

TTD becoming agent for affordable housing



The environmental document for the loop road is looking at affordable housing going in where these businesses are located. Photo/LTN file

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories about affordable housing in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region. All articles may be accessed via the home page under Special Projects, 2017 Affordable Housing.*

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By Kathryn Reed

Transit oriented development – it's the latest buzz phrase in the basin. Simply put, it means creating commercial and residential areas that are walkable-bikeable and have easy access to public transportation.

At today's Tahoe Transportation District meeting the board

will hear a presentation about how housing ties into the proposed loop road project.

The district has identified 78 residential units in South Lake Tahoe that would have to be leveled if and when Highway 50 is rerouted behind Harrah's and MontBleu. Fifty-five of those units fit the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's definition of needing to be deed restricted based on low income criteria. Finding the right mix for the remaining 23 is still in the discussion phase.

TTD has pledged to not have any decrease in housing stock because of the highway project. The bi-state agency has also expressed interest in creating more housing than what it removes.



In the loop road's environmental document, which will be released this month, three locations were studied for where affordable housing could be located. Affordable in this case goes beyond the legal income based definition.

"When it comes to workforce housing, this is primary housing, and what supports and engages a transit system," Carl Hasty, TTD chief, told *Lake Tahoe News*. This would be multi-family housing – apartments, townhomes – no single family residences. And not second homes or vacation rentals.

Hasty has been contacted by three potential developers about affordable housing. But before those projects can be talked about in any seriousness, the highway project needs to have a preferred alternative and be green-lighted.

The three areas the environmental impact statement looked at include: the triangle area where the Naked Fish and Bottle

Shop are located; directly across the street from there; and the strip of land behind Raley's at Stateline behind the center and paralleling what would be Highway 50.

This latter area has been talked about by Terry Hackett, the center's owner, as a potential location for senior housing. Parking could be underneath, with a couple floors of housing above it.

However, Mike McKeen who owns the Naked Fish-Powder House building told *Lake Tahoe News*, "Low income housing at our property will never happen. I would only be open to condos like the Zalanta project."

The environmental document is exploring density, commercial floor area constraints and other factors.

Hasty has received a letter of interest by a developer who would like to build 142 units on land that is being studied in the EIS.

"The concept they are suggesting to me is something that we should take a look at," Hasty said. "I first need a decision about (the highway) project."

TTD is working with other entities on the housing issue. With TRPA, the city and Douglas County, the plan is to send out a request for proposal seeking "an experienced person or firm to assist the group in addressing housing needs through eligible projects and act as a bridge between the public agencies and the private sector development community."

Tom Lotshaw, spokesman for Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "Major projects like the proposed Highway 50 project are one place where we can work together to make sure housing improvements are incorporated and a benefit of the final project. These types of transformative transportation projects are a great opportunity to improve not only our transportation system, but to incorporate elements

that improve housing options, spur community revitalization and mixed-use redevelopment, and improve the environment.”

Another player in all of this housing talk is the California Tahoe Conservancy. It has several parcels that staff and the board have earmarked to sell. All are located in the Tahoe Valley Area Plan. Here is the CTC land map.

“We are now exploring, among other options, whether we should partner with TTD in soliciting interest from developers to provide housing and/or mixed uses on these parcels,” Patrick Wright, CTC executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

One area the TTD is eyeing is acreage on Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Tata Lane that CTC owns. Hasty has been approached about a 120-unit development there.

The cost to relocate the displaced residents in the highway realignment project will be incurred by TTD.

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Notes:

- TTD meeting is April 14 at 8:30am, TRPA offices, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- The Douglas County commissioners will hear a presentation from Hasty on April 20 about TTD’s role in housing and how the county can be a partner.
- A similar discussion will occur at the May 2 South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.