



Placer County Community Development Resource Agency
Attn: Crystal Jacobsen, Project Manager
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190
Auburn, CA 95603
cjacobse@placer.ca.gov

June 23, 2014

Subject: Placer County Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document

Dear Ms. Jacobsen:

The Friends of the West Shore (FOWS) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Placer County Tahoe Basin Community Plan Update Policy Document (“Document”). However, the purpose of this policy document within the context of the Community Plan/Area Plan update is unclear, as are the mixture of terms between the Placer County and TRPA planning requirements.

Depending on the purpose of this document, there is a lack of reference and detail related to TRPA policies (and therefore, policies based on meeting Tahoe Basin’s environmental thresholds). Also, policies based on environmental outcomes should be tied directly to achievement and maintenance of TRPA’s thresholds, not merely to the Regional Plan. Policies which ‘promote, encourage, consider, etc.’ have little meaning. We recommend policies clearly define what will (or will not) be permitted.

Additionally, goals and policies are needed to address several issues, including but not limited to:

- Including meaningful environmental, social, and economic protections;
- Tying future development decisions to monitoring (and requiring sufficient monitoring in the first place);
- Ensuring adequate public services are available into the future to meet existing demands (let alone increased demands);
- Considering and planning for truly sustainable Tahoe communities and environments;
- Addressing the unique conditions of the West Shore and all individual communities in the Placer County portion of the Basin;
- Recognizing the impacts of adjacent projects and plans that will draw more people to the Tahoe Basin;
- Planning for the impacts of climate change.

We herein incorporate comments submitted by Ellie Waller and Ann Nichols. Please feel free to contact Jennifer Quashnick at jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Susan Gearhart,
President,
Friends of the West Shore

Jennifer Quashnick
Conservation Consultant
Friends of the West Shore

Attachments: (Six documents pertaining to identified faults along the West Shore)
FOWS Comments to OPR (& related attachments) (June 2014)
Placer County Letters regarding public beach access in Homewood
FOWS Comments on Proposed Ferry project NOP (January 2014)
FOWS comments to HRA WG (March 2014)
FOWS comments to Lahontan on Nearshore (March 2014)
FOWS comments to TRPA GB on Nearshore (February 2014)

Framework, Community Plan Update, and Area Plans

Purpose of the Policy Document:¹

In our comments on the Framework (February 1, 2014), we requested clarification of how the Framework document fit into the larger Plan update process. Unfortunately, those same questions apply to the Policy document as well.

It remains unclear what the purpose of this Policy document is. How does this relate to alternatives that will be analyzed in an EIR/S for the Community/Area Plan (“Plan”) update? Will the policy serve as the policies which will be analyzed, similar to how TRPA’s draft Code for the preferred RPU alternative was claimed to support the RPU EIS analysis of policy and Code changes? If this document is intended to provide the policies for which alternative Plans will be analyzed in the EIR/S, then the document requires far more information, detail, and additional opportunities for public engagement and comment. Further, how much will this policy ‘set in stone’ the direction for future Placer County Plans in the Basin? There is extensive recent scientific information that is available regarding Tahoe’s environment (e.g. nearshore), that has not been addressed within the items in this policy.

Although it is unclear what the intent of this document is (at least to those not serving on any Planning Teams), FOWS provides the following comments on the draft policy document. However, if this is more than a simple ‘over-arching’ document, we request the opportunity to clarify the intent and provide further comments.

In addition, how does the policy document address CEQA and TRPA Compact requirements? When will Placer County release the Notice of Preparation for the Area Plans? What will the environmentally superior alternative be?

The introduction (p. 1-1) states:

This Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document provides direction on future land use decisions for the Placer County Tahoe Basin Area, and articulates a vision of what the area aspires to be. It provides an overview of current conditions and is the over-arching policy document that addresses land use and natural resource policy for the entire portion of Placer County within the Tahoe Basin. The Policy Document draws its goals from residents, business owners, elected officials, and County staff, and translates these ideas into a set of policies for present and future generations. It leverages prior work efforts including the Pathway 2007 Basinwide Management

¹ Note: Throughout these comments, we simply paste the Policy language, followed by our comments on the language.

FOWS Comments on Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document

Plan, the Existing Conditions Report and the Policy Framework, which outlined overarching goals for the Community Plan Area. As a policy document, it provides for the legal basis for all zoning, subdivision, and related actions. It also provides the legal basis for County and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) regulations and the initiation of public projects.

As the Pathway 2007 process was ended years before the RPU's pro-development approach emerged, we do not feel it is appropriate to suggest that the current RPU-based policies in this document reflect the public feedback received during the Pathway 2007 process. In addition, although FOWS requested multiple times that Placer County/TRPA hold a seminar on the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) so the public would understand SB 375, this was not done. Yet the RPU began relying on the SCS approach around 2011 – after the Pathway 2007 process was essentially ended.

Confusion among Community Plans, Area Plans, General Plans, and Plan Areas:

The policy document includes:

The Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document is implemented through four Area Plan Development Codes: the West Shore Area Plan Development Code, the Greater Tahoe City Area Plan Development Code, the North Tahoe West Area Plan Development Code, and the North Tahoe East Area Plan Development Code. Collectively, the Community Plan Policy Document and all four Area Plan Development Codes documents serve as a TRPA “Area Plan” and are developed and intended to comply with and implement the TRPA Regional Plan goals and policies and meet the requirements of Chapter 13: *Area Plans in the TRPA Code of Ordinances*. (p. 1-1).

As stated in our Framework comments, Placer County needs to clarify the various planning policies and terms. The following list is repeated from our previous letter with some additions. In order for Placer County to truly engage and represent the public, then the County needs to lay information out in a way that the public can understand and provide feedback on.

Until release of this Framework document, Placer County has suggested it would develop one Area Plan for all portions within the Basin; it appeared to be noted so on TRPA's December 2013 Area Plan Map (<http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/December-18-2013-Governing-Board-Packet.pdf>), although instead of planning teams, the map now says ‘plan area.’ Placer County needs to clarify exactly what will be an Area Plan, what those boundaries will be, etc., and to also be cognizant of confusing terms. Differences and clarifications are especially important among the following terms:

- Area Plans
- “Plan Areas”
- Community Plans
- Plan Area Statements (TRPA)
- General Plans (CA requirement)
- Community Plan Policy Framework
- Sub-areas
- Community Plan Policy Document
- Development Code

In addition, it is unclear how the policy document addresses the unique characteristics among different communities in the Placer County portion of the Basin. Although four Area Plans appear to be planned for TRPA's RPU requirements, the policy document does not clearly distinguish between these four areas.

Finally, the Policy document states:

Accordingly, this Community Plan Policy Document serves as the County's General Plan for the Tahoe Basin portion of Placer County. (p. 1-3)

What, exactly, does this mean? How can a new General Plan draft be released when there has been no NOP, no discussion of alternatives, no environmental analysis of the impacts (even if Placer County aims to tier from TRPA's RPU EIS, there are proposals in this document which go beyond the RPU EIS, as noted in our comments below), etc.?

OVERARCHING NEED TO CONSIDER WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE FOR TAHOE

The existing TRPA RPU's allowances, in combination with approved, proposed, or conceived projects and plan amendments within and adjacent to the Area Plan, do not represent a sustainable situation for Lake Tahoe's environment or communities. We have documented this extensively in our attached comments to the California Office of Planning and Research. We request Placer County step back and work with the OPR and our individual communities to address what we can do to truly be sustainable, because everyone but the TRPA/TMPO² appears to recognize the urbanized approaches to smart growth included in the RPU are not appropriate for rural mountain communities.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE:

Urban and non-urban Tahoe Communities:

What is the definition of "urban" that comports with the areas identified as "urban areas" in Figure 1-1? There is a big difference between existing residential areas and urbanized areas. As noted in our comments to the California Office and Planning and Research (attached), "urban" appears to be defined as areas with populations over 50,000 people (residents).³ There are no areas within the Lake Tahoe portion of Placer County which even come close to this population. We recommend Placer County follow California's determination and remove this designation from all Tahoe communities. *Even collectively, the residential population of all areas in the Tahoe Basin portion of Placer County do not appear to total 50,000 people.* The categorizations of rural communities is misleading, and has also led to improper planning concepts being applied to rural areas.

