

# **Editorial: Saving for when March miracle goes away**

**Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the March 16, 2016, Sacramento Bee.***

The snowpack is back and the water is rising. Between last weekend's storms and this weekend's forecast, drought-weary California appears to have gotten the March miracle we were all hoping for.

That's the good news. The bad news is that, between this state's natural climate and global warming, drought is now perpetually around the corner, and, as usual, people are already beginning to forget that.

So as much as we hate to sound like a broken record – or a dripping faucet – it bears repeating: No, California, you can't stop conserving water just because we have wet weather.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Opinion: Acts by Calif. politicians have backfired**

**By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee**



Dan Walters

When Gov. Jerry Brown unveiled a criminal sentencing reform measure last month, he cited the “unintended consequences” of a law he had signed nearly 40 years earlier.

Brown said he didn’t foresee that the 1977 law, setting rigid sentences for felons, would remove “incentives for inmates to improve themselves” and discourage them from working toward earlier release through rehabilitation.

The “determinate sentence law” that Brown signed reflected the political angst that sharply rising crime rates were creating in the 1970s.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Letter: Austin’s House says thank you**

**To the community,**

The board of directors, staff and children of Austin’s House would like to thank the entire community for the tremendous support of our 2015 Appeal For Kids and 2016 Cowboy Mardi Gras fundraisers.

The 2015 Appeal For Kids ended on Jan. 31 and our generous

community stepped up once again to help local children in crisis. The Cowboy Mardi Gras fundraiser on Feb. 26 was our best ever. Everyone had a great time for a great cause. Every dollar raised will be used to pay for operating expenses at Austin's House.

It would be impossible to thank everyone who donated and surely I would leave off a deserving name. We would like to recognize the following donors. Thank you Patty Clark, owner of Century 21 Clark Properties and founder of the Austin Kirby Foundation who donated \$50,000. Our three sponsors for Cowboy Mardi Gras: Thank you Carson City Toyota Scion, Carson Valley Medical Center and Frontier Communications.

Thank you to the following who purchased full tables at the Cowboy Mardi Gras: Hettrick Electric, GE, Cristek Interconnect, Brenda Robertson, Heritage Law, Douglas County, Town of Genoa, Pet Sitters, CASA of Douglas County, Edward Jones, Century 21 Clark Properties, David Shriver, United Electric and Carpet Cops. Thank you Jennifer McLaughlin of Sierra Canopies who did all the beautiful decorations.

I am truly honored to live in our beautiful Carson Valley with such generous neighbors. Austin's House was built entirely with donations and your continued support keeps our beautiful facility open. Thank you very much.

**Conrad Buedel, Austin's House board of directors**

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# **Opinion: Being prepared for a**

# hospital visit

By Dawn Evans

At Barton Health we strive to provide consistently exceptional care for our patients and their families. But what can someone do before a hospital visit is needed or after being released?



Dawn Evans

Here are some safety tips to help you and your loved ones stay safe, healthy, and out of harm's way.

- Focus on balance

More than a third of adults over age 65 fall each year. Injuries from falls can lead to broken bones, bleeding, and even death.

What can you do?

- Improve your balance with exercise. Yoga, cardio activity, and strength exercises help build muscles, activate your core, and improve balance.
- Have your eyes examined regularly and wear corrective glasses or contacts as prescribed.
- Remove any hazards in walkways.
- Be aware of the side effects of medications. The risk of falling can increase by three times with certain medications.

- Know your meds

Medication errors occur when the wrong medication or correct medication with the wrong dosage are taken. Every year, more than 1.5 million Americans receive the wrong medication, the wrong dose, the wrong form (for example, taking a pill rather than liquid), or take their medication at the wrong time.

What can you do?

- Fill your prescriptions at one pharmacy. Pharmacists are trained to look for drug interactions.

- Tell your pharmacist all the medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbals, and nutritional supplements you take.

