

# Placer County on path to build affordable housing

Placer County supervisors this week agreed to take steps to purchase an 11-acre plot near Dollar Hill for \$3.6 million that could be developed into affordable housing.

The property, located on North Lake Boulevard just northeast of Tahoe City, was previously approved for a mixed-use housing and retail development and retains its development rights for residential and commercial use. Its expired permit approved 128 housing units – 78 affordable apartments for seniors and 50 market-rate units – as well as 4,800 square feet for commercial use. Dollar Hill offers an ideal site for achievable housing, with easy access to TART bus routes, schools, North Lake Tahoe's downtown centers of Tahoe City and Kings Beach and the Dollar Hill Trail.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has also designated it a "preferred affordable housing area," which could make it eligible for more units than zoning density would otherwise allow.

A recent study by Beacon Economics commissioned by the county's Economic Development Office showed that while local housing prices are increasing at a rate slightly lower than elsewhere in California, median local wages are actually decreasing, worsening the problem.

Under the terms approved this week the county would pay a \$50,000 refundable deposit, with a 120-day investigation period to explore the feasibility of a workforce housing project, find a housing developer to build it and secure funding for the land purchase. The county may exercise up to three three-month extensions to complete its investigations, with an additional \$20,000 deposit for each. All deposits

would be applied to the final sale price if the county buys the land.

Funding for the purchase could come from a variety of sources including the Placer County Housing Trust Fund, transient occupancy tax revenue and possibly local partner agencies and philanthropists. The Tahoe Truckee Airport District Board of Directors is expected to vote on a proposal to allocate \$500,000 toward the purchase.