² See summary of statements from June 4th meeting in the attached comments to OPR.

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_California_urban_areas

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT:

As noted in our 2012 comments on the RPU EIS (see excerpts as attached to comments to the OPR), and again in our June 12, 2014 comments to the OPR, the smart growth concepts (which include the mixed-use and Town Center zoning/land uses⁴) imposed by the RPU are not appropriate for Tahoe's rural communities. In addition, the actual changes brought by mixed use zoning/land use changes were not discussed adequately with the community, nor the community planning teams. **We recommend Placer County reconvene the planning teams and clearly explain and discuss the changes associated with the mixed-use and Town Center zoning/land uses.**

Magnitude and Distribution of Uses:

The Conservation/Backcountry acreage in the Plan boundary represent undeveloped land that should remain undeveloped. Most of it is owned by the public. Including it in the percent breakdown makes it difficult to understand the areas where planning changes are proposed. **Placer County should, at a minimum, include a separate Table which shows the existing number of acres and percentages by use without the 39, 478 acres of Conservation/Backcountry Use.**

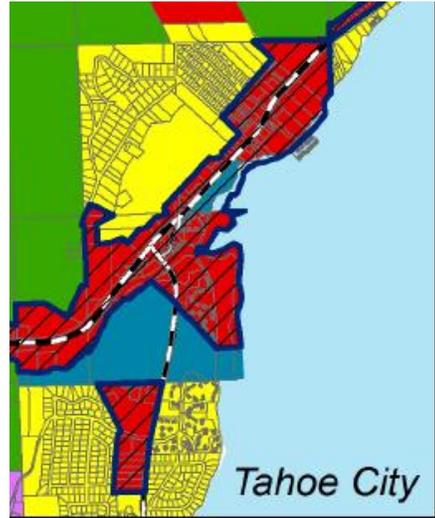
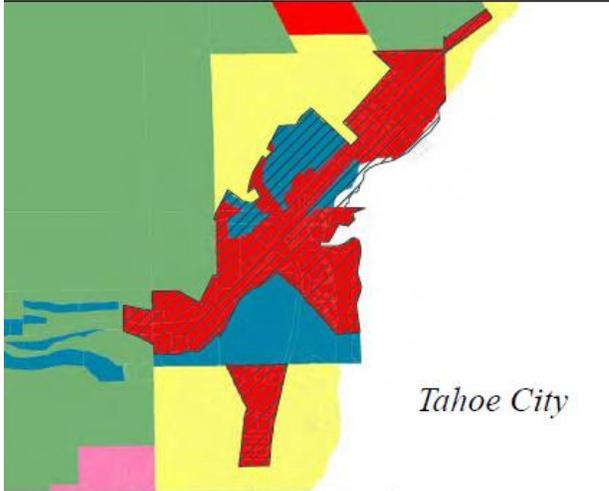
Table 2.2-2: Existing and Allowable Hard Coverage by Land Capability District should also separate out the publicly-owned, conservation/backcountry use acres from the total coverage, as including these presumably undevelopable areas skews the information. Further, as coverage closer to the Lake has the greatest impact, it is inappropriate to categorize all coverage the same. **We recommend additional tables be included which note the coverage excluding the Conservation/Backcountry use, as well as tables which delineate the location of coverage.**

Town Center Overlay:

In the first version of the draft Policy document posted online, page 2-13 indicated that the Tahoe City Golf Course would be included in the Town Center Overlay (with increased mixed use areas). This was revised prior to the June 4th meeting, where the document did not include the Golf Course in the Overlay. We asked Placer County staff member Crystal Jacobsen which map was correct, and she responded that it was the (revised) map that did not include the Golf Course. However, given the recent interest in changing the land capability at the Golf course, and expressed interests by Tahoe City interests in developing a new hotel on the golf course, we've retained the original comments we had drafted when the first version of the document was provided in May.

⁴ Due to the confusion between the meaning of zoning and land use, we will simply refer to them together. An example of how unclear these terms are, to both the public and apparently agency staff, is noted at: <http://www.laketahoenews.net/2014/06/letter-meyers-deserves-more-than-political-hyperbole/>

We note that the TRPA RPU EIS did not include this property in the Town Center boundary (see below). Therefore, the individual and cumulative impacts of this change must be comprehensively analyzed in the EIR/S for the Plan. What are the potential growth-inducing impacts of this change? What impacts could result with the combination of this change, and TRPA's current efforts to allow more units without allocations (comments on this proposal are attached).



Left: from Figure 2-3 in Policy Document

Right: From TRPA RPU, Map 1, Conceptual Regional Land Use (12/12/12)

Existing Land Coverage:

In order for the public to better evaluate the proposed changes in development, the document should include the existing land coverage associated only with areas that are or will be developed. In other words, **we recommend a separate table which excludes the Conservation/Backcountry acreage would help the public understand the proposed Plan changes.**

Options involving caps below the RPU's maximums:

TRPA's boundaries and development standards are simply 'maximums.' Local jurisdictions can choose area plans that do not fully utilize the maximums in the RPU. For example, to protect scenic views of Lake Tahoe, Placer County can choose heights and densities less than the RPU's for the entire area, or for areas lakeward of highways 28 and 89.

Land Use Diagram:

Mixed-use areas are urban areas that have been designated to provide a mix of commercial, public services, light industrial, office, and residential uses to the Community Plan Area or have the potential to provide future commercial, public services, light industrial, office, and residential uses. The purpose of this classification is to concentrate higher intensity land uses for public convenience and enhanced sustainability. (p. 2-12)

As noted in our comments to OPR, how rural communities can be sustainable remains undetermined as the mixed use concepts approved by the TRPA RPU are not appropriate for rural communities. **We recommend Placer County, in cooperation with representatives from individual communities, work with the California OPR to help residents develop truly sustainable strategies for our communities.**

Development Potential:

Growth potential was always limited in the Basin:

Development in the Tahoe Region is heavily constrained by growth management goals and policies adopted as part of the TRPA Regional Plan and implemented through the TRPA Code of Ordinances. As such, development potential within the Community Plan Area is calculated based on the estimated maximum TRPA allocation of residential and non-residential development over the next 20 years, until December 31, 2032.

The TRPA Compact required carrying capacities be determined and achieved – in other words, unlimited or extensive growth in the Basin beyond what existing by the 1980's was not contemplated. **We recommend Placer County clearly explain that development potential is regulated first by the TRPA Compact in order to protect Tahoe's natural resources.**

Growth not truly limited by TRPA's new allocations:

This information only focuses on new allocations from TRPA. This fails to address the changes which increase development but do not require a new allocation (e.g. certain housing, transfers and conversions of uses, morphing of units such as TAUs, etc.). **We recommend the document include information related to all regulations which allow growth through 'redevelopment,' transfers and conversions of uses, new units that do not require allocations, the transfer of uses from small rooms into large, multi-unit structures, etc.**

Placer County should also include a policy which supports true redevelopment that does not increase coverage.

Residential:

While the permanent population in the Community Plan Area appears to be in decline—17 percent decrease since 2000—demand from high-income second-homeowners from the Bay Area remains strong. According to the Market Opportunities and Constraints report prepared by EPS in 2006, demand for new market-rate luxury housing continues to be higher than the Region can supply. (p. 2-15)

What is the 2014 demand for housing, including affordable, moderate-income, and luxury homes? A great deal has changed since 2006. **We recommend the document be revised to reflect existing conditions.**

Buildout:

Based on the existing capacity of vacant parcels located throughout the Community Plan Area, and TRPA goals and policies focused on high intensity mixed-use development within centers (primarily Tahoe City and Kings Beach), there would appear to be sufficient land to accommodate the projected 580 new housing units and 900,000 square feet of commercial space within the Community Plan Area. (p. 2-19)

Are these the maximums for new development based on land use and density, as opposed to allocations and other regulatory limits? The RPU allows 200,000 sq. ft. of new CFA only after the existing CFA has been used up (which has not happened yet, plus there are extensive amounts of vacant commercial facilities). **We request that Placer County provide the full list of assumptions used to generate these numbers, as well as what regulatory approvals are needed to obtain this much new development. Further, as this exceeds the RPU EIS analysis of maximum CFA, the Placer County EIR/S must comprehensively analyze the individual and cumulative impacts of these build-out numbers.**

2.5 Land Use

We have several questions and comments regarding the draft language. In addition, we recommend the following changes to the Goal/Policy language, as noted below (underline to add, ~~strikethrough~~ to delete).

