

Community plans designed to be blueprint for basin

By Kathryn Reed

Paperwork and meetings seem to be synonymous with government. No wonder people tune out and get discouraged. Action and accomplishments seldom seem to be part of the equation.

Finding an answer for the need for 15 community plans throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin is easy – it's a requirement of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. The bi-state agency has it as a must do in its myriad requirements.

"It is a guiding principle," TRPA spokeswoman Julie Regan said of community plans.

Chapter 14 – Community Plans in the TRPA's Code of Ordinances is 18 pages. The first page says, "The goal of the TRPA is to have all community plans completed by Dec. 1, 1989."

The Tahoe Valley Plan, aka Y Community Plan, has had several hiccups. The latest incarnation will be before the South Lake Tahoe City Council Sept. 15. Homewood kind of has a plan. It is tied to Placer County's General Plan.

As TRPA finalizes its regional, changes affecting community plans will be made. The 20-year regional plan is expected to be before the Governing Board in late 2010.

During a series of placed based planning meetings in 2006, input was sought from locals about what they want their community to look like and how this would meld with the entire basin. Pathways is supposed to reflect those opinions.

"(Community plans) are a tool to revitalize these different areas without them turning out to be all the same," said Teri Jamin before retiring this summer as South Lake Tahoe's

community development director. "The process is not one size fits all."

Height, coverage and density restrictions placed on development by TRPA's current set of rules prove to be stumbling blocks for some looking to improve their property, according to Jamin.

TRPA's desire to blend living and working components of a municipality, where the bottom level could be shops and the top housing, is an indication of change.

"You want to make sure you are using the best available science and technology and information to achieve your goals," Regan said. "The current regional plan has not proved to be very flexible. Right now the current zoning is not really conducive to the density standards of mixed use."

Even though most of the community plans have been completed, not all have been implemented. Part of this has to do with a substantial number of property owners living outside the basin. Community plans are visions, not mandates – so nothing has to get done except for the paperwork.

The community plans around the lake include:

Stateline-Ski Run

Bijou-Al Tahoe

Tahoe Valley-Y

Y Industrial

Meyers

Kingsbury Grade

Round Hill

Stateline

Incline Village has three plans

Tahoe City

Carnelian Bay

Kings Beach

Kings Beach Industrial

Tahoe Vista

Homewood