

Urbanization of Tahoe may be its downfall

By Rochelle Nason

Tahoe is on the verge of changes that will affect it for generations to come. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is deciding the ground rules for how to develop Tahoe for the next 20 years. The most disturbing proposal is to require taller buildings and higher density on more than 800 acres across the lake, in the name of "smart growth."

Yes, get ready for TRPA's new refrain: "Build, baby, build."



Rochelle Nason

Under the new plan, Tahoe could become unrecognizable to so many who love it: dozens of towering new resorts and subdivisions, more traffic, more pavement, more commercial space, and more luxury timeshares and condos.

TRPA accuses doubters of a "do nothing" approach. Let's be real: We all want walkable, bikeable and accessible communities. We all want less traffic. We all seek to eliminate blight and nurture vibrant communities with beautiful views. Responsible redevelopment can be a true win win for everyone.

However, we do not have to urbanize Lake Tahoe to achieve those goals. In California and Nevada, there are many

communities with compact, two-story town centers that provide mixed use and preserve scenic views. But TRPA proposes six- to four-story buildings along most of Tahoe's main roadways, and developers are already saying that is not enough.

"Yes" versus "No"

The League to Save Lake Tahoe agrees with the TRPA that "just say no" is an outdated mentality. We supported the first big redevelopment projects at the lake over a decade ago, the Embassy Suites in South Shore and the timeshare resort at the foot of Ski Run. We also supported the Heavenly Gondola and Village for traffic reduction. These projects made sense because they transferred development from sensitive lands to the already highly-dense casino corridor, and created true open space in the process. We have also deferred to communities when it comes to economic development. For example, we set aside our multiple objections to the airport master plan and the convention center that form the city of South Lake Tahoe's vision for its future.

So, "just say no" has been on its way out for a while. However, "just say yes" can also be precarious. TRPA has "just said yes" to a string of projects that set dangerous precedents for irresponsible development in Tahoe. In the absence of checks and balances within the agency, communities are forced to seek the last-resort option of litigation.

These projects make it clear that Tahoe needs a strong environmental watchdog. TRPA "just said yes" to a timeshare project at Sandy Beach campground using excess and incorrect coverage. The League and community successfully fought to reduce the coverage by a third. The Burke Creek project is another example. TRPA "just said yes" to a developer who didn't want to count driveways as coverage, while this is a rule for all other property owners. Furthermore, the agency "just said yes" to new lakeshore development that will allow 62,000 more boat trips per year, while existing boat traffic

is contributing to pollution violations today.

Cooperation critical

The real question is: Why is the TRPA suddenly unable to put forth projects that are palatable to those outside the development community?

The League to Save Lake Tahoe boasts a 53-year history of offering constructive critique and alternative solutions to Tahoe's environmental challenges. And we often work with diverse interests to do so. For example, 15 years ago, the League initiated the effort to advocate for public funds for Tahoe. Since then, in partnership with the business community, we have secured hundreds of millions of dollars for environmental restoration here.

For this regional plan, the League seeks responsible redevelopment that concentrates on built areas instead of raw land. We seek height limits that protect Tahoe's scenic beauty. We support density changes that reduce traffic into and within Tahoe, and that acknowledge Tahoe's unique driving and living patterns. We seek plans that allow low-impact recreationists to enjoy Tahoe. We have long pushed for a near-shore clarity standard so beachgoers don't have to wade through wads of algae. We seek ongoing community-based planning so that communities aren't caught off-guard by specific projects. Finally, Tahoe needs a basinwide analysis of just how much pollution, vehicles, boats, and high-impact activities the lake can sustain before it is loved to death.

"Smart growth" is an excellent strategy for urbanized areas, where growth is inevitable. But it is not smart to apply it to Tahoe, a sensitive area that is threatened by growth and overuse.

Tahoe is at a critical juncture. We have common enemies we can unite against: fine sediment, invasive species, pollution, traffic, climate change, and overdevelopment. We must

cooperate to find scientifically sound solutions. If we do not, the biggest loser will be Tahoe.

When Congress approved the creation of an agency to protect Lake Tahoe, “build baby build” was not among its recommended strategies. To the contrary, it recognized urbanization as the problem and not the cure.