LU-G-1 Direct the amount and location of new land uses consistent with the Compact's requirements to achieve and maintain the environmental threshold carrying capacities and the other goals and policies of the TRPA Regional Plan and Bi-State Compact.

LU-P-1 Develop zoning districts consistent with Regional Plan that reflect the unique rural community characteristics of the Community Plan sub-areas.

LU-P-2 Prohibit new divisions of land within the Community Plan Area that would create new development potential inconsistent with achievement and maintenance of the environmental threshold carrying capacities and other federal, state, and local environmental standards. ~~the goals and policies of the Regional Plan.~~

A land use policy should be added which increases residential access to safe and clean public beaches on Lake Tahoe. Where right-of-ways exist to public beaches, improvements to facilitate safe and clear public access should be made.

“Additional” CFA?:

LU-P-5 Require each project seeking an allocation of additional floor area to contribute toward achieving the capital improvements proposed for the Community Plan Area. Projects shall also be subject to commercial floor area allocation procedures.

In policy LU-P-5, what qualifies as “additional”?

Policies to allocate commercial growth outside of Centers conflict with RPU:

LU-P-6 Direct allocations of commercial floor area toward Town Centers ~~and commercial and mixed-use areas outside of Town Centers.~~

TRPA’s Goals & Policies include focusing redevelopment in existing Town Centers. TRPA’s position is this will improve the walkability/bikeability of Centers by concentrating services and commercial uses in those areas. Placer County’s policy LU-P-6 appears in conflict with the TRPA Goals & Policies because it encourages new CFA *outside* of Centers. In addition, LU-P-6 also appears in conflict with LU-P-10:⁵

Recognize priority importance of Lake Tahoe’s environment:

LU-G-2 Provide for a distribution of land use that ensures the environmental, social, and economic, ~~and environmental~~ well-being of the Community Plan Area.

The social and economic well-being of the community plan area relies on a healthy environment. **The policy should be revised to reflect this distinction.**

Public Safety impacts of more traffic on highway 89:

LU-P-9 Prohibit development of property that endangers the public health, safety, and welfare.

Regarding LU-P-9, any development which adds more traffic to West Shore areas along highway 89 endangers the public. It is already difficult for emergency vehicles to get by traffic, and there are no back roads or alternatives for them to drive on. Further, crossing the highway, especially during congested conditions, can be dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. **The policy should be revised to clarify the intent and applicability.**

⁵ TRPA Goals and Policies state: “LU-1.2 REDEVELOPING EXISTING TOWN CENTERS IS A HIGH PRIORITY. Many of the Region’s environmental problems can be traced to past and existing development which often occurred without recognition of the sensitivity of the area’s natural resources. To correct this, environmentally beneficial redevelopment and rehabilitation of identified Centers is a priority.” Policy document, p. 2-20: “LU-P-10 Direct development toward Town Centers, as identified on the Area Plan Land Use Diagram.”

Policies should retain existing scale and character of areas:

LU-P-13 Encourage public gathering places, outdoor dining, and special event venues, where appropriate.

LU-G-3 In areas designated as ~~Mixed-Use~~ or Tourist in the Regional Plan, provide incentives and remove barriers to redevelopment that are coupled with environmental improvements through use, building, and site design standards consistent with the Regional Plan that reflect the unique character of each area and respond to local design issues and considerations.

LU-P-14 Address parking, transportation, water quality, public access, SEZ restoration, land coverage, and other issues affecting the Community Plan Area through community-wide approaches that encourage appropriately-scaled redevelopment and maximize attainment of environmental thresholds.

Keep tourist uses in tourist areas:

LU-P-15 Encourage tourist-oriented uses in areas designated as ~~Mixed-Use~~ or Tourist. Prioritize locating tourist retail uses on street and sidewalk frontages.

Not all areas designated mixed use by the RPU are appropriate for expanded tourist uses. The RPU currently rezoned Tahoma, Homewood, and Sunnyside as “mixed use.” Chances are, most residents aren’t aware of this, or what it means. To date, we have not seen any additional outreach in West Shore that would suggest residents and business owners understand the implications of this change. We recommend that “Mixed-Use” be removed from this policy.

Incompatibility between protecting residential neighborhoods and the RPU’s new mixed-use:

LU-P-17 Preserve and protect residential neighborhoods while allowing limited opportunities for small-scale retail and service uses such as small stores selling fresh food and basic daily goods, cafes, and coffee shops.

The proposed policy LU-P-17 lends support to removing the term “mixed-use” from LU-P-15 as well. This policy suggests small, locally-owned businesses in predominantly residential areas be preserved and protected. Encouraging more, potentially larger tourist-uses in these areas appears contrary to this policy. **Further, a policy should be added to discourage chain stores and big box stores.**

Tahoe City Golf Course:

LU-P-18 Consider the high capability land on the Tahoe City golf course as a receiving area for development within SEZs and/or floodplains.

Regarding LU-P-18, as the Golf Course is not within TRPA’s Town Center boundary, it should not be prioritized as a receiving area. Further, the original proposal (shown in the first May draft Policy document) to include the Golf Course in the Town Center Overlay, with Recreation and mixed use zoning, is in direct conflict with LU-

G-5 and LU-P-19.⁶ The Golf course currently provides open space, as well as a buffer between more intense downtown Tahoe City uses as the residential neighborhood behind the golf course. **We recommend LU-P-18 be deleted.**

Open Space:

LU-G-5 Provide for the protection and preservation of open space, as well as conservation, wilderness and backcountry land located within the Community Plan Area.

LU-P-19 Maintain and augment existing inventory for open space lands in the Community Plan Area.

We support LU-G-5 and LU-P-19. However, we are concerned that these goals and policies are ‘side-stepped’ by proposals such as the Martis Valley West Area Plan, where proponents claim land is being ‘protected’ or conserved, yet really it just means new zoning/land uses allowing development on nearby forested land are *not as extensive as they could be*. **We recommend a new policy which states that no new zoning/land use changes are allowed which will allow new development in Backcountry/Conservation Areas, nor inappropriate development in Recreation Areas.**

“Environmental Enhancement Improvement?”

LU-G-6 Provide areas for passive and active recreation uses and related services to improve public access and enjoyment of Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River. Allow limited supportive retail and service uses when coupled with environmental enhancement improvements.

Regarding LU-G-6, what will be considered an “environmental enhancement improvement?”

“Public Amenities?”

LU-P-20 Require development on properties with lake frontage to be designed and built to maximize visual and public access to and along the shore as well as require public amenities on site.

Regarding LU-P-20, what are considered ‘public amenities’ on the site? In some instances, letting a beach just be a beach may be what the public wants.

⁶ **LU-G-5 Provide for the protection and preservation of open space, as well as conservation, wilderness, and backcountry land located within the Community Plan Area.**

LU-P-19 Maintain and augment existing inventory for open space lands in the Community Plan Area.

2.6 Mixed Use

Mixed use approach not appropriate for rural areas:

Mixed-use areas incorporate complementary non-residential and residential uses in the same area. The overall intent is to accommodate growth while helping to reduce auto dependence, preserve open space, promote economic development, and increase housing opportunities. A typical characteristic of a mixed-use area is the inclusion of an employment generator, such as offices or retail shops, supported by medium-density residential. Public amenities and facilities are usually required as part of the design of a mixed-use center and may include open space, pedestrian-oriented walkways, and streetscape improvements. (p. 2-22)

We refer Placer County to our comments on mixed use in the attached letter to the OPR. Further, we note the RPU's concepts encourage larger resort developments, which tend to provide low-wage, part time jobs. **Placer County needs to address this disparity.**

In the Community Plan Area, mixed-use areas are generally planned in Town Centers. The allowable use and typical density depend on the type of mixed use and may vary greatly depending on location and the characteristic of the area. Area Plan goals and policies for mixed-use areas support complementary uses, minimize potential conflict, and promote a pedestrian-oriented environment.

