MEMORANDUM

To: TRPA Hearings Officer

From: TRPA Staff

Date: March 24, 2011

Subject: South Tahoe Public Utility District Headworks Replacement, Phase 2, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, El Dorado County, California, Assessor’s Parcel Number 025-061-32, TRPA File #ERSP2010-1318

Proposed Action: Hearings Officer action on the proposed project and related findings based on this staff summary and the attached Draft Permit. The required actions and recommended conditions are outlined in Section D of this Staff Summary.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the project based on this staff summary and the evidence contained in the project record. The recommended conditions of approval are contained in the attached Draft Permit.

Project Description: The proposed project consists of replacing the existing Headworks Facility at the wastewater treatment plant. The Headworks Facility receives raw sewage at the beginning of the treatment process, and provides preliminary treatment of the sewage. Most of the existing Headworks Facility has been in service for over 50 years and is critical to South Tahoe Public Utility District’s (STPUD) operations and compliance with the 1967 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, which prohibits the discharge of any wastewater in the Tahoe Basin. Replacing the Headworks Facility is required to ensure a highly reliable and efficient wastewater treatment and effluent transport system.

As the continuing operation of the wastewater treatment plant requires that the existing Headworks Facility remains in service, the project is divided into two phases. STPUD has completed Phase 1 of the project, in which the site for the new Headworks Facility has been prepared for construction of the new building and ancillary features.

Phase 2 includes the construction of the new Headworks Facility and then the demolition of the existing facility when the new facility is online. This project does not expand the capacity of the South Tahoe Public Utility District’s wastewater treatment system.

Site Description: The proposed project area is located at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive in the City of South Lake Tahoe, CA. The project area is within Land Capability Class 6. Surrounding land uses include single family dwellings, a community college, community play fields and open space.
Issues: According to Plan Area Statement 098, Bijou/Al Tahoe Community Plan, District 4, Public Utility Centers are a special use and therefore require Hearings Officer review in accordance with Chapter 4, Appendix A, of the TRPA Code.

Staff Analysis:

A. Environmental Documentation: TRPA staff has completed the Initial Environmental Checklist (IEC) and “Project Review Conformance Checklist and Article V(g) Findings” in accordance with Chapter 6, Subsection 6.3.B of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. All responses contained on said checklists indicate compliance with the environmental threshold carrying capacities. A copy of the completed checklists will be made available at the Hearings Officer hearing and at TRPA.

B. Plan Area Statement: The project is located within the Bijou/Al Tahoe Community Plan. The Land Use Classification is Commercial/Public Service and the Management Strategy is Redirection. Agency Staff has reviewed the subject Community Plan and has determined that the project is consistent with the applicable planning statement, planning considerations, and special policies. The proposed use (public utility center) is listed as a special use.

C. Required Findings: The following is a list of the required findings as set forth in Chapters 6, 18, 20, 22, and 64 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. Following each finding, Agency staff has indicated if there is sufficient evidence contained in the record to make the applicable findings or has briefly summarized the evidence on which the finding can be made.

1. Chapter 6 – Required Findings:

(a) The project is consistent with and will not adversely affect implementation of the Regional Plan, including all applicable Goals and Policies, Plan Area Statements and maps, the Code and other TRPA plans and programs.

Based on the findings provided on the Initial Environmental Checklist and the Article V(g) Findings Checklist, there is sufficient evidence in the project file to make this finding. The proposed project is compatible with surrounding linear public facilities, is non-growth inducing, and with the special permit conditions will meet all TRPA Codes and Ordinances.

(b) The project will not cause the environmental threshold carrying capacities to be exceeded.

TRPA staff has completed the “Project Review Conformance Checklist and Article V(g) Findings” in accordance with Chapter 6, Subsection 6.3.B of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. All responses contained on said checklist indicate compliance with the environmental threshold carrying capacities. Also, the applicant has completed an Initial Environmental Checklist (IEC). No significant environmental impacts were identified and staff has concluded that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. A copy of the completed checklist and IEC will be made available at the Hearings Officer hearing and at TRPA.
(c) Wherever federal, state or local air and water quality standards applicable for the Region, whichever are strictest, must be attained and maintained pursuant to Article V(g) of the TPRA Compact, the project meets or exceeds such standards.

