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Newsletter: June/July 2016

Public participation is making a difference, but we aren't done yet!

Public participation in our planning processes does matter and *can* have an impact, even though it may feel very discouraging sometimes. As our economy recovers, we once again find the Tahoe Basin threatened with massive developments. But communities are rallying together to have a say in the future of our area, and our local representatives appear to be listening:

- On May 12, the North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council (NTRAC) [did not recommend](#) approval of the proposed Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan, instead recommending more time be taken to review the final environmental documents and noting several concerns about the project's impacts.
- On May 26, the Squaw Valley Municipal Advisory Council (SV MAC) [recommended](#) the proposed Village at Squaw Valley project be denied, and a reduced size alternative considered after adequate environmental analysis has been performed.
- On June 9, the Placer County Planning Commission [continued their hearing](#) on the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan in order to consider lingering community concerns, including traffic impacts to SR 267, public safety concerns (e.g. impacts to SR 267 as an emergency evacuation route), and impacts to Lake Tahoe.



Over 200 people attended the June 9 Planning Commission hearing regarding the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan.

In all cases, without public participation, these representative boards may have simply followed staff's recommendations to support these projects. Although the push for these large developments continues, it is clear that community participation has encouraged local advisory bodies to take a step back and ask more questions. But we must continue to participate and speak up. The pressure to build massive new projects incompatible with our Tahoe communities and sensitive environment is high.

FOWS works diligently to keep you informed of plans and projects in our area and ensure you have a say in our area's future. On that note, if you belong to a Homeowners Association on the West Shore, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you and your neighbors as you gather for your annual HOA meetings this year. Please [contact us](#) for more information.

Sincerely,

Susan Gearhart
President, Friends of the West Shore

Mark your calendars!

This August, FOWS will be holding a fundraiser at [West Shore Pizza](#) in Tahoma, CA. Please plan to come join us for an opportunity to help out FOWS while enjoying great-tasting food and the opportunity to converse with neighbors and friends. (We are still figuring out the best date and will send you an Alert once it's set).



Regional and Local Planning Updates:

TRPA Regional Plan Update:

We are still waiting for a final decision from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals regarding our lawsuit on TRPA's Regional Plan Update. As reported in our last Newsletter, the [final hearing](#) for the FOWS and Sierra Club RPU lawsuit took place on April 12 (the full hearing can be viewed [online](#) and court documents are available on [FOWS website](#)). We will keep you apprised of any new information!

Placer County - Tahoe Basin Area Plan (TBAP):

The draft Environmental Impact Report/Study (DEIR/S) for the TBAP (which also includes the DEIR/S for the proposed [Tahoe City Lodge](#)) was [released for public review](#) on June 15th. Public comments are being accepted until August 15th. FOWS will continue to review the document for technical adequacy, representation of community interests, coverage of traffic, public health and safety, community character, and other issues that may affect the West Shore and North Tahoe region. The following list of public hearings has been recently provided. Once available, agendas and reports for TRPA meetings will be available [here](#).

- July 13 - TRPA Advisory Planning Commission (APC), Board Room, Stateline, Nevada.
- July 27 - TRPA Regional Plan Implementation Committee (RPIC), North Tahoe Event Center, Kings Beach, California.
- July 27 - TRPA Governing Board, North Tahoe Event Center, Kings Beach, California.
- July 28 - Placer County Planning Commission, North Tahoe Event Center, Kings Beach, California.
- August 11 - Placer County North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council, North Lake Tahoe Event Center, Kings Beach, California.

Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan (MVPSP):



Image from Save Tahoe Forests

Roughly 250 people attended the [June 9 Placer County Planning Commission hearing](#) for the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan (MVPSP) and over forty spoke during the three-hour long public comment period.

Concerns included increased traffic and impacts to a key evacuation route from the North Shore (SR 267), cumulative impacts (including the Brockway Campground), scenic, water quality, and other impacts to Lake Tahoe, inadequate environmental review, insufficient mitigation, and poor response to comments.

Although the [staff report](#) requested the Planning Commission recommend approval of the project, Commissioners questioned why no representatives from Caltrans and area fire departments

attended and/or spoke to concerns about the project, and then requested the item be continued to another hearing. Notably, the EIR concludes significant and unavoidable traffic impacts to SR 267.