- Know what medications you take and why you take them. This includes prescriptions, over-the counter medications, and other vitamins or supplements.

- Keep a list of the medications you take. Bring it to all medical appointments and have ready if you are admitted to the hospital.

- Become a patient advocate

You are your best advocate when it comes to patient safety. Your healthcare providers want you to speak up and ask questions.

What can you do?

- Write down questions before your appointment. It's easy to get nervous and forget what you want to ask.

- Bring a loved one with you to your appointment. This person can recall and confirm what you heard.

- Become a member of the Patient Family Advisory Council. Advisors represent patients and families of patients

that receive care at Barton Hospital. They work closely with hospital doctors, nurses, and administrators to help improve the quality of care for all patients and family members.

March 13 to 19 is the National Patient Safety Awareness Week. For more information about joining the Patient and Family Advisory Council, call 530.543.5537.

*Dawns Evans is the patient safety officer at Barton Memorial Hospital.*

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## **Letter: Loop road may not be best for SLT**

***Publisher's note: This letter was sent to the South Lake Tahoe City Council and city manager. It is published with permission.***

Dear Mayor David, Council Members, and City Manager Kerry:

Once again, thank you for your work and service to the people of South Lake Tahoe. I know that you all want to do what you think is best for South Lake Tahoe.



Dave Jinkens

I am again writing to you as a resident of the city regarding

the proposed loop road. The comments and suggestions below are mine alone are not intended to reflect the opinions of organizations of which I am a member. I write once again because specific answers to important questions I and other concerned residents have raised on this matter in the distant past and recent past have not been answered. While pundits in favor of the project exhort its virtues in the media, sound and informed public policy decisions in favor or against the project cannot be made without these answers.

The City Council needs accurate and complete information about the cost and the environmental and financial impact of the proposed loop road before you are asked to make a decision. Residents of South Lake Tahoe need and deserve the same information so that they can make an informed judgment on the benefit of the project and how it might affect them. While we have some answers after three years of asking for them, and this is good thing, there are important questions remaining.

In addition, some government officials have recently said that there is little city government can do to decide the fate of the loop road, because the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) is a separate legal entity. I beg to differ, and I will explain why below.

Important outstanding questions remain

1. Impact on existing city residents and businesses: Loop Road proponents and TTD officials say that hard-working city residents displaced by the destruction of their homes will be helped to find new housing somewhere and that new affordable housing will be constructed for them. The remainder questions are: who will build the housing; when will it be built; where will it be built in the city limits; how will it be financed; and what are the guarantees, not just promises, that it will be built? As you know, affordable housing for working families is a scarce commodity in South Lake Tahoe and many working people already have trouble finding affordable housing.

2. Economic impact of the project on existing businesses in the city and the city economy: The June 7, 2013, Economic Analysis of the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project prepared by EPS is cited by TTD officials as proof that there is substantial benefit to the city economy from the project. However, the analysis did not go far enough. This is not the fault of the EPS, a respected California economic firm. It is because the firm was not tasked by TTD to do a broader and more complete study of the economic impact of the loop road and the attendant development it will support in Nevada on the business community in South Lake Tahoe as a whole. Will the Highway 50 realignment and the linked new Nevada development grow the total economy of the South Shore or will it simply shift business from the California side to Nevada? We do not know, and we need to know the answer.

An expanded study by EPS should and could be done at a cost of about \$60,000 so that we know the positive and negative impacts of the loop road on South Lake Tahoe. After we have these answers we can then determine how and if negative economic impacts on the entire city business community can be eliminated. Concerned citizens and business organizations examining this proposed project have been asking for this vital information since early in 2013 – March 2013 to be exact. Had this expanded study been done, then we would not still be asking for it. As you might agree, spending \$60,000 to get answers on a proposed \$100,000,000 loop road is a prudent investment.