All potential effects are temporary and shall be mitigated through temporary and permanent Best Management Practices. The applicant will meet or exceed all federal, state, or local water quality standards. Upon completion of construction, the projects will have no impact upon water quality standards.

2. Chapter 18 – Special Use Findings:

(a) The project, to which the use pertains, is of such a nature, scale, density, intensity and type to be an appropriate use for the parcel on which, and surrounding area in which, it will be located.

The proposed Headworks Facility replacement project is located on a site currently used by STPUD as a wastewater treatment plant. As such, the proposed project is a replacement of an existing use on the property and is required for public health and safety and compliance with the 1967 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

(b) The project to which the use pertains, will not be injurious or disturbing to the health, safety, enjoyment of property, or general welfare of persons or property in the neighborhood, or general welfare of the region, and the applicant has taken reasonable steps to protect against any such injury and to protect the land, water, and air resources of both the applicant’s property and that of surrounding property owners.

This public health and safety project will directly enhance the health and safety of the property, and general welfare of the persons in the neighborhood and community. The applicant has taken every step to protect the land, water and air resources. During the project heavy equipment will be used at the site and heavy debris will be removed. The Contractor will be required to use routes that are appropriate for the load. Additionally, the project includes replacement of the existing odor control system, which is designed to minimize fugitive odors off-site of the wastewater treatment plant.

(c) The project, to which the use pertains, will not change the character of the neighborhood detrimentally affect or alter the purpose of the applicable planning area statement, community plan and specific or master plan, as the case may be.

The project will not adversely affect the community plan or change the character of the neighborhood. The proposed project is limited to replacing and upgrading existing facilities without increasing plant capacity and includes the installation of Permanent Best Management Practices.

3. Chapter 20 – Land Coverage Findings:

(a) The relocation is to an equal or superior portion of the parcel.
All land coverage relocation will take place in Land Capability Class 6. No additional coverage is created with this project.

(b) The area from which the land coverage was removed for relocation is restored in accordance with Subsection 20.4.C.

As a condition of approval, all areas where land coverage is removed shall be required to be revegetated and restored in accordance with Subsection 20.4.C. The applicant will be required to submit a landscape plan which shows all areas were land coverage will be removed and revegetated.

(c) The relocation is not to Land Capability Districts 1a, 1b, 1c, 2 or 3, from any higher numbered land capability district.

All relocated land coverage will be in within Class 6.

4. Chapter 22-Height Findings

(a) When viewed from major arterials, scenic turnouts, public recreation areas or the waters of Lake Tahoe, from a distance of 300 feet, the additional height will not cause a building to extend above the forest canopy, when present, or a ridgeline. For height greater than set forth in Table A for a 5:12 pitch, the additional height shall not increase the visual magnitude beyond that permitted for structures in the shoreland as set forth in Section 30.15.G, Additional Visual Magnitude, or Appendix H, Visual Assessment Tool, of the Design Review Guidelines.

The proposed structure is not visible from major arterials, scenic turnouts, public recreation areas or the waters of Lake Tahoe.

(b) When outside a community plan, the additional height is consistent with surrounding land uses.

The project area is located within the Bijou/Al Tahoe Community Plan. The proposed building is similar in height to the surrounding one and two-story buildings on the STPUD property and structures located at the adjacent Lake Tahoe Community College.

(c) With respect to that portion of the building which is permitted the additional height, the building has been designed to minimize interference with existing views within the area to the extent practicable.

The proposed structure is the replacement of a previous structure of the same scale, and has been designed to coordinate with the Customer Service Facility and the Electrical and Generator Building that surround it. As such, the proposed structure has been designed to minimize interference with the existing views within the area.
5. Chapter 64 – Excavation Findings:

(a) A soils/hydrologic report prepared by a qualified professional, whose proposed content and methodology has been reviewed and approved in advance by TRPA, demonstrates that no interference or interception of groundwater will occur as a result of the excavation.

