

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED – FACT SHEET NO. 3

Monday, Aug. 26, 2002
***Nevada Legislative Commission's
Committee to Continue the Review
Of Programs and Activities in the
Lake Tahoe Basin***
**12:30 p.m. Incline Village General
Improvement District
955 Fairview Boulevard
Incline Village, Nevada**

Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2002
TRPA Governing Board
**9:30 a.m. North Tahoe Community
Conference Center
Kings Beach, California**

Preserving the Scenic Quality of Lake Tahoe's Shoreline

What do you hope to remember after a day of touring Lake Tahoe? Is the image one of sandy beaches, rock outcroppings and brilliant blue water? Or do you leave with an image of a highly developed shoreline dominated by homes and other structures? Somewhere in between those two images is the picture of the Lake Tahoe shoreline that is embodied in the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan scenic quality threshold.

While beauty is absolutely in the eye of the beholder, visual magnitude and contrast can be measured and quantified for purposes of preserving the unique natural "feel" of Lake Tahoe's shoreline. We are now proposing a refined system for determining visual magnitude and contrast to ensure that new and expanded structures integrate rather than contrast with the natural landscape.

Here are some facts:

FACT: The 1980 Tahoe Regional Planning Compact says that the "social and economic health of the region depends on maintaining the significant scenic . . . values provided by the Lake Tahoe Basin" and mandates TRPA to preserve scenic beauty by insuring an "equilibrium between the region's natural endowment and its manmade environment".

FACT: In 1982, TRPA adopted environmental threshold standards in nine areas. Water quality was just one. Scenic quality was another.

FACT: In 1982, each of 33 “shoreline units” was scored based on the view of the backdrop, the character of the shoreline and natural and man-made features. A moderate status quo baseline score was established as the desired measure of scenic quality that would allow shoreline development to occur but not dominate over and contrast with the natural landscape.

FACT: *TRPA is mandated by the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact to make progress toward attainment and must take appropriate steps to reverse negative trends.* In 1982, four of the 33 units were in “non-attainment.” In 2001, nine additional units had fallen out of attainment.

FACT: The negative trend, which is the result of an increase in visual dominance and contrast of man-made structures, has been measured by the same independent scenic quality experts using the same criteria since 1986.

FACT: *TRPA has listened and has responded.* During the last six months, TRPA has held 22 workshops with lakefront property owners and their paid consultants, lobbyists, and attorneys. The current scenic quality proposal incorporates six major concessions based on input received at these meetings.

FACT: The proposed system provides lakefront property owners with a variety of options on how to integrate new and expanded structures with the natural landscape. The options include color, number of surface planes, texture of materials, and visible perimeter. These design elements can be incorporated into a variety of home sizes and architectural styles. There are homes as large as 5,000 square feet on the lake today that are well integrated and meet or exceed the proposed visual magnitude and contrast scores.

FACT: *The scenic review system does not require reduction in views from existing homes.*

FACT: Existing homes are not subject to the proposed scenic review system unless the owners want to tear down and rebuild or expand. Many existing homes, as noted, will either already meet the score or come very close, requiring little or no change.

FACT: In the event visual dominance and contrast must be reduced, homeowners will have five years to paint, plant additional vegetation, or do whatever is required to achieve compliance. In every case of shoreline development, the cost of scenic quality mitigation measures will total a tiny fraction of the construction costs and/or the property value.

FACT: *The public interest and investment in preserving the scenic and recreational values of Lake Tahoe will be protected with adoption of the scenic quality review system.*

For more information on the proposal, visit the TRPA website at www.trpa.org/scenic/scenic.html.