Loop road advocates and proponents say that we are one South Shore, and while we are in spirit and we should cooperate and collaborate when possible, we live in two very different states with very different revenue streams, taxes, and business opportunities. I always wish our Nevada neighbors and friends success, but I want projects they propose to be in the best interest of the people of South Lake Tahoe if they want our support and our land to build the realignment of Highway

50.

3. Promises made and how they will be kept: As we learned painfully with the convention center project, developers and proponents make promises that sometimes they can't or won't keep. Sometimes projects go bankrupt. Sometimes not all of the promises are known by public officials. The questions are what are those loop road promises made to affected residents and businesses owners and operators in the path of the road to co-opt them into supporting the project, how will these promises be kept, and what guarantees/promises/assurances and binding agreements have been made that will be kept? The general public and public officials need to know the full and complete story in advance of a vote on the project. Let's not have another hole in the ground and painful results and disappointments it created.

What is city government's role and what can and should it do?

Contrary to what some public officials have recently stated, city government has an important role in determining whether the loop road is built in the city limits, and it has many options it can take in regard to the proposal. While it may not be necessary or even desirable for city government to take all of the actions below, it is possible that they could do so if regional and/or state agencies try to force a loop road on the city of South Lake Tahoe. We have learned from hard lessons of the past. Let's not make the same or similar mistakes.

- The City Council will be required to accept the dedication of a street now part of Highway 50 if the highway is relocated. Dedication of the street is part of the entire project and thus the project needs City Council approval.

- The City Council and Planning Commission must find that the project is consistent with all elements of the city's adopted General Plan and make factual findings in this regard

including a finding that it consistent with the City's Housing Element (a part of the General Plan) and state law.

- The City Council has a responsibility and arguably a duty to ensure that existing affordable housing in the city limits is not eliminated by a loop road unless replaced with affordable housing in the city limits for those displaced. The guarantees must be firm, backed up with real money, and enforceable.

- The City Council can affirm once again that it will not use its power of eminent domain to acquire title to land needed to build the realigned highway and that it will oppose the use of eminent domain by any other public entity. (Note 1).

- The City Council should insist and require that a complete, comprehensive and independent economic analysis be undertaken to determine the fiscal impact of the Project that will serve new developed areas in Nevada be evaluated on a citywide basis. An updated EPS study as described previously is essential and must be done.

- The City Council could initiate legal action to prevent TRPA and/or TTD from building the highway unless its information and guarantees are met.

- The City Council could oppose federal and state funds being allocated for this "community displacement" project unless its requests are met.

- The City Council could join in these actions with STPUD to oppose the project and litigate the issue if STPUD is required to relocate utilities to a realigned road costing millions of dollars that will be borne by city taxpayers.

- The City Council could on its own amend the General Plan to eliminate the loop road; however, this approach could take some time and require at least an environmental

assessment to be prepared.

- The City Council could decide on its own volition to place the measure on the June or November ballot without the need for an initiative to be circulated. A general plan may be amended by initiative. (See DeVita v. County of Napa, 9 Cal. 4th 763, 777 [1995]). It is not clear that an initiative by the people amending the general plan requires an EIR. Placement on the June ballot would be the best course and cost less because of the June primary election.

- The City Council can and should insist that all guarantees, and promises made to property owners and residents be made public and that a comprehensive financial impact analysis be completed and available to the public before any action on the project is taken by any agency.

- The City Council could vote and direct its representative on TRPA and TTD to oppose the project if it comes up for a vote. The council has the power to so direct its representatives.

- The City Council could request its county supervisor or her alternate to oppose the project at TTD and TRPA unless its demands and requests are met.

- The City Council must be given sufficient time by TTD to get answers to the questions and concerns presented herein before moving forward with Project approvals or City government can and should oppose the project outright including ways defined in this letter.

