it's an eyesore and with it only being staffed at random times its viability is questioned.

Austin Sass, who represents South Lake Tahoe on the TRPA board, asked if there would be anyplace for workforce housing in Meyers based on this plan.

Ferry spoke more in general development parameters instead of specific uses when he said there is vacant land available. Some of it is owned by the California Tahoe Conservancy and would be available through the state agency's asset lands program.

During the last six years of public meetings, the residents of Meyers were more interested in development that would generate tax dollars and add to the local flair, such as a boutique lodging establishment, an outdoor oriented commercial entity and the like.