In the last version of the draft Area Plan for West Shore, areas of Sunnyside, Homewood, and Tahoma had been rezoned to mixed-use, yet these areas are outside of Town Centers. **The Policy document needs to clarify this.**

Quality of life and mixed-use:

MU-G-1 Recognize the importance of mixed-use areas to the vitality and quality of life in the Community Plan Area.

MU-P-1 Promote the revitalization of Town Centers by encouraging a mixed land use pattern that combines tourist accommodation, residential, commercial, public facilities and public spaces to serve visitors and locals alike.

According to whom? As mixed use typically involves placing incompatible uses together (e.g. commercial/light industrial, retail, residential, public service, etc.), many feel this may detract from the existing quality of life along the West Shore. Further, many tourists visit Tahoe to enjoy the beauty and escape the louder, more developed urban areas outside of the Basin. We have yet to see a qualified, scientifically-sound survey of residents or visitors which assesses what factors positively and negatively impact quality of life.

Placement of tourist uses:

MU-G-3 Foster high quality design, diversity, and a mix of amenities in new residential, commercial and tourist accommodation, where appropriate.

MU-P-3 Establish design guidelines for mixed-use tourist districts that build on the existing tourist recreation theme with high-quality storefronts designed to attract tourists and meet the needs of local residents.

Although the “existing tourist recreation theme” is not defined, it would appear to suggest that tourist districts include developments such as the Heavenly Village, which caters to higher end tourists and tends to push out local, small businesses (due to rental increases, etc.). Will Placer County consider rent maximums to support small, locally-owned businesses? Are there examples of locations or areas where such tourist districts truly ‘meet the needs of local residents’ as well? It is otherwise unclear how these two objectives are proposed to be achieved.

2.7 Town Centers

What is sustainable for Tahoe?

TC-G-1 Encourage redevelopment and revitalization of Town Centers (Kings Beach and Tahoe City) in a manner that improves environmental and economic conditions and creates a more sustainable and less auto-dependent development pattern.

We refer to our comments regarding sustainability issues specific to Lake Tahoe communities, and the inappropriate application of smart growth/mixed-use concepts by the RPU. Further, it is certainly questionable whether the large resort developments promoted by the TRPA RPU, and carried forward by Placer County, are economically or environmentally “sustainable.” **Placer County needs to assess what is truly sustainable for Tahoe Basin communities and the environment.**

TC-P-1 Prioritize redevelopment and rehabilitation of Town Centers.

TC-P-2 Address environmental and economic enhancements in Town Centers through community-wide, locally sustained programs and projects.

What represents community-wide, locally sustained programs and projects? Can Placer County provide examples so the public can understand what this means, and assess whether programs and projects are sustainable given Tahoe’s unique conditions?

TC-G-2 Encourage the transfer of development rights from environmentally sensitive lots and outlying residential areas to Town Centers.

TC-P-3 Reduce onsite land coverage primarily through environmental redevelopment by providing development incentives in Town Centers that promote the relocation and transfer of land coverage. The County will endeavor, ~~where feasible,~~ to reduce and avoid creating new coverage in order to achieve and maintain TRPA’s environmental threshold carrying capacities, and all federal, state, and local environmental standards. ~~-benefit the objectives of the Tahoe Basin Community Plan Policy Document.~~

As the objectives of the Community Plan should be to achieve and maintain the thresholds and other environmental standards – which when protected, support a healthy economy - **this policy should be revised as suggested.**

Goals and policies for developed areas outside of Town Centers:

A goal and associated policies is needed to guide the land use for communities along the West Shore which are not designated Town Centers. Our communities have unique characteristics, unique make-ups, and our transportation options are severely limited in an emergency situation, which may include the need for an ambulance, fire evacuation, etc. Policies for Tahoe City are insufficient to address our unique issues.

2.8 Community Design

CD-G-1 Encourage preservation and enhancement of the natural features and qualities of the Region, provide public access to scenic views and enhance the quality of the built environment.

CD-P-1 Establish building height standards that support a high-quality, pedestrian scaled environment, in Town Centers compatible with scenic values of the Community Plan Area.

What makes an environment ‘high-quality?’ Further, the proposed heights and densities we have seen thus far will create large, massive structures that will block existing scenic views of the Lake and mountains, therefore it is questionable how such developments are compatible with the scenic values of the Community Plan Area? **Placer County needs to address these issues. We also recommend Placer County work with the public to develop policies specific to individual areas that provide for heights below TRPA’s new RPU maximums.**

Scenic policies:

CD-P-2 Limit unbroken length of buildings and articulate building entrances with recesses, projections, overhangs, and architectural details in order to create a pleasant and engaging experience for pedestrians, where such buildings do not block existing natural views.

CD-P-3 Achieve and maintain ~~or improve~~ the scenic quality ratings established by the environmental thresholds.

CD-P-4 Implement restoration programs ~~based on incentives~~ in those areas designated in need of scenic restoration to achieve the recommended rating.

Protection of existing trees in project areas:

CD-P-5 Require landscaping with both private and public development projects. Existing trees of importance size, age, and value, within the Project Area will be protected to ensure long-term survival.

We have seen several late seral/old growth trees that are surrounded by new developments and afforded only minimal soil eventually die. At South Shore’s Heavenly Village, wooden sculptures have replaced beautiful, old pine trees that could not survive with the disturbance brought by the project. **We request Placer County include policies which aim to ensure protected trees are afforded the space and natural resources needed to be able to survive amidst new development.**

Conflicts in mixed use areas:

CD-P-8 Buffer adjacent residential uses from the commercial, tourist and public service uses of Town Centers through site design, landscaping, vegetation, and screening.

This policy appears to acknowledge that mixing residential uses with these other uses creates problems and should be buffered. However, we note the mixed-use zoning/land use in the RPU, and Policy document, will actually ‘mix’ residential uses with these other uses, thereby reducing the ‘buffers’ provided by the zoning and land use in the pre-2012 Regional Plan and existing Community Plans. It makes little sense to throw these uses together, then include policies to try to buffer the impacts.

We recommend Placer County work with existing communities to discuss the implications of mixed use zoning and determine whether such changes are desired by communities.

CD-P-10 Encourage commonly designed architectural monuments compatible with the mountain theme throughout the Community Plan Area, particularly at gateways.

2.9 Development and Redevelopment

As stated in countless comments on the RPU, we do not believe TRPA’s RPU emphasizes redevelopment. Rather, it encourages massive new development be constructed under the guise of (and obtaining benefits as) “redevelopment.” We would support true, environmentally-beneficial redevelopment of buildings within the scale of their existing communities and the capacity of the environment.

DP-G-1 Direct development to those areas most suitable for development in accordance with environmental threshold carrying capacities and other considerations, such as flood hazard risk, infrastructure capacity, wildfire risk, earthquake risk, and progress toward accomplishing water quality improvement.

DP-P-1 Require, prior to approval, projects on a parcel rated and ranked by IPES be served by an existing paved road, and existing water service, sewer service and an electrical service.

DP-G-2 Manage development and redevelopment consistent with progress toward achieving meeting and maintaining environmental thresholds.

DP-P-2 Provide incentives to encourage rehabilitation and/or remodeling of commercial, tourist, recreation, public service, and residential properties within the existing scale and character of where the properties are located and the carrying capacity of the environment. Prioritize projects that emphasize rehabilitation by replacement or remodeling of substandard and inefficient development.

DP-P-3 Develop an allocation strategy that assigns priority of commercial floor area (CFA) to projects that emphasize remodeling and rehabilitation of substandard development.

Regarding DP-P-3, what qualifies as “substandard”?