## Conclusion

As a resident of South Lake Tahoe, I want our City Council and city staff to have the best information possible about the loop road before any decision is made about it. I want a bright future and opportunity for all city residents and all existing businesses in town. City officials should insist that

TTD and regional officials provide the requested information before actions are taken on the loop road. I remain proud of our Nevada neighbor's efforts to improve their community. I want them to be successful. I just want to be certain that what they are proposing and asking for city cooperation does not harm South Lake Tahoe.

Best wishes and regards. I would like to see a positive outcome for all parties in this matter on the basis of mutual interests and respect. Cooperation, collaboration and respect are the keys. I am available to help in whatever way I can to see an amicable resolution.

Sincerely,

**Dave Jinkens, South Lake Tahoe**

**Note (1)** Eminent domain is the power of local, state, and federal government agencies to take private property for public use so long as the government provides just compensation. Arguably, while there are some public benefits to the proposed Project, the proposed Highway 50 realignment is designed mostly to serve a private purpose for property development in Nevada.

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# **Opinion: Graffiti destroying national landmarks**

**By Marjorie "Slim" Woodruff, High Country News**

The Coconino sandstone at Grand Canyon means many things to many people. To the hiker, it indicates that he or she is almost at the top. To the artist, it is a graceful sweep of

sculptured stone, and to the geologist, it evokes the trade winds blowing across Aeolian dunes 265 million years ago. But to the graffiti punk, it is a blank canvas.

It's a snap to scratch names, drawings and dates into sandstone. Fortunately, most of the time it is easy to erase the same, using water, a scrub brush and some occasional blue language. For vandalism that's not as easily removed, such as marks made by paint or with black or colored markers, park rangers have more powerful tools at their disposal, using rock-colored resin mastic to cover the panel, for example. In the worst cases, however, sometimes they end up having to cut out part of the rock.

Graffiti is surging at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Joshua Tree, Arches and Zion national parks, and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. At Capitol Reef and Independence Rock, ignorami scrawl their names over 100-year-old pioneer inscriptions. Even 4,000-year-old drawings from the Archaic Period have been scribbled on.

**Read the whole story**

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# **Opinion: Importance of not driving while sleepy**

**By Janelle Fallen Dunham**

The switch to daylight-saving time often means losing an hour of sleep for many people. The California Highway Patrol joins the National Sleep Foundation in observing National Sleep Awareness Week, March 6-12, to highlight the importance of drivers being aware of the potential dangers of the time

shift.

“Many people have a hard time adjusting to the time change, and it can affect their driving,” CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow said. “Even the most careful drivers become confused and use poor judgment when they are sleepy.”

Last year in California, sleepy or fatigued drivers were involved in 5,447 collisions, in which 40 people died. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year, resulting in an estimated 1,500 deaths, 71,000 injuries, and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses.

Cognitive impairment after approximately 18 hours awake is similar to having a blood alcohol content of .05 percent, research by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) has found. The NSF studies also show that after 24 hours awake, cognitive impairment is similar to a blood alcohol content of 0.10 percent – higher than the legal limit in the U.S.

Two out of every five drivers admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel at some point, research by the American Automobile Foundation shows, with one in ten drivers saying they have done so in the past year. More than a quarter of those surveyed said they continued to drive even though they had difficulty keeping their eyes open.

“The only safe driver is an alert driver,” Farrow said. “We ask all California drivers to be alert, awake, and prevent crashes.”

The NSF recommends that individuals aged 18-64 get seven to nine hours of sleep a night. Stimulants like coffee, energy drinks, and lights from electronic devices all may interfere with natural sleep/wake cycles.

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest levels of

Safety, Service, and Security to the people of California.

*Janelle Fallen Dunham works for the California Highway Patrol.*

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## **Opinion: A better plan for the Stateline area**

**Publisher's note:** *This first ran in the March 2016 issue of the Tahoe Mountain News and is reprinted with permission.*

**By Taylor Flynn**

I'll come right out and say it. I'm opposed to the loop road.

But it's not because I'm a naysayer – it's because I'm an optimist.