Please visit us at KeepTahoeBlue.org.

Rochelle Nason is executive director of the Leagues to Save Lake Tahoe.

Barton thankful for successful health day

To the community,

Thank you seems so small for the tremendous effort you all contributed to the second annual “Latino Family Health Day, Everyone is Invited” event, which took place at Bijou School on May 26. Barton Health extends a huge thank you to everyone who made this family health day an enormous success – we simply couldn’t have done it without you.

We at Barton appreciate your time, talents and commitment to helping keep every one in our community healthy, one person at a time. Our family health day offered nearly 30 free medical screenings and health related information booths to approximately 475 locals of all nationalities.

Your support and partnership in this vital health screening day is extremely important to our community and we offer our sincerest gratitude. Our appreciation goes to:

Optimist Club of South Lake Tahoe

Soroptimist International of the Tahoe Sierra

Barton Foundation

Tahoe Family Resource Center

Latino Affairs Commission

LT Unified School District

El Dorado County Public Health Department

El Dorado Public Library

South Lake Tahoe Women's Center

Dr. Jenifer Norris of Alpine Family Practice

Dairy Council of California

Safeway, South Lake Tahoe

Choices for Children

Embassy Suites & Echo Restaurant

South Tahoe Public Utility District

Bayer & CCS Medical

Kahle Community Center

Worth & Naccarato Chiropractic

Tahoe Youth & Family Services

Planned Parenthood

City of South Lake Tahoe

CalStar

HOPE & AVID volunteers

Tahoe Daily Tribune

Barton Health departments that participated include Public Relations, Community Clinic, Barton Family Medicine, Laboratory, Home Health & Hospice, Occupational Medicine, Engineering & Housekeeping, Auxiliary and Barton Mountain Café.

We truly hope that you had as much fun as we did in providing these vital services to our locals.

Sincerely,

Denise Sloan Smart, communications specialist for Barton Health

Memorial Day – a time to reflect, a time to say thank you



Lake Tahoe News would like to salute all the men and women who have died fighting for the United States of America.

You are what Memorial Day is all about.

Thank you for making the ultimate sacrifice.

Looking to put locals first



Publisher's note: *This message went out to all employees on May 26 asking for their comments. It is reprinted with permission.*

Good Afternoon:

The city has an existing policy of the council to give preference to qualified local vendors of service in our procurement. We are proud of this fact. We are examining a proposal made by our Carpenter's local to set specific preferences in the award of contracts in regard to local hiring.

The issue undoubtedly will be in this case whether the funds are federal, state or local funds. Different standards apply depending on the color of money, but I am very interested in what the city attorney comes up with. I hope that we can provide preferences in major construction contracts and put our own people back to work.

In a time when many people in our community are suffering under the pressures of a continuing slower economy, business is hurting, people are out of work not just here but in our nation, is there any merit to the idea of establishing a city policy that gives preference under certain defined guidelines for products that are made or assembled in the United States. I have nothing against foreign made products, but in these times, is there something reasonable our local government can do to promote purchase of American made and/or assembled

products? Maybe if there was more consumer demand for American made products, there would be more American made products.

No, I wish no ill on our foreign friends and vendors. I just think we need to take care of our folks first.

Any comments and observations in this regard? What is the upside and what is the down side of proposing a policy like this one to the City Council? Are their secondary negative or positive benefits should such a policy be put in place.

I welcome ideas and comments from you.

Dave Jinkens, South Lake Tahoe city manager

Digital mammograms makes viewing easier for docs

By Jeffery Behar

It's time for your annual mammogram, and you've just learned that you're going to have a digital one.

If you've never had a digital mammogram, you might be wondering, "What's the difference between it and a more traditional film mammogram?"



Jeffery Behar

Both use X-rays to capture images of the breasts. And yes, your breasts still have to be compressed for a digital mammogram – there's no escaping that part of the procedure. But Barton has the MammoPad which makes compression much more comfortable.

The difference between film and digital is how those images are recorded and stored. A traditional mammogram displays images on a large piece of film.

A radiologist studies the film for any suspicious looking areas in the breasts.

A digital mammogram, on the other hand, converts X-rays into electrical signals that are sent to a computer. The images that are produced can be enhanced, magnified or manipulated on a computer screen, which can help the radiologist see specific areas of the breasts more clearly.