DP-P-4 Require projects make substantial progress toward implementing the areawide improvements in order to be eligible for commercial floor area allocations.

What determines whether a project will make ‘substantial progress’? What is meant by “areawide improvements?” Also, monitoring must be required to ensure any environmental benefits required from projects are maintained over time.

Conversion of TAUs to CFA:

DP-G-3 Encourage consolidation of development and restoration of sensitive lands to a naturally-function condition through transfer of development rights and transfer of land coverage programs. Consider a revised allocation program that allows for inter-jurisdictional transfers and conversion of tourist accommodation units to commercial floor area.

This policy does not conform with the Regional Plan. We have heard that Placer County aims to analyze the impacts of such a program in the EIR/S for the Area Plan. As the policy proposes transfers and conversions inter-jurisdictionally, the individual and cumulative impacts of this proposed policy must be fully analyzed, including the variations which could result. Further, this policy would impact areas outside of Placer County; how will these impacts be evaluated and dealt with by Placer County? **We believe any such policy should be evaluated regionally, not piecemeal.**

DP-P-5 Encourage transfers of residential development and residential development rights to parcels in Centers ~~and other areas designated as receiving areas~~ in accordance with Regional Plan policies and implementing ordinances.

The RPU’s claims to reduce driving and provide environmental benefits are based on the idea of concentrating development in Centers. Meyers residents were recently told by TRPA staff that they could not make changes in their Area Plan which conflicted with TRPA’s ‘regional strategy’ to transfer development into Centers,⁷ thus how can Placer County conform to the RPU if it discounts that same regional strategy?

DP-P-6 Encourage transfers of existing tourist accommodation units into Centers ~~and other designated areas~~ in accordance with Regional Plan policies and implementing ordinances.

DP-P-7 Encourage transfers of existing commercial floor area into Centers ~~and other designated areas~~ in accordance with Regional Plan policies and implementing ordinances.

DP-P-11 Limit transfers of development rights, other than land coverage, to equivalent uses with no increase in the parameters by which the uses are measured by this plan (e.g., floor area, units, people at one time [PAOT]) ~~plus bonus units~~ awarded in accordance with the Regional Plan.

DP-G-4 Encourage the development and redevelopment of tourist accommodations in the Community Plan Area by removing barriers to hotel development (or redevelopment) and promoting opportunities for public private partnerships.

What ‘barriers’ are referred to here?

⁷ Pers. Comm., As heard by Jennifer Quashnick and four other Meyers Residents on May 14th meeting with TRPA, EDC, and the Meyers Community Advisory Council.

2.10 Housing

Protection for existing residential neighborhoods:

HS-P-1 Maintain existing development patterns in residential neighborhoods ~~outside of Town Centers~~ and environmentally-sensitive lands with no significant change.

There are many residential homes which fall within the Town Center boundaries, and this policy does not protect the existing residential character of those neighborhoods. How will Placer County treat these areas?

Placer's proposed policy contradicts TRPA's "regional strategy:"

HS-G-3 Encourage development of very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing in Town Centers ~~throughout the entire Community Plan Area~~ consistent with Placer County Housing Element's Regional Housing Needs Allocation for the Tahoe Basin.

We again refer to the RPU's claim that concentrating development, including residential units, in Town Centers is the key strategy to meet the purported environmental benefits of the new 'mixed use' and higher density developments. A policy which encourages more housing sprawl contradicts TRPA's "regional strategy."

Bonus Units:

HS-P-6 Large employers shall assume "fair share" of the responsibility to provide very low- and low-income housing in the Community Plan Town Center Area. Bonus units shall be rewarded to large employers who create additional, low-income jobs above and beyond their fair share.

Bonus units should not be awarded to new, large developments that create an additional need for low-income housing due to the creation of new, low-income jobs. This would be akin to paying someone \$100 out of public funds for creating a new job that pays a private citizen \$10. If large developments aim to profit from paying low wages, they should be responsible for providing low income housing. This should not rest upon the taxpayers.

Also, the large resort developments currently proposed and/or approved but not yet built in the Placer County portion of the Basin will create negative environmental impacts. Such projects should not be rewarded with bonus units. Rather, allocations should be required so the projects remain subject to TRPA's supposed growth control strategies. In addition, **a policy should be added which requires that at least 50% of workforce housing be on site of any sizeable development and workforce/affordable housing needs to be within a walking distance of no more than 1/2 mile to the work place.**

Displacement of affordable housing:

HS-P-10 Mitigate low income housing displacements as a result of redirection developments in Kings Beach.

How will Placer County “mitigate” this? If people lose housing, there should not be a delay in providing the mitigation-based housing.

HS-P-12 Remove identified barriers preventing the construction of necessary affordable housing in the Town Center Community Plan Area.

Need for West Shore policies on Housing:

The policies related to affordably housing should include separate policies for West Shore communities. Housing situations, availability, and use are variable. Also, current policies which may emphasize placing affordable housing into Centers neglect the affordable housing which may already existing in these areas, and/or the demand for more.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

3.2 Transit Network

Regarding the North Tahoe Water Shuttle description that the “[TTD] is conducting a study for a larger waterborne transit service that could connect the north shore and south shore,” we refer again to our attached comments on the NOP for that project.

3.4 Transportation Network

Funding for public transit and fair share from development:

A policy should be added which requires that large resort projects provide more than the ‘formulated’ amount towards public transit.

T-P-8 Fully mitigate the regional and cumulative traffic impacts of new, expanded, or revised developments or land uses. Mitigation must apply year-round and mitigate the type of traffic generated by the project.

T-P-9 Consider non-automobile travel modes appropriate for mitigating project impacts when mitigating traffic-related project impacts.

In other words, if a resort project will draw more visitor traffic, it must mitigate the visitor traffic. Adding a bike lane that a few local commuters may use for half the year or less will not mitigate those impacts.

What is sustainable for Tahoe?

T-P-10 Support sustainable transportation infrastructure and operational programs that provide environmental and community benefits.

How will Placer County determine what is ‘sustainable?’ As noted in our attached letter to OPR, the current plans and projects being proposed/approved in Lake Tahoe, especially North Lake Tahoe, are not sustainable.

3.5 Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle

A policy should be added which addressed the need to reduce the visitor traffic entering and exiting the Basin. Current policies and plans appear only to focus on reducing traffic once visitors are here, yet allow for significant developments that will draw more visitor traffic into the Basin.

Waterborne Transit and environmental impacts vs. benefits:

T-P-38 Consider waterborne transportation systems in coordination with other public and private transportation systems, including the pedestrians bicycle network, ~~using best available technology to benefit~~ minimize air and water quality impacts as an alternative to automobile travel within the region.

T-P-43 Actively support Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) in the Tahoe region.

To what end? What benefits do TMAs provide to achieving and maintaining the thresholds?

Year-round accessibility to bike paths:

A policy associated with Goal T-G-11 is needed which requires the development and implementation of a program which provides for year-round snow removal on bike paths which have been, or are proposed to be, used to reduce and mitigate traffic impacts. Conversely, **a policy should be added which states that where it is logistically impossible to ensure snow removal during the winter months, those paths cannot be used as ‘mitigation’ for new plans or projects that will draw more vehicles to the area.**

CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Add a policy which states that no zoning/land use amendments will be allowed which will increase development in open space where it would not currently be allowed. For example, the proposed Martis Valley West Area Plan advertises “conservation” of a portion of land in the project area,⁸ *however, the entire project area is currently zoned conservation such that it’s already being conserved.* Developing ‘less’ of it then calling that difference ‘conserved land’ does not protect open space.

⁸ Per presentations provided to the public by the applicant during ‘scoping’ hearings.

4.1 Vegetation

VEG-P-24 Provide opportunities for intensive resource management practices such as regeneration harvest and selective cutting.