The proposed project is necessary for the protection of public health and safety and the environment, as it will allow the District to continue to meet its obligation to treat and export wastewater in compliance with the 1967 Porter-Cologne Act. The site for the Headworks Facility Building must be excavated to a depth below seasonal high ground water table (14’8” below ground surface, plus a small 1ft deep sump), because it is dictated by the hydraulic grade line of wastewater flow through the plant. It is not possible to construct the proposed structure any shallower without detrimental impact on the entire treatment process. TRPA has approved a waiver (TRPA File # LCAP2009-0227) for the excavation limitations for this project. In conjunction with the design, a geotechnical exploration was performed in October 2009, including one boring in the vicinity of the proposed Headworks Facility (TRPA File# LCAP2009-0227). Groundwater was encountered approximately 14.5 feet below ground surface. Appropriate shoring and dewatering controls will be implemented. Ground water collected during construction dewatering will be treated in a settling basin and routed through the wastewater treatment system.

(b) The excavation is designed such that no damage occurs to mature trees, except where tree removal is allowed pursuant to Subsection 65.2.E, including root systems and hydrologic conditions of the soil.

There are no mature trees in the vicinity of the project area that might be adversely impacted by the proposed excavation.

(c) Excavated material is disposed of pursuant to Section 64.5 and the project area’s natural topography is maintained pursuant to Subparagraph 30.5.A(1); or if groundwater interception or interference will occur as demonstrated by a soils/hydrologic report prepared by a qualified professional, the excavation can be made as an exception pursuant to Subparagraph 64.7.A(2) and measures are included in the project to maintain groundwater flows to avoid adverse impacts to SEZ vegetation, if any would be affected, and to prevent any groundwater or subsurface water flow from leaving the project area as surface flow.

Approximately 7,000 cubic yards of soil will be excavated during the project. Excess material will be handled and disposed of in accordance with Subsection 64.5. At the completion of the project the site will be returned to existing grades.
Required Actions: Agency staff recommends that the Hearings Officer approve the project by making the following motions and findings based on this staff summary and the evidence contained in the record:

I. Approve the findings contained in this staff summary, and a finding of no significant environmental effect.

II. Approve the project, based on the staff summary, subject to the conditions contained in the attached Draft TRPA permit.

Attachments:

1. Draft Permit
2. Site Plan
3. Simulation
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Replacement Headworks Facility

PERMITTEE(S): South Tahoe Public Utility District

COUNTY/LOCATION: El Dorado County/1275 Meadow Crest Drive

Having made the findings required by Agency ordinances and rules, the Hearings Officer approved the project on March 31, 2011, subject to the standard conditions of approval attached hereto (Attachment Q) and the special conditions found in this permit.

This permit shall expire on March 31, 2014 without further notice unless the construction has commenced prior to this date and diligently pursued thereafter. Commencement of construction consists of pouring concrete for a foundation and does not include grading, installation of utilities or landscaping. Diligent pursuit is defined as completion of the project within the approved construction schedule. The expiration date shall not be extended unless the project is determined by TRPA to be the subject of legal action which delayed or rendered impossible the diligent pursuit of the permit.

NO TREE REMOVAL, CONSTRUCTION OR GRADING SHALL COMMENCE UNTIL:
(1) TRPA RECEIVES A COPY OF THIS PERMIT UPON WHICH THE PERMITTEE(S) HAS ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE PERMIT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONTENTS OF THE PERMIT;
(2) ALL PRE-CONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL ARE SATISFIED AS EVIDENCED BY TRPA’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THIS PERMIT;
(3) THE PERMITTEE OBTAINS A CITY BUILDING PERMIT. TRPA’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN A CITY BUILDING PERMIT. THE CITY PERMIT AND THE TRPA PERMIT ARE INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER AND MAY HAVE DIFFERENT EXPIRATION DATES AND RULES REGARDING EXTENSIONS; AND
(4) A TRPA PRE-GRADING INSPECTION HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH THE PROPERTY OWNER AND/OR THE CONTRACTOR.