The images also can be stored electronically and transmitted from one location to another, allowing breast specialists in different locations to study them.

A digital mammogram also takes less time to perform, which in turn shortens the amount of discomfort time.

Is digital better?

The earlier breast cancer can be found, the better the chances that treatment will work. Both digital and film mammograms can often detect breast cancer at an early stage.

However digital mammography is better than film mammography at finding cancers in:

- Women with dense breasts. About 40 percent of women who undergo screening mammography have dense breasts.
- Women younger than 50, regardless of breast density.

- Women who had their final menstrual periods within 12 months of their mammograms.

When should I be screened?

Most experts agree: Regular screening with either digital or film mammography saves lives.

The American Cancer Society recommends that you get a mammogram once a year beginning at age 40 and every year after that as long as you're in good health.

If you're at high risk of breast cancer because of a family history of the disease or other factors, your doctor may recommend that you be tested more often and at an earlier age.

Stateline Mammography has merged with the Mammography Department at Barton Memorial Hospital. Digital mammograms with the warmer, softer MammoPad are available at Barton Memorial Hospital. Call (530) 543.5851 for your appointment.

Jeffery Behar is a radiologist at Barton Memorial Hospital.

Ideals of South Tahoe's next city manager

To the community,

Tuesday night at the Rec Center, a group of local citizens met to discuss the qualities they want to see in our next city manager. Here are some of the comments.

1. Most important, we need a city manager who can build positive working relationships with groups like TRPA, the

county, the state, our neighboring counties, Nevada, Lahontan, the Forest Service, CTC, the public utilities, local businesses, non-local businesses and the local citizens. Once these constructive bonds are formed, it will be easier for Tahoe to grow and prosper. And we will have a more powerful voice. For example, we will be able to go to Washington, D.C., as a group and ask for the \$100 million needed to fix our streets.

2. We need a city manager with vision. Someone who can see that Tahoe is not like any other city in the world. Hopefully, this new manager will come from a community with similar governmental and environmental demands, like a community on the California coast.

3. There was some discussion about the differences between people with corporate backgrounds verses civil service backgrounds. Corporate people thrive on reaching solutions that benefit all parties at the table. They know how to strike deals that satisfy people on both sides of an issue. And someone who knows how to promote the beauty of the lake and the High Sierra.

4. Someone who is enthusiastic about making Tahoe 100 percent sustainable.

5. Someone who think "out of the box".

6. Someone who is not afraid to be criticized.

Ernie Claudio, South Lake Tahoe

Keeping creativity alive in youngsters

By Vicki Barber

I just watched the movie “Avatar” and I have friends telling me I should be watching the TV show “Glee”. I love to visit art museums when I’m traveling, although I’m certainly not one who can draw a straight line without a ruler. I’m as left brained a thinker and doer as most education administrators, yet part of my job is to foster those who can create, build, and provide the arts, music, and drama that so appeal to the right side of our ever active brains.

With so many of our schools cutting back on “frills” these days because of funds and increased academic pressures, where do we find the support for those children whose talents lie in the creative arts? In El Dorado County since 1958, it’s been at Sugarloaf Fine Arts Camp. It wasn’t always called Sugarloaf and it wasn’t always at the Sly Park Environmental Education Center, but the 52-year-old summer camp has always had the express purpose of allowing students to explore the arts and their own abilities to express those arts.



Vicki Barber

A child started somewhere to dream up the visual graphics from Avatar. Somewhere there was permission and encouragement to go beyond the boundaries of what we know every day. That permission created a science fiction planet filled with eight

foot tall creatures with vibrant colors, yellow eyes, cat-like ears, and very long tails whose hair braid ends connect with the other living species on the planet as well as the vibrancy of the life force itself. That's not textbook "stuff." That's imagination and vision.

A child started somewhere to create music, sing, dance, and be in the Glee Club. How do they hit notes like that? When the rest of us may be afraid to dance or sing, or, even worse, be different in front of others, for some young people creating music is like breathing. If they didn't do it, they'd suffocate. So where do they have the opportunity to try out their wings?