This appears to be an outdated policy. There is no commercial harvesting in the Basin; all efforts should be focused on thinning and management which improves the health of the forest and reduces fire danger. **This policy should be removed.**

4.2 Wildlife

A policy is needed which protects the habitat corridors needed by wildlife through Town Centers and other developed areas. For example, the ‘infill’ called for by the RPU will further fragment wildlife habitat. **This must be addressed to prevent further fragmentation.**

Add a policy which protects the fragmentation and damage of wildlife in existing conservation and recreation zoned areas.

4.4 Soils

S-G-1 ~~Prevent~~ ~~Minimize~~ soil erosion and the loss of soil productivity in order to sustain forest vegetation, water filtration and storage, and wildlife habitats within the Community Plan Area.

S-P-5 Retain all existing natural functioning Stream Environment Zones (SEZs) as such and restore disturbed SEZs ~~whenever possible~~ and may be treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

S-G-2 ~~Encourage~~ Require restoration of native wetland habitat to provide natural filtration of stormwater/developed area runoff.

4.5 Shorezone

SZ-P-3 Prohibit new ~~Discourage~~ use of lawns or ornamental vegetation in the shorezone. Encourage replacement of existing lawns and ornamental vegetation with landscaping that does not rely upon fertilizer.

Further, add a policy to limit new facilities, and limit maximum boats on the Lake, to recognize there is a capacity to how many motorized boats the lake, and its nearshore, can handle without further detriment to the environment.

4.6 Scenic Resources

SR-P-10 Manage development located between designated scenic corridors and Lake Tahoe so as not to cause a reduction of views or loss of viewsheds of Lake Tahoe from the corridors.

SR-G-3 Encourage redevelopment of built features along the roadway and shoreline within scenic corridors that are in non-attainment with TRPA thresholds, and which do not reduce existing views or viewsheds.

Add a policy which recognizes that screening from manmade landscaping is not a scenic substitute for existing, open forest.

4.7 Stream Environment Zones

SEZ-P-2 Increase the area of naturally functioning SEZs by protecting and managing SEZ lands for their natural values, and removing development from and restoring disturbed SEZs.

Add a policy that in order to accommodate increased flooding that will result from climate change, additional SEZ lands will be protected.

4.8 Cultural Resources

It is upsetting to see no Goals and Policies to protect Washoe tribal resources. During a town hall meeting held by Placer County in early 2013, two representatives from the Washoe Tribe spoke about the RPU's failure (and draft Placer documents' failure) to address the historical and cultural resources of their Tribe. They provided staff with documentation regarding those resources and asked that the Plans protect them. Where is this report? Where are goals and policies to protect Washoe resources?

Placer County needs to work with the Washoe Tribe and ensure that cultural resources in the tribe's report are adequately protected. Policies are needed to reflect these values and protections.

4.9 Energy

Placer needs to explain to the public (in non-planning terms) what "per capita" means, and how it relates to TRPA's thresholds (which are based on the Basin's capacity, not on per person units). This distinction was not made clear in the RPU process and many misleading statements have mischaracterized the impacts of the plan.

Sustainability of water supply, snow-making, and increased resort developments:

A policy which prohibits the use of precious groundwater, and drawing additional water from Lake Tahoe, for snow-making and other non-essential purposes is needed. It is not sustainable to use limited water resources for a voluntary (and very high-energy) activity. Ample science is available to document the impacts of climate change and overpopulation. Water conservation is needed to meet our drinking and agricultural demands. Further, drawing water from Lake Tahoe as our wells dry up due to continuous snowmaking is not sustainable for this Natural Resource.

VMT:

E-G-2 Promote a broad range of transportation, land use, and site design measures that result in a decrease in the number of automobile trips and vehicle miles traveled per-capita.

TRPA may want to disregard the VMT threshold, but the threshold is still the total Basinwide VMT, not per-capita VMT. In fact, Tahoe's watershed, airshed, and other environmental resources do not care how many miles each person may drive; they are affected by the total amount of driving, period. Thus, protecting Tahoe's natural resources requires reducing the total impact of driving – this is why the threshold is based on the total VMT. Per capita VMT may be valuable for California's considering of GHG emissions in larger metropolitan areas, but it is not an appropriate substitute for TRPA's threshold.

4.10 Water Quality

The water quality section needs to include a discussion regarding Tahoe's nearshore conditions. In addition, goals and policies are needed which protect the nearshore, including a reduction in coverage closest to Tahoe's shoreline, and a reduction in nitrogen from fertilizer.

Nearshore policies are needed:

A goal and associated policies are needed to address the protection of Tahoe's nearshore environment. The existing TMDL-based policies only address mid-lake clarity. As noted in our attached comments to the TRPA HRA Working Group, and to Lahontan Water Quality Control Board, we know enough about the nearshore environment to know that coverage closest to the lake is bad for the nearshore. We also know that nitrogen from fertilizer use contributes to increased algae in the nearshore. The TRPA RPU, unfortunately, places more coverage closer to the lake and does nothing to require a reduction in nitrogen from fertilizer from existing limits. The nearshore information released by esteemed research institutions in 2013⁹ must be addressed through appropriate policies and protections by Placer County.

9

[http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCgQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fterc.ucdavis.edu%2Fpublications%2FLake Tahoe Nearshore Evaluation and Monitoring Framework.pdf&ei=7hinU-](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCgQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fterc.ucdavis.edu%2Fpublications%2FLake+Tahoe+Nearshore+Evaluation+and+Monitoring+Framework.pdf&ei=7hinU-)

Snowmelt and water supply:

Snowmelt is the primary source of recharge to the groundwater basin. Other sources of groundwater recharge include stream-flow seepage and groundwater inflow from the surrounding bedrock.

The document should discuss climate change and how less snow may impact groundwater.

Goals and policies which require adequate environmental monitoring, and appropriate response to results, are also needed.

Water supply and Lake Tahoe:

Add a policy that no development will be allowed to draw any more water from Lake Tahoe for any reason. If existing water supplies are insufficient to cover a project, the project cannot be allowed. No matter how many dollars any developer may throw towards water systems or mitigation, money cannot be turned into water. Climate change and drought are a reality we must not ignore.

Pollution from motorized watercraft:

Boating impacts are also a water quality issue, and policies should limit the use of motorized watercraft to within the environmental carrying capacities for water, air, and noise.

On and off road motor vehicles are responsible for most of the smog producing pollutants (nitrogen oxides and reactive organic gases) in the Community Plan Area and two-thirds of the carbon monoxide. Miscellaneous processes is a major source of organic gases, including reactive organic gases that contribute to smog. (p. 4-40)

4.11 Air Quality

As noted in the 2012 California Air Resources Board Emissions Inventory for the Lake Tahoe Basin,¹⁰ off road vehicle emissions create about as much pollution (in terms of ozone precursors) as on-road vehicles. This is important for the Lake Tahoe Air Basin, especially given the impacts of boating. As noted in our comments on the RPU EIS, available evidence suggests the impacts of boating on air pollution are significantly underestimated by CARB's EI methodology as it relies on residential boat registration, which excludes the impacts of non-local boats. Given the CA designation for ozone in the Lake Tahoe Air Basin is non-attainment/transitional, **Placer County needs to revise this discussion and ensure the most up-to-date and**

[z1F4qCogTI7oDQCA&usg=AFQjCNGf8pteCeWvh5EMNDcCQhvZtRHTww&sig2=ETd1Cb0GIgvohUyd8sz8Pg&bvm=bv.69411363.d.cGU&cad=rja](http://www.arb.ca.gov/app/emsinv/2013/emssumcat_query.php?F_YR=2012&F_DIV=-4&F_SEASON=A&SP=2013&F_AREA=AB&F_AB=LT#8)

¹⁰ http://www.arb.ca.gov/app/emsinv/2013/emssumcat_query.php?F_YR=2012&F_DIV=-4&F_SEASON=A&SP=2013&F_AREA=AB&F_AB=LT#8

locally-applicable air quality data are included in the EIR/S and all related materials.

AQ-G-1 Attain and maintain local and regional ambient air quality standards levels that ~~help meet regional attainment status.~~

AQ-P-2 Reduce ~~or limit~~ sources of pollutants that degrade visibility.

AQ-P-3 ~~Encourage the reduction of~~ Reduce emissions from motor vehicles and other motorized machinery in the Community Plan Area.