PERMITTEE’S ACCEPTANCE: I have read the permit and the conditions of approval and understand and accept them. I also understand that I am responsible for compliance with all the conditions of the permit and am responsible for my agents’ and employees’ compliance with the permit conditions. I also understand that if the property is sold, I remain liable for the permit conditions until or unless the new owner acknowledges the transfer of the permit and notifies TRPA in writing of such acceptance. I also understand that certain mitigation fees associated with this permit are non-refundable once paid to TRPA. I understand that it is my sole responsibility to obtain any and all required approvals from any other state, local or federal agencies that may have jurisdiction over this project whether or not they are listed in this permit.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Permittee(s) ___________________________      Date______________________

PERMIT CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
Excess Coverage Mitigation Fee (1): Amount $32,019.50 Paid _____ Receipt No.______

Security Posted (2): Amount $_______ Type ___ Paid _____ Receipt No.______

Security Administrative Fee (3): Amount $_______ Paid _____ Receipt No.______

Notes:
(1) See Special Condition 3. E, below.
(2) Amount to be determined. See Special Condition 3. D, below.
(3) $152 if a cash security is posted, or $135 if a non-cash security is posted.

Required plans determined to be in conformance with approval: Date:__________

TRPA ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The permittee has complied with all pre-construction conditions of approval as of this date and is eligible for a county building permit:

TRPA Executive Director/Designee Date

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. This permit specifically authorizes the construction for the replacement of the Headworks Facility at the waste water treatment plant for South Tahoe Public Utility District in South Lake Tahoe. The existing Headworks Facility will remain in operation until the proposed facility is operational. Once the new facility is online the existing facility will be removed. The project has received approval for excavation to 15 bgs (below ground surface) for the proposed structure and 17 feet bgs for over excavation for the demolition of the existing structure. No additional coverage is required as part of this permit. The project includes removal and banking 4,552 square feet of coverage.

2. The Standard Conditions of Approval listed in Attachment Q shall apply to this permit.

3. Prior to permit acknowledgement, the following conditions of approval must be satisfied.

   A. The site plan shall be revised to include:

      (1) The following revised land coverage calculations:

      (a) Coverage table to reflect current existing and proposed coverage calculations for Land Capability Class 6 as follows:

             Existing Coverage  661,983
             Proposed Coverage  657,431
             Banked Coverage    4,552
(2) A note indicating: “All areas disturbed by construction shall be revegetated in accordance with the TRPA Handbook of Best Management Practices and Living with Fire, Lake Tahoe Basin, Second Edition.”

(3) Temporary erosion control structures located downslope of the proposed construction areas.

(4) The permittee shall submit calculations and proposed permanent Best Management Practices for the slope and soil type of the construction area that will capture and infiltrate a 20 year/1 hour storm event using the updated spreadsheet available at www.tahoebmp.org.

B. A landscape plan will be submitted in accordance with the standards required in Sections 30.7 and 81.7 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances for TRPA review and approval prior to the security return. The final landscaping plans shall be consistent with prior approvals and shall be limited to appropriate species. The landscape plan shall have approval by the local fire protection agency prior to submittal to TRPA for review.

C. Prior to security release photos shall be provided to TRPA taken during the construction of any subsurface BMP’s or of any trenching and backfilling with gravel.

D. The security required under Standard Condition I.B of Attachment Q shall be determined upon the permittee’s submittal of required Best Management Practices plan and related cost estimate for the project area. Please see Attachment J, Security Procedures, for appropriate methods of posting the security and for calculation of the required security administration fee.

E. The affected property has 7,259 square feet of excess land coverage. The permittee shall mitigate a portion or all of the excess land coverage on this property by removing coverage within Hydrologic Transfer Area 5 (Upper Truckee) or by submitting an excess coverage mitigation fee.

To calculate the amount of excess coverage to be removed, use the following formula:

Estimated project construction cost multiplied by the fee percentage of 0.02 (as identified in Table A of Subsection 20.5.A.(3), Chapter 20 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances) divided by the mitigation factor of 8. If you choose this option, please revise your final site plans and land coverage calculations to account for the permanent coverage removal.

An excess land coverage mitigation fee may be paid in lieu of permanently retiring land coverage. The excess coverage mitigation fee shall be calculated as follows:
Coverage reduction square footage (as determined by formula above) multiplied by the coverage mitigation cost fee of $8.50 for projects within Hydrologic Transfer Area 5 (Upper Truckee). Please provide a construction cost estimate by your licensed contractor, architect or engineer. In no case shall the mitigation fee be less than $200.00.

F. The permittee shall submit a projected construction completion schedule to TRPA prior to commencement of construction.

G. The permittee shall submit three sets of final construction drawings and site plans to TRPA.

4. All waste resulting from the saw-cutting of pavement shall be removed using a vacuum (or other TