



Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449

November 12, 2014

Subject: Requesting Amendments to the Code of Ordinances to protect scenic ridgelines

Dear Chair Teshara and Members of the TRPA Advisory Planning Commission:

The Friends of the West Shore (FOWS) and Tahoe Area Sierra Club (TASC) request the swift inclusion of revisions to the Code to protect Tahoe's scenic ridgelines. The TRPA Compact¹ (Article I) specifies that the TRPA's role includes:

“(6) Maintenance of the social and economic health of the region depends on maintaining the significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific, natural public health values provided by the Lake Tahoe Basin...“(10) In order to preserve the scenic beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities of the region, there is a need to insure an equilibrium between the region's natural endowment and its manmade environment.” [Emphasis added].

The TRPA Goals & Policies² also call for the protection of Lake Tahoe's scenic values. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

“LU-1.1 THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE REGION SHALL BE AS A MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA WITH OUTSTANDING SCENIC AND NATURAL VALUES.

The economic health of the Region depends on a viable tourist and recreation-oriented environment. It is the intent of this Regional Plan, among other things, to encourage development that enhances these values.

...

GOAL SR-1

MAINTAIN AND RESTORE THE SCENIC QUALITIES OF THE NATURAL APPEARING LANDSCAPE.

SR-1.1 ALL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SHALL EXAMINE IMPACTS TO THE IDENTIFIED LANDSCAPE VIEWS FROM ROADWAYS, BIKE PATHS, PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS, AND LAKE TAHOE.” [Emphasis added]

In TRPA's 1982 EIS for the development of the environmental threshold carrying capacities, it was recognized that:³

“...Scenic quality is perhaps the most often identified natural resource of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Visitors to the area enjoy views of a magnificent lake sitting within a forested mountainous environment under clear blue skies. The Tahoe Basin is unique in that it combines visual elements normally found in several different landscape settings into one clearly defined region exhibiting exceptionally high aesthetic values...”

“...The distinctive mountain landforms surround the flat plane of the Lake, creating an enclosed landscape type. The edges between sky and ridgetops, between water and shore, and between vegetation and rock all add interest to the scenic landscape.”

“...views of natural landscape features uninterrupted by manmade development rank higher than views competing with or blocked by buildings. Also, large scale panoramic views rate higher than focused or intermittent, obscured views...” [Emphasis added]

¹ <http://www.trpa.org/bi-state-compact/>

² http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Regional_Plan_Goals_Policies_Final-2012-12-12.pdf

³ *Environmental Impact Statement for the Establishment of Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities*, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. May 1982. (p. 44-45).

However, the Code fails to specifically protect the scenic values of natural ridgelines. Chapter 13 includes a statement that Area Plans “consider” ridgeline and viewshed protection.⁴ We request the Code be revised to specifically state “ridgelines and viewsheds shall be protected”. In addition, such language is needed in Code Section 66 to protect these natural values in *all circumstances*, not just when new Area Plans are adopted. Example language can easily be found in other areas, including many in Colorado resort communities. We are happy to provide those examples for you.

Please feel free to contact Jennifer Quashnick at jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net or Laurel Ames at laurel@watershednetwork.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Laurel Ames,
Conservation Chair,
Tahoe Area Sierra Club



Susan Gearhart,
President,
Friends of the West Shore



Jennifer Quashnick
Conservation Consultant
Friends of the West Shore

⁴ http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/TRPA-Final-Code-Adopted-by-Governing-Board-7_23_2014-amended_notracking.pdf (p. 13-11)