AQ-P-4 ~~Encourage the reduction of~~ Reduce emissions from gas appliances.

AQ-P-5 ~~Encourage the reduction of~~ Reduce emissions through building efficiency.

AQ-P-7 ~~Promote the reduction of~~ Reduce air quality impacts from construction and property maintenance activities in the Community Plan Area.

Placer County should add a policy which requires large development projects to contribute towards the costs of air quality monitoring.

4.12 Noise

Noise is primarily a concern with regard to noise-sensitive uses such as residences, schools, churches, and hospitals. In the Lake Tahoe Basin, noise sensitive uses also include non-motorized outdoor recreation.

A policy is needed to address the noise conflicts that will arise from the mixed use zoning/land use changes. Not only will noise-generating uses more often be placed adjacent to residential uses, but Tahoe's environment is such that many people open windows to cool down their homes (which itself is far more GHG efficient than air-conditioning). Noise in these areas will create problems, and encourage more people to use air conditioning, thereby creating more GHG emissions.

A policy is needed to require mitigation for construction noise even during exempt hours when the duration of projects will result in ongoing exposure of people and wildlife to noise.

4.13 Natural Hazards

Natural hazards need to be taken more seriously than the draft document states. Minimizing dangers, informing people of fire dangers, etc., only goes so far. New developments in hazardous areas should not be allowed.

Flooding:

The opening flooding section should include a discussion of how climate change will impact our weather, increasing the need for more natural areas to handle increases in flooding.

Add a policy which states that new development in areas where natural hazards exist or may exist, including flooding and fire danger, will be discouraged.

NH-P-2 ~~Prohibit~~ Regulate development in identified avalanche or mass instability hazard areas.

NH-P-3 Prohibit additional development, grading, and filling of lands within the 100- year floodplain and in the area of wave run-up ~~except for public recreation facilities, public service facilities, necessary crossings, restoration facilities, and as otherwise necessary to implement these goals and policies.~~ Require all facilities located in the 100-year floodplain and area of wave run-up to be constructed and maintained to minimize impacts on the floodplain.

Given the impacts of climate change, any building constructed in a floodplain would be threatened. Why allow this for so many facilities?

Fire danger:

Add a policy to created programs and incentives for existing property owners to retrofit buildings to reduce ignitability.

Seismic Hazards:

A policy is needed which recognizes the potential threats associated with the Tahoe-Sierra frontal fault zone, including a major earthquake, a 30 foot tsunami, and earthquake-induced landslide hazards. As explained in the attached USGS document (5/23/2012): “LiDAR Technology Reveals Faults Near Lake Tahoe.”

“CARNELIAN BAY, Calif. — Results of a new U.S. Geological Survey study conclude that faults west of Lake Tahoe, Calif., referred to as the Tahoe-Sierra frontal fault zone, pose a substantial increase in the seismic hazard assessment for the Lake Tahoe region of California and Nevada, and could potentially generate earthquakes with magnitudes ranging from 6.3 to 6.9. A close association of landslide deposits and active faults also suggests that there is an earthquake-induced landslide hazard along the steep fault-formed range front west of Lake Tahoe...”

Policies need to direct future developments and redevelopments away from areas most threatened by these hazards. Additional details on suggested policies are included below.

RECREATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES ELEMENT:

5.1 Recreation

A policy is needed to emphasize that recreational opportunities in the Lake Tahoe Basin should be available for people of all income levels.

Recreational Capacities and Types:

There is also a capacity for every type of recreation – when exceeded, environmental, social, and other impacts will result. This must be considered in the goals and policies. Although policies to meet recreational demands are important, meeting those demands should not cause environmental or social harm.

Further, Tahoe offers extensive outdoor recreational opportunities available nowhere else. That said, development of urban recreational facilities – which can be provided in other locations - should not cause harm to Tahoe’s environment or outdoor opportunities. **A policy is needed which reflects this distinction, and prioritizes protection of Tahoe’s outdoor recreational opportunities above urban recreational facilities which may create environmental harm.**

On page 3, it is unclear how the “Undeveloped Parkland” listed in Table 5.1-1 is different from open forest. We recommend Placer County clarify in the document.

Bike trail use:

The document notes over 500,000 people per year use the multi-use bike trail. How many of these reflect recreational versus commuting (diverted) trips?

Non-motorized recreation along Tahoe’s shoreline:

R-P-3 Expand trail systems for hiking and horseback riding to accommodate projected demands within the limits of the environmental threshold carrying capacities and provide a link with major regional or interstate trails.

Add a policy which locates nearshore/foreshore structures to minimize impacts to the Lake Tahoe water trail used by kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, and others.

Reservations for outdoor recreation:

R-P-11 Commit all existing reservations of services for outdoor recreation.

What does the R-P-11 policy mean?

Recreation within the carrying capacity of the Basin:

~~R-P-12 Expand recreational facilities and opportunities in response to demand within the limits of the environmental threshold carrying capacities.~~

The policy R-P-14 should be removed until and unless sufficient environmental analysis is available to determine the lake's boating capacity. Also, climate change is an environmental constraint, as is drought.

Inappropriate policies regarding Northstar and Homewood expansions:

~~R-P-21 Coordinate with USFS and operators of the Northstar ski facility to assess the feasibility of, and demand for, expanding the Northstar operations into the Community Plan Area. Ski expansion within the Basin should be limited to lifts and runs. Access should be from facilities located outside the Tahoe Basin. Other accessory uses to ski areas, such as warming huts and eating and drinking establishments, should be serviced from outside the Basin. Also, such facilities, if constructed, should be screened from view originating from within the Basin.~~

Policy R-P-21 should be removed. This is suggesting the support of a specific project and inappropriate for a policy document. This is also outside of the parameters of the TRPA RPU and Bi-State Consultation Agreement, and proposes a policy to support future development that will harm Lake Tahoe's environment to clearly benefit interests outside of the Basin (e.g. as noted, access will come from Northstar).

~~R-P-23 Coordinate planning to assess feasibility and demand for expanded ski facilities in Homewood.~~

Policy R-P-23 should be deleted. This is a project-specific focus that was not contemplated by the RPU EIR/S and is inappropriate for a policy document.

Open space:

R-G-6 Use existing and new open space to meet multiple needs including bike and pedestrian linkages, stormwater drainage, wildlife habitat, and active and passive recreation opportunities. Buildings, including public service facilities (e.g. stormwater utilities) will not be permitted to block existing open space.

Waterborne Transit:

~~R-P-29 Promote the use of underutilized recreation areas through programs that improve the public awareness of recreation opportunities and through an expanded water and inland transit system.~~

See comments regarding the waterborne transit policies and proposed project.

Outdated Policy for Homewood:

~~R-P-31 Encourage common management and consolidation of Homewood and Tahoe Ski Bowl.~~

This appears to be an outdated policy.

R-P-33 Reserve sufficient public service and facility capacity to accommodate all forms of urban recreation consistent with the achievement and maintenance of the environmental threshold carrying capacities and the scale and character of existing communities.

R-P-38 Expand and upgrade marina facilities in Homewood to accommodate increasing boating needs.

This policy is outdated and any such expansion would first require specific and thorough environmental analysis, including a study of Tahoe's boating capacity. **Policy should be deleted.** In addition, the location of the Homewood marina facilities should be evaluated in terms of the public beach access in the Homewood area. Policies should not encourage increased marina facilities that will impede, pollute, or make dangerous, public beach access.

Improve accessibility to public shoreline:

R-P-41 Maintain and expand public access to the shoreline on public lands, particularly on areas of existing public interest at Tahoe Pines. Improve accessibility of public shoreline in Homewood.

As noted in the attached documents regarding the public beach access on "Lake Boulevard" between South St. and El Capitan in Homewood, there is currently shoreline in Homewood which provides public access. However, getting there is difficult; it is not marked, and not made clear as public beach. We request a policy be included to recognize this location and to improve the ease and safety associated with public access.

