

# Calif. plan linking housing to public transit rejected

By Liam Dillon, Los Angeles Times

A robust effort to attack California's housing shortage was rejected Tuesday by a state legislative panel at the Capitol, felled in part by opponents who argued that it treated small cities and large ones like San Francisco the same way.

The defeat for Senate Bill 827 came in its first legislative hearing, a surprisingly early end for a bill that had attracted national attention. Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, was attempting to tackle two of California's most pressing issues: the rising cost of housing and the need for development that is consistent with the state's ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Wiener's colleagues on the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee contended the bill would be too blunt.

**Read the whole story**

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## Car accident results in power outage in Meyers

Power is expected to be restored to residents in Meyers by 6pm April 18.

Liberty Utilities on Wednesday afternoon de-energized underground lines so South Tahoe Public Utility District could fix a fire hydrant.

The hydrant had been damaged earlier in the day when a vehicle hit it. This occurred on Friant Drive between Matheson and Murietta drives.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## **S. Lake Tahoe on path to hire key executives**

**By Kathryn Reed**

Apparently it pays just to show up.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on April 17 agreed to hire Prothman Executive Recruitment to find city manager and city attorney candidates. The votes were 4-1 on each contract, with Councilman Tom Davis in the minority for the city manager vote and Councilman Austin Sass the dissenter on the city attorney.

Brad Robbins with Prothman spoke at Tuesday's meeting, saying he was impressed with how the council conducted itself based on seeing them in action that morning. There were snickers in the audience. He told the council he had done some research about the city and thought they were a great group.

Of the three firms applying for the job for the city attorney search, only Prothman had a rep at the meeting.

The council members did not discuss the other candidates.

Sass said he was fine with the current firm Burke, Williams & Sorensen, with Nira Doherty doing the bulk of counsel responsibilities.

In the end, the majority of the council said having an in-house attorney is better for all involved. These last six months were the first time South Lake Tahoe had used an outside firm as legal counsel for routine work and not just hired as special counsel.

The city attorney search will cost \$8,500, with a not-to-exceed figure of \$12,000.

While the council talked to Robbins they broached the subject of his firm doing the city manager and interim city manager searches as well. They ultimately picked him to find a full time city manager. That will cost about the same as finding a city attorney.

The recruitment for city manager and interim city manager were a combined separate agenda item, however the city had never asked for firms to apply. Government Code normally mandates a more fair process for hiring firms than just giving it to the person who happens to be in the room.

The city's human resources director will find the interim. Unsolicited, three people have turned in resumes for that position, with a fourth expressing interest. As this time their information is not public.

The city will be accepting resumes for interim city manager until April 26. The council at a special meeting on April 30 will interview the candidates. It remains to be seen what part will be done in open and/or closed session.

Fire Chief Jeff Meston has been acting city manager since earlier this year when City Manager Nancy Kerry was let go for reasons that could remain forever a secret. Meston has told the council he is stepping down from the city manager role in a matter of weeks.

Also at the April 30 meeting the council will be getting a lesson in the Brown Act and ethics training. The time of the

meeting is still to be determined.

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# SLT recreational pot ordinance taking shape

**By Kathryn Reed**

An adult-use marijuana ordinance is expected to be before the South Lake Tahoe City Council next month, with development agreements and a decision about what to do with the existing medical facility still to be decided.

The electeds on April 17 agreed to allow the following licenses: two micro businesses, two retail, and two cultivations not to exceed 5,000-square-feet. Other agreed to rules include: no limits on testing facilities, delivery linked to a retail establishment, dual licenses from planning and public safety, development agreement model, full cost recovery for the application fee, and permits awarded based on merit with a local preference.

Specifics to the latter will be decided by the council via a resolution.

Sergio Rudin with the law firm of Burke, Williams and Sorensen was the city attorney of record for Tuesday's meeting. He said the ordinance should be ready by May 1.

Rudin stressed that it will be necessary to have the development agreement in place before the ordinance takes effect.

With a development agreement, the city will be able to collect a fee of sorts from the businesses. This is in lieu of a tax

that could be assessed on the product. The voters will have to decide whether recreational marijuana will be taxed. The council has not decided to go forward with a tax measure, but has in the past said that is an eventual route to explore.

Rudin said it would be best to employ a consulting firm to gauge the appetite of the electorate about such a tax.

He also advised that the development agreements have parameters so they don't exist indefinitely, but also would sunset if a tax were implemented.

Legal and planning have worked out their differences regarding zoning. A micro business would be allowed in the industrial area, but no retail sales would be permissible. The Y area is another area of town where a micro business could open.

The advantage to a micro business is that one company can then do multiple things like grow the plants, create product like edibles, and then sell them.

While the state allows for 10,000-square-feet of cultivation for micro businesses, it is possible for the city to make that more restrictive. The council leaned toward 5,000 square feet.

What the council does not want is on-site consumption.

Council members Brooke Laine and Austin Sass have been appointed to a subcommittee to work with staff to formalize the development agreement criteria as well as figure what to do with Tahoe Wellness Cooperative.

TWC has been dispensing medicinal marijuana for about nine years in the middle of town. It operates as a micro business, and allows on-site consumption. Cody Bass, who owns TWC, multiple times at the meeting said the direction the council was going would make his business obsolete unless it could be grandfathered in.

TWC's future remains to be seen. It will be up to the city's

subcommittee to make recommendations to the full council regarding TWC's future.