The EIR also claims less-than-significant impacts to emergency evacuation, however only the project area is considered in this analysis - thus failing to account for impacts on the capacity of SR 267 to evacuate people from the Tahoe Basin. [References were made](#) to a County evacuation plan, however the County's plan does not address areas in the Tahoe Basin. Notably, a [court recently found that](#) " the [plan] speaks of evacuations in the sense of managing evacuations on existing roads. It does not speak of evacuation routes in the sense of assuring that roads have the capacity to evacuate residents and visitors safely."

A meeting will be held on [July 7th at 2 p.m.](#) to continue the hearing. FOWS submitted [additional comments](#) in response to new information included in the June 30th staff report. *We encourage you to attend!* The project was previously scheduled to be voted upon by the Board of Supervisors on July 25/26.

Project Updates:

Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Highway Realignment Project

Although no start date has been set, the Fanny Bridge project will begin construction [sometime after July 4th](#). This summer's work - phase 1 - will include the two-lane bypass through the USFS 64 acres lot and the installation of the two roundabouts at either end.

Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan:

On May 26, the Squaw Valley Municipal Advisory Council (SV MAC) voted to recommend that Placer County deny the proposed project. As many as 250 to 300 people attended, which a [county staff person called](#) "the largest Squaw Valley MAC meeting [he's] ever attended..." in his twenty years with Placer County. Although only twenty-four public comments were made, when a Sierra Watch representative asked those in the room who opposed the project to stand up, nearly the entire audience rose.

The SV MAC voted 3-1 to recommend Placer County deny the current proposal and that "serious consideration be given to the project at a level approximately 50% of what is currently proposed, subject to further research to support the conclusions previously reached in the draft EIR." At this time, the project is tentatively scheduled to be heard by the Placer County Planning Commission on July 28 and Board of Supervisors on August 9.

Alpine Meadows to Squaw Valley Base-to-Base Gondola:

The proposed Gondola would cut through the federally-designated Granite Chief Wilderness Area (GCWA). Although the actual structure would cross on privately-owned land within the Wilderness Area boundaries, FOWS and other organizations are concerned about the impacts the project will have on the adjacent federally-owned portions of the GCWA, including scenic impacts, noise, increased recreational use, traffic, and other effects. FOWS submitted comments on the [Placer County](#) and [USFS](#) notices of upcoming environmental reviews released in late April.



(Image posted by Sierra Watch 12/27/2015).

Brockway Campground:

There is no schedule yet for when the Notice of Preparation for the Brockway Campground may be released.

Other Regional Project and Plans:

Several other regional projects are in the works, including [multiple projects in the North Tahoe/Truckee region](#). Citizens, non-profits (including FOWS), and other entities are concerned about the cumulative impacts of these projects to our area, as well as what appears to be a rush by Placer County to swiftly approve several significant developments without ample time to consider the implications. Further, it is worth noting that members of the public, as well as decision-makers, [are being bombarded with numerous environmental documents](#), each consisting of 1000's of pages, within a short period of time. This limits the ability of the public to participate and makes it impossible for decision-makers to carefully review and assess each project.

Easy ways to help FOWS!

Did you know that up to 3% of your purchase at Save Mart and [other stores](#) can be donated to FOWS at no extra cost to you? A program previously known as "SHARES" allows shoppers to designate FOWS to receive donations earned through their purchases. The original program was recently changed, and shoppers can now earn their own rewards *and* designate donations to FOWS (versus having to choose one or the other). The new program requires existing SHARES card users to register with the new company ("Escrip") or sign up for a new account [through this link](#), then you simply provide your phone number at checkout and funds are donated to FOWS. It's easy and there is no cost to you!

Also, don't forget that we've joined the Amazon Smile program; all you have to do is order from Amazon through [this link](#) and 0.5% of your purchase will be donated to FOWS at no additional cost to you! If you are an Amazon Prime member, please remember us on #PrimeDay, July 12, and shop for member deals [through this link](#) to support FOWS.



We invite you to contact us to learn more, ask questions, or simply get to know the FOWS Board.

Please contact Jennifer Quashnick, FOWS Conservation Consultant, at: jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net, or Susan Gearhart, FOWS President, at: susan@friendswestshore.org or (530) 525-0368.