5.2 Public Services and Facilities:

There is a general lack of recognition that public services and needs, including water supply, law enforcement, and fire departments, will be facing *less available water*, more tourism, and more development in fire prone areas. As noted below in the fire services section, it does not appear that existing conditions and the RPU's increases in development have been considered in light of dwindling environmental and financial resources. Further, the impacts of drawing more visitors to the Basin on all of our utilities and public services will be significant. The document needs to include an updated and thorough assessment of the actual capacity of all public services and facilities in light of climate change and future growth. The importance of ensuring adequate public services needs to be emphasized, and Goals and policies included to ensure we do not overwhelm or outgrow the abilities of public providers to meet our communities' needs.

Rating and assessment systems need to take into consideration tourist populations, and water supply providers must consider declining water availability due to the loss of our snow pack and drought. Can we truly expand our development and draw more people to the Basin and meet all water needs with less water?¹¹

Finally, the ability of people to conserve water, and the future quantity of water, must be considered. Unfortunately, recent articles have shown that Californians are not taking the drought seriously enough.

- "Californian's failing at water conservation"¹²
- "Drought conditions worsen in California"¹³
- "No escaping climate change"¹⁴

It should be clear that relying upon the hope that people will use dramatically less water when they visit the Basin, and/or that our government leaders will find ways to ensure people conserve water, is not a substitute for planning for reduced water availability in the future.

Fire Services:

Referenced LAFCO report and year applicable:

Currently there are six fire stations located in the Community Plan Area. Most of the NTPFD's fire stations were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and have been maintained to a high standard. In July 2012 NTPFD relocated Station 51 from 300 North Lake Boulevard to 222 Fairway Drive in Tahoe City, across from TCPUD. Station 51 serves as the district's headquarters and is expected to accommodate projected growth in demand for services over the next 15 years.² Figure 5-2 maps the location of the fire stations located in the Community Plan Area.

Although there is no year listed for the referenced LAFCO report in the footnote ("Fire/Emergency Protection Services, Municipal Service Review, Placer LAFCO"), the referenced MSR document appears to be a 2005 review.¹⁵ Can Placer County please confirm the year the study applied?

Misleading information regarding ability of fire capabilities:

In reviewing the discussion for the NTPFD (pages 32-38), it appears that the Policy Document misrepresents the LAFCO report's conclusions. The policy description should discuss the caveats associated with the claim that the Station 51 can

¹¹ As our snowpack declines from climate change, this will mean less water storage and earlier runoff. We cannot assume we will have the same amount of groundwater, surface water, or water in Lake Tahoe that we currently have.

¹² <http://www.laketahoenews.net/2014/06/californians-failing-at-water-conservation/>

¹³ <http://www.laketahoenews.net/2014/06/drought-conditions-worsen-in-california/>

¹⁴ <http://www.laketahoenews.net/2014/06/goldman-no-escaping-climate-change/>

¹⁵

<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCQOFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2F98.129.89.114%2Ftahoe%2F478%2Fsite%2Fgraphics%2Fpdf%2FFireServices.pdf&ei=azGmU7nzKcz0oATk5oFA&usq=AFQjCNHwVlp7Zx0CjJPWLlkkEmrQ3wOhQ&sig2=ytx2oVA5w0fqFpuErnhg5w&bvm=bv.69411363.d.cGU&cad=rja>

accommodated projected growth over the next 15 years. Example language in the LAFCO report includes:

“...North Tahoe FPD anticipates that the construction of the new fire department headquarters will be sufficient to provide necessary office and storage space to accommodate projected growth in demand for services over the next 15 years. A construction schedule has not yet been set for this project. The Department is currently considering locations and potential funding sources. Once constructed and operational, this structure will satisfy projected infrastructure needs related to capital facilities for the District...”

“...There are no facilities and/or buildings being underutilized by the District. All fire department resources are utilized to the fullest extent possible, and the District does not maintain excess capacity. The fire department has the ability to serve additional populations, but this would require new developments to pay fees in order for the District to purchase additional equipment required to serve new constituents...” [Emphasis added].

Report did not consider RPU’s increases in development and cumulative impacts:

The projected growth in 2005 is outdated. This was years before TRPA’s new RPU approach was even proposed, let alone adopted, which calls for significant increases in the residential and tourist populations of the North Tahoe area. Placer County needs to complete an updated assessment of the existing emergency services available in the context of the new RPU and proposed Placer County Area Plans, as well as cumulative increases in visitors from adjacent projects and resort expansions, including Northstar and Squaw Valley resorts.

Drinking water for the Community Plan Area comes primarily from Lake Tahoe itself, local streams, smaller nearby lakes, and groundwater. The two largest water providers in the Community Plan Area are NTPUD and TCPUD. Additionally, there are 13 small public and private water companies that provide drinking water to residents located outside of public utility district boundaries. See Figure 5-3 for the location of district service areas for water purveyors in the Community Plan Area.

Given TCPUD’s request to draw more water from Lake Tahoe to support snow-making at Homewood, it appears there is not currently sufficient water to support the area. As more developments are added, and climate change reduces our snow pack, this situation is expected to become worse. Placer County needs to address these issues.

PS-P-9: Require new development to demonstrate adequate water supply within an existing water right. Climate change impacts must also be considered as existing water supplies will likely decrease.

Additional recommendations:

We reiterate the requested policies in comments submitted by Ellie Waller dated June 16, 2014, and add the following:

Goals and Policies to prohibit ridgeline development:

Goals and policies should prohibit any Plan amendments which will allow development on Tahoe's forested ridgeline. The environmental and scenic impacts alone, which would run contrary to TRPA's Compact requirements to protect these resources, should prevent such projects from ever being considered, yet the Martis Valley West Area Plan proposal shows otherwise. Not only does such development and the associated roads it requires create environmental impacts to water quality, air quality, noise, vegetation and forest health, wildlife, and scenic resources, but it also places more people in areas that are most prone for serious fire danger. Fires tend to burn up slopes; in the example of the Martis Valley West Area Plan, a fire starting on either side of the mountain would most likely burn any developments on the ridgeline. With increased fire threats posed by years of suppression, dry, unhealthy forests, pine trees damaged by bark beetles and ozone, climate change, and drought, such developments will place people and their property in serious danger and should not be prohibited.

Goals and Policies to require sufficient monitoring of natural resources:

All development decisions should be tied to the impacts on the environment. The only way to understand what impacts are or could be is to have adequate on-the-ground environmental monitoring in place. There is a disturbing lack of goals and policies regarding monitoring and measurements, yet such information is necessary for assessing whether future decisions will have an impact on the environment. **We recommend Placer County includes very clear and comprehensive goals and policies which require the monitoring necessary to ensure environmental requirements are met.**

Goals and Policies needed specific to highway 89/West Shore:

Although we have provided some recommendations above regarding traffic and other issues on the West Shore, the communities, conditions, environment, transportation system, and other factors on the West Shore are very unique and must be addressed by separate goals and policies which take into account our specific conditions. **We recommend specific policies for the West Shore be developed for all goals and policies categories.**

Goals and Policies to protect scenic views:

As suggested above, Placer County need not adopt TRPA's maximum heights and densities. It does not take a planning degree to recognize that allowing four story buildings along our highways and in the Town Centers will block scenic views. This is a clear contradiction between the RPU's new increased heights and densities and the Compact's requirement to protect scenic resources. Strong goals and policies are needed to ensure the Compact's requirements are met, whether by TRPA or Placer County.

Goals and Policies to protect fish habitat:

Figure 4-2 shows the extent of feeding escape/cover and spawning habitat along the shoreline of Placer County. Policies to protect these habitats are needed.

Goals and Policies to protect Night Sky/Dark Skies:

The document needs to include goals and policies related to lighting to protect night sky from light pollution.

Goals and Policies related to construction:

Given the extent of construction expected in the Area Plan over the next few years (e.g. Homewood, highway projects, etc.), the cumulative impacts of construction have the potential to create extensive environmental, economic, and social problems. We encourage goals and policies which require the timing, location, duration, etc., of large construction projects be considered and modified, as needed, to reduce the cumulative impacts of multiple projects.