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# SLT council to discuss allegations of wrongdoing

By Kathryn Reed

Even though the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office has initiated an investigation into allegations of illegal activities by the South Lake Tahoe City Council, the five local officials want an airing of grievances at the next council meeting.

Councilwoman Brooke Laine started the latest firestorm with her **opinion piece** published on *Lake Tahoe News* on April 14 where she alleges illegal conduct by herself and her colleagues.

Laine in her column mentions the Mary Egan contract. She wrote, "To this day, that contract has never been addressed, corrected, or publicly acknowledged."

At the end of the April 17 council meeting, acting City Manager Jeff Meston said the MRG bill needs to be paid and that he wants to discuss it at the next meeting. MRG or Municipal Resource Group, is Egan's company. Egan was brought in last fall at the request of then Mayor Austin Sass to assess the culture of the city. The contract was never discussed in open session.

However, *LTN* was told that **contract was paid** through the city's law firm Burke, Williams & Sorensen at the request of

interim City Attorney Nira Doherty.

That contract is one of the examples Laine has of an alleged Brown Act violation.

Laine's column was followed two days later by Mayor Wendy David's **rebuttal**. David said she wanted the DA to investigate Laine's accusations.

Laine on Tuesday said she had been contacted by the DA's office and said two investigators have been assigned to the case.

She said the entire council should have weighed in on the decision to go to the DA, that it should not have been initiated by the mayor.

Councilman Jason Collin said he wants to discuss Laine's accusations in public and to "do it swiftly so we can get back on track."

Sass read the following into the record during council comments:

*"First, I wish I could share everything that happened in closed session with the public. Every vote, their preceding discussions and the information and personal comments shared to us. I believe that doing such would clear this entire matter up and truly show who had the city's best interests at heart and who impeded the process because of a lack of objectivity. Unfortunately, the California Brown Act legally prohibits that.*

*"At no time have I sat in a meeting or with council or had a conversation with Ms. Laine where she ever used the words corruption, personal gain, power struggle or many of the comments she stated in her opinion piece. She has never abstained from a vote, protested a vote, or raised the issue that a particular vote was illegal. Thus,*

*without discussing specifics with council members, I hope Ms. Laine plans to share whatever evidence she has with the presiding and appropriate legal authority which I understand to be the district attorney. I hope the public is asking themselves the obvious question, 'What is she talking about, who is she talking about and why didn't she lodge an official confidential complaint like most whistle blowers do so an unbiased investigation can occur?'*

*"Corruption is generally defined as a form of dishonesty undertaken by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. Corruption may include many activities including bribery and embezzlement. Strong words for our little town. I do not believe for one moment that Tom, Jason, Wendy and myself personally benefited from any council vote or knowingly participated in any criminal activity. I look forward to the DA's investigation and sincerely hope that all matters discussed in closed session can legally become public through such process."*

The council agreed the issue needs to be discussed and not just left with the DA. To bring a topic back to the next meeting requires a four-fifths vote of the council, otherwise it would be at least two council meetings down the road. All five agreed the allegations should get a public airing at the May 1 meeting.

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# **Tahoe man dies skiing at**



# Alpine Meadows

By CBS-13

A skier has died at Alpine Meadows Ski Resort today.

Jeffrey R. Pearlstein, 33, of Kings Beach, was skiing on a steep run in the Keyhole area about 11am April 17 when he apparently lost control and crashed.

**Read the whole story**

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## Mt. Rose in environmental phase of expansion

Comments are being taken on the draft environmental impact statement for a proposed expansion of the Mout Rose ski area.

Resort owners want to expand terrain across the highway, which would be accessed by a skiable bridge. New lifts would open this terrain up to skiers and riders.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is the lead agency.

For more info, go **online**.

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# MontBleu ownership changing hands

By Wayne Parry, AP

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. – Carl Icahn’s company has struck an approximately \$1.85 billion deal that would fuse the gaming and hotel operations of Tropicana Entertainment to Eldorado Resorts Inc.

The agreement, announced early Monday, includes the sale of Tropicana Entertainment Inc.’s real estate to Gaming and Leisure Properties Inc. It doesn’t include Tropicana’s Aruba assets, which will be disposed of as a condition to closing.

Eldorado Resorts is acquiring the operating assets of seven casinos in six states, including two in Nevada – the Tropicana Laughlin and MontBleu in Stateline.

[Read the whole story](#)

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## Bear trapped in vehicle does serious damage



A bear locked in a truck in  
Tahoe destroys the inside of  
it. Photo/EDSO

A South Shore car owner found out the hard way why leaving food in a vehicle is a bad idea.

El Dorado County sheriff's deputies spent part of April 16 enticing a bruin to leave a vehicle. It did. But left behind was a destroyed interior.

"Another very important reason to lock your vehicles up at night, particularly in bear country, is that bears are very adept at entering unlocked vehicles looking for food. If you are lucky, they will rummage around and leave your car relatively unharmed," deputies said on the EDSO Facebook page.

The bears are out, having awoken from their winter slumber. And they are looking for food.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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## **Sierra snow drought endures despite March moisture**

**By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal**

The series of March storms that slammed the Sierra Nevada made skiers and snowboarders rejoice and provided a much-needed boost to water storage reservoirs in California and Nevada.

But even a one-month snow total that rivaled the "Miracle March" of 1991 isn't enough to erase the snow drought that lingered through winter 2017-18.

“The takeaway is we had another snow drought year,” said Dan McEvoy, regional climatologist for the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno. “We are still below average this year and we are going to lose our snowpack earlier than average.”

**Read the whole story**