Ire over proposed Tahoe ridgeline development



This ridgeline located in Carnelian Bay is what East West wants to develop.

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – Developing 112 acres of pristine ridgeline in Lake Tahoe is drawing the wrath of many North Lake Tahoe residents and environmental groups. Even the Placer County supervisor who represents the area has questions.

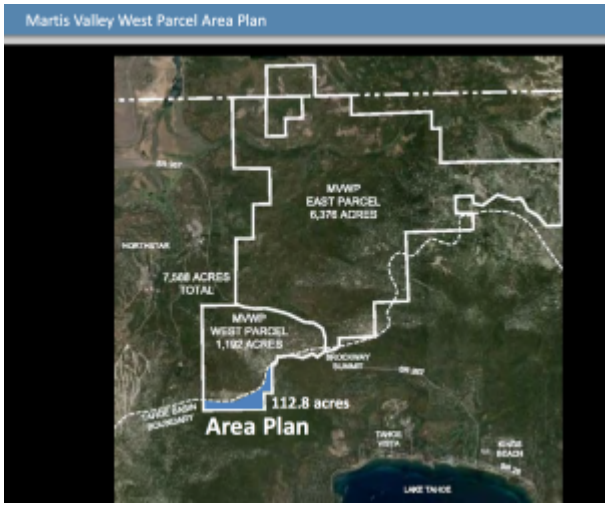
“I’m struggling with how the Lake Tahoe piece is consistent with the Regional Plan,” Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery said at the Oct. 21 board meeting. She asked for staff to explain it at a later date.

Paul Thompson with the Community Development Resource Agency on Tuesday gave supervisors an update on several Lake Tahoe projects. His request of the packed audience at the North Tahoe Events Center to not comment on the Martis Valley project was met with grumbles. He wanted comments to wait until the environmental documents are released.

Seven people voiced their outrage with the project, including

representatives of the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Friends of the West Shore and the Mother Lode Chapter of the Sierra Club. Many at the meeting were wearing “Stop Martis Valley West” stickers.

East West Partners, which developed the Village at Northstar and Lake Tahoe Ritz-Carlton, is proposing to build housing on both sides of Highway 267 — some of which is in the basin and some in the Martis Valley.



“The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s most recent Regional Plan update states that new and redevelopment should be concentrated in urban town centers — areas that already have services such as schools, hospitals, banks, retail stores, and so on, plus infrastructure such as roads, sewer, water, and utilities,” said Ellie Waller, who was speaking on behalf of several people at the meeting. “Building on undeveloped forest land miles from any services is in direct contradiction of the Regional Plan. The negative effects are far reaching and will impact everyone who lives, works, or visits, Lake Tahoe.”

Others repeated that sentiment; each time it was followed by applause.

County officials pointed out that anyone could propose any project.

The environmental documents are where concerns will be

ferreted out. But many opponents believe it will be a waste of taxpayer money and staff time to go through the environmental impact statement and environmental impact report process when the project doesn’t meet Tahoe Regional Planning Agency rules.

Opponents plan to be at today’s TRPA meeting to speak out about the Martis Valley proposal during public comment.

East West wants to build 760 residential units in the form of single-family homes, townhomes, cabins and condominiums. More than 6½ acres would be used for commercial. To make this happen acreage between the east and west parcels needs to be rezoned.

That is what has people upset because it would mean building on what is now a forested ridge in Lake Tahoe. Opponents believe it would be precedent setting in a negative way.

The west parcel is approximately 1,185 acres adjacent to Northstar. The east parcel is approximately 6,376 acres, of which 660 acres are zoned for residential and commercial development.

Today, the east parcel can have 1,360 residential units and 6.6 acres of commercial. East West wants to rezone 775 acres of timberland production on the west parcel to allow for the development. The 660-acres of the east zoned for development would be rezoned forest.

The end result is for no development on the east side and 600 fewer residential units fewer than currently allowed.