Leonardo da Vinci said, "There are three classes of people: those who see, those who see when they are shown, those who do not see." A picture is worth a thousand words. Sometimes art expresses what we can't even find the words to say. Da Vinci was once a child. The entire world is grateful he found a way to express his art for the rest of us to enjoy. There are children like da Vinci today who are ready to express the art that the rest of us want to see.

So Sugarloaf Fine Arts Camp has existed for its 52 years to encourage middle school and high school students to find out what they can do in music, theater, photography, and dance. Each year students explore the boundaries of their favorite creative expression. Who knows what's beyond "Avatar" or who's our next American Idol? Perhaps an even better discovery may be one who can find a way to paint a landscape to go over a fireplace in grandpa's house just because it feels good to do it.

You can find information about Sugarloaf Fine Arts Camp [here](#).

Vicki Barber is superintendent of El Dorado County Office of Education.

Rallying support for Chelsea's Law

To the community,

In the continuing effort to better protect California's children from violent sexual predators, I want to urge you to take part in the Chelsea's Law Petition Drive.

Chelsea's Law, which you can read about in detail [here](#), is a bill pending before the Legislature. It was named after San Diego teenager Chelsea King, whose life was tragically taken by a convicted sex offender earlier this year.



Ted Gaines

The initial goal of the Chelsea's Law Petition Drive is to collect 20,000 signatures from across the state. The signed petitions will ultimately be presented to the Legislature as official testimony in support of the bill.

To express your support for this critical measure which will go a long way toward reforming California's sex offender laws, please print out this petition and circulate it among your family and friends. The petition can be downloaded [here](#) and mailed to:

Attention 75th Assembly District

9909 Mira Mesa Blvd., Ste. 130

San Diego, CA 92131

Please return completed petitions by June 10.

Just think – if each of us commits to asking 10 of our friends and neighbors to sign the petition, we can truly demonstrate that we are serious about making changes to protect children from violent sexual predators.

We still have some convincing to do in the Legislature before we can make Chelsea's Law a reality, so we really need your support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ted Gaines, California Assembly 4th District

Odyssey of Mind team thankful for money to travel

To the community,

The Odyssey of the Mind team met its fund-raising goal of \$4,000. Thanks to everyone who supported our team including the local service clubs and local businesses which supported our fund-raising nights.

The team is composed of Darcy Daly, Kale Spina, Jessie Brown and Zoe Greco. They will be traveling to Michigan State on May 26 and return May 30. They will be partnered during the trip with a team from Singapore.

We are proud of their accomplishments and their hard work to

make this trip possible.

Ryan Galles, principal Sierra House Elementary School

Support for Luca for sheriff

Dear to publisher,

I have read with interest many of the "Letters to the Editor" concerning the race for sheriff of El Dorado County.

Most voters desire a positive campaign, but there are many who only speak negatively of their candidate's opponents. We think all six candidates are qualified to run the sheriff's department and would not have the backing of their supporters if they were not people of good character.

We do, however, feel Bob Luca's education, experience and qualifications make him the best candidate. He was the chief of the California Bureau of Information and as such supervised a staff much larger than the sheriff's department. He developed the worldwide security department for E-Trade; again heading a staff larger than the sheriff's department. His wide experience with budgets gives Bob the tools he needs in order to deal with these difficult economic times. He has done it before. In addition he has extensive "street" experience as well having worked undercover fighting gangs and drugs.

Bob has traveled throughout the county in a variety of venues, including walking neighborhoods, meeting with citizens and listening to their concerns and ideas. One concern always stands out; they want a sheriff who will lead a department that addresses the new problems that our County is facing. They want new ideas and innovative programs. Bob Luca will

fulfill the voter's hopes for the Department.

Bob believes the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department needs new direction and leadership. We and many others agree with him. He has the support of more law enforcement officials, both in the county and throughout the region than all the other candidates combined. In addition, Bob has more support from the deputies in the Department than all the other candidates. They all know Bob Luca is the right man for the job of sheriff of El Dorado County.

Thank you for your coverage of this important race.

Joe and Marilyn Whiten, El Dorado Hills

P.S. Mr. Luca has declared that he will not accept a pension for the County if he is elected. Now, there is an excellent example of cost cutting and leading by example.