Taylor Flynn

It's because I think there are better solutions for our community and for Lake Tahoe.

But before I get to the answers, let me first hit on a few points where I believe the loop road proposal falls short.

For one, I don't think the Powers That Be are being forthcoming about development plans involving open space tied to the loop road, especially the Edgewood Mountain property

that I discussed last month.

Another is that the loop road would essentially barricade the mountain from the town with a fast-moving, noisy, four-lane freeway. This, at a time when we are trying to enhance recreation and connect our town to the outdoors with the Van Sickle Campground, hiking trails and other recreational activities up on Heavenly.

Third, as we all know, there are huge obstacles and problems associated with putting a freeway through a residential neighborhood: lost housing, lost property tax revenue, eminent domain, traffic impacts to Pioneer Trail and negative impacts to the remaining neighborhood.

Fourth, loop roads tend to work in directing traffic around aesthetically pleasing, mostly older, charming and often historic downtowns like Livermore. Frankly, I don't see the Stateline casino corridor ever being, well... charming. Rather, I see a narrow wind tunnel surrounded by concrete and glass high rises. Not exactly our best asset.

Most importantly, the loop road proposal is not something that comes from the heart of our town. It did not come about as a collaborative effort with our community rising up and saying, "This is what we want and need." Rather, it's a "top down" idea that was sprung on us and was almost a done deal, back-door style, when the Mountain News blew the whistle on that process back in 2012.

OK, now the good stuff. Here are my solutions to all things loop road.

### **"Lake Tahoe Village"**

One of the main problems with the South Shore is the major lack of public access to Lake Tahoe.

So, as long as we're going to dream about a tourist core

that's truly walkable and bikable to the lake, why not do it right and put it closer to the lake?

Let's establish a "village" centered around that totally underutilized block of turf right across the street from Lake Tahoe along Lakeshore Drive.

We could maintain the open space as the village plaza, and have a retail and restaurant district right on the lake.

Whereas Heavenly Village is a retail center tied to the gondola and the mountain, this would provide a second village tied to the lake.

There's got to be a way to take down the stupid fence along the beach and open up the waterfront to the public. We could even revamp the playground into something wonderful and attractive for families. If you've ever been to Dennis the Menace Park in Monterey, you will understand what dreaming is really about.

What's cool is that this "in-fill development" would be totally within the confines of the already established urban boundary and would instantly revitalize the "quad" motel district back there – perhaps Tahoe's most blighted area.

And while you might have to remove a handful of old motels, it would be far better than using eminent domain to take over upwards of nearly 100 homes under the loop road proposal.

## **Housing**

One of the elements of the loop road proposal that the Tahoe Regional Young Professionals say they are most attracted to is the prospect of affordable housing. The Tahoe Prosperity Center has also identified the affordable housing problem, but is groping for answers.

The TTD admits that it has no funding for this in the loop road proposal, and the affordable housing they allude to is

big, developer-built and government-subsidized apartment complexes. Not exactly the American Dream.

Here's a better solution that communities elsewhere have used to satisfy their low-income housing needs while also benefitting the middle class.

Allow single family homes in Tahoe to establish "granny units." What this would do is basically allow legal duplexes on single-family lots that have enough land coverage.

With the prospect of added rental income, buying a home in Tahoe would become much more affordable for families who want stay and live here.

Meanwhile, the "granny units" would act as affordable housing units for ski resort employees, college students, service industry workers and others (including grandmothers!).

The coolest part about this is that it would act as a kind of immersion program (think Bijou School) to bring otherwise transient or culturally isolated residents into the fold of Tahoe's middle class neighborhoods.

To me, this is much better than cordoning off poor people into institutional housing projects where kids are forced to play along busy roads, or worse, along four-lane highways.

## **Marketing**

This winter, we have all dealt with the frustration of heavy skier traffic leaving on Sunday afternoons.

The problem, of course, is that there is just too much volume at pinch points in Meyers, Pioneer Trail and along Highway 50 over the mountains.

But rather than view this as a transportation problem, a better solution is to view it as marketing opportunity.

The Stateline casinos and Heavenly, in particular, could benefit while also improving their guest experience, by marketing to folks coming from the east rather than the west.

Think about it.

To the west, we have two-lane roads over the Sierra Nevada crest, but to the east, Highway 50 offers four lanes all the way to Carson City. And, with the new freeway currently under construction, there will soon be four lanes all the way to Reno.

As we know, Reno and the surrounding area is growing by leaps and bounds, what with the coming of the Tesla Factory, Apple and more; plus, we now have easier access to the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. Rather than view Reno as competition, we need to see Nevada's newfound affluence as an opportunity – as part of our customer base.

The idea is to trade some of our California visitors for those coming in from Nevada to create a better experience for all (including our own residents).

## **Transportation**

To me, Highway 50 through the casino corridor is exactly where it belongs – in a bustling urban environment.

Many businesses even use the roadway to their advantage, like Stateline Brewery where patrons – who want to see and be seen – dine outside along the road's edge.

I personally think a much better use of federal highway funds would be to improve pedestrian safety in the existing casino core. Rather than build a four-lane freeway between us and the mountain, and then have to build bridges over the freeway, we could simply use the money to construct pedestrian bridges over the existing roadway.

Truly, a better solution for all.

Well, there you have it. Those are my answers that I suspect will generate all kinds of naysaying from the very people who accuse others of being naysayers with no answers.

But if you notice, my answers are not about paving over paradise with a parking lot – or a freeway – but turning an existing parking lot into paradise.

*Taylor Flynn is publisher of the Tahoe Mountain News.*

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# Opinion: Loop road promises are a farce

By Jerome Evans

The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) has dressed up what has been known for years as the loop road project with terms such as “community revitalization”, “main street”, “gateway”, “walkability” and “affordable housing”, but it still makes no more sense than it did years ago. I believe it is time to separate fact from fantasy regarding this project.

**Fantasy:** The project is necessary to solve “the long-time problem of improving community traffic flow into and out of its most congested area...”. This was the original justification for the loop road when it was proposed back in the 1970s, and it appears to be the principal justification today (FAQ, TTD, not dated).

**Fact:** The most recent (2014) Caltrans data for traffic volume (average annual daily traffic or AADT) in this portion of Highway 50 indicate that traffic has declined by nearly 50 percent during the past two decades. And as early as 2007,

“peak hour operations” were found to be “generally acceptable” (Project Study Report, p.9) The traffic congestion that may have once justified diversion no longer exists.

Traffic volume projections for 2035 produced by the project-engineering firm Wood Rogers Inc. in 2010 to justify the project – an increase of more than 90 percent – are without adequate explanation or plausibility. They do, however, serve the interests of the project engineer.

**Fantasy:** The project will convert Highway 50 into a “main street” similar to the central shopping streets to be found in Livermore, Sutter Creek, and Lancaster.

**Fact:** The portion of Highway 50 proposed to become a “local Main Street downtown core” is that portion from Stateline Avenue to Lake Parkway, a stretch of highway now bordered by five casinos, their driveways and their parking lots. (A Transportation Project Evolves, TTD, 12/2015) Why would pedestrians want to walk by the walled-off casinos and their parking lots? This segment of highway 50 does not and never will look like the “main streets” of towns with several tree-lined blocks of two-story, close-to-the-street shops and cafes.

According to the 2013 economic report by Economic & Planning Systems (ECS), “... some of the larger casino structures themselves present a barrier of the built environment that is not necessarily welcoming to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized users.” To make this into a “main street” would require a redevelopment project that staggers the imagination.

**Fantasy:** The project will create “a more pedestrian friendly local street experience in the commercial core”. (FAQ, TTD, undated)

**Fact:** Isn't that what the ongoing redevelopment project, Redevelopment Project 3, was expected to provide? Has it been

a failure in this respect? On the California side, there is only a short stretch on the lake side of the roadway that was not included in that redevelopment. Is it this short stretch that is to provide “a more pedestrian friendly local street experience”?

**Fantasy:** The project will “help revitalize local business health.” (FAQ, TTD, undated)

**Fact:** This, again, was and is the objective of the ongoing redevelopment project. And according to the economic analysis of ECS, the Village Center is “a very successful shopping center that enjoys considerable patronage, low vacancy, and is an established and popular shopping destination for both local residents and visitors to the South Shore.” Much the same was reported for Heavenly Village.” So why is “revitalization” needed?

It should be noted that the economic report also stated that any economic benefit is dependent upon a long list of resort area “best practices” that are not envisioned in the project as it has been proposed to date. (EPS, pp.47-48)

It should also be noted that the same economic analysis stated that “spending among local residents ... could very conservatively increase by 5 to 10 percent as the Stateline area ... is able to capture market share within the South Shore and nearby areas.” Tell that to merchants elsewhere in South Lake Tahoe who are just hanging on by their fingernails.

**Fantasy:** The project “offers the potential of renovating properties on the city’s redevelopment list to provide some of the necessary housing for impacted tenants, thereby providing better housing.” (FAQ, TTD, undated)

**Fact:** The vagueness of this claim belies TTD’s lack of experience in housing development and the uncertainty as to whether private developers will be willing to invest in an area that has been losing population for years. The assertion

that there will be public/private participation in relocating residents and businesses does not answer questions about the impact of the project on affected residents and businesses.

**Fantasy:** According to the TTD FAQ sheet, "The estimated cost of the project is \$70 million." An earlier (2010) estimate by Wood Rogers was \$65 million to \$85 million depending on the alternative selected, and not including the cost of redesigning the roadway from Pioneer Trail to Kingsbury Grade. TTD District Manager Carl Hasty used the figure of \$80 million at the Feb. 10 question and answer session.

**Fact:** Following the Feb. 10 meeting, I asked Mr. Hasty if TTD had a cost estimate for the project. His reply was, "I wish we did." Absent an independent cost estimate covering all elements of the project, one can only guess that it will be much greater than \$70-\$80 million. Moreover, absent a reliable cost estimate, how can we give credence to Hasty's recent statement that, "We are not looking to the city of South Lake Tahoe to finance this project"?

With all this fantasy surrounding the project, it is clear that the South Lake Tahoe City Council should not, cannot, give its approval. Does anyone this side of Stateline believe it should have the same priority with respect to our city's very limited resources as such projects as completion of Lakeside Commons, the renovation of Regan Park & Beach, the restoration of the Upper Truckee Marsh, and further development of our bike trail system?

Haven't we done enough for the Stateline area? Don't we need to focus attention on the rest of our town?

Finally, I should say that I have no financial interest in the loop road project, one way or another, save as a city, state and federal taxpayer.

*Jerome Evans is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.*

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# Opinion: Why is it so hard to serve healthy food in schools?

By Katie Arnold, *Outside*

The other morning my 5-year-old daughter begged me to let her buy lunch at school. I typically pack her and her 7-year-old sister an almond-butter sandwich, carrot sticks, and a sliced apple, but we'd gotten a late start to the day and my husband and I were chasing them around with hairbrushes and reminding them for the eighth time to put on their socks and shoes. I looked at the clock and did the math: I could hustle and make the five-year-old lunch, or we could bike to school. Easy choice: we rode bikes, and she got beef tostadas at school.

Our mornings would certainly be smoother without making lunch everyday.

It's not a question of cost—at \$2.50 a pop, the lunches at our public elementary school are affordable. It's matter of nutrition.

Every time I look at the menu, I have to wonder: If food is fuel for our bodies and brains, and kids are in school to exercise both, why aren't school lunches healthier?

**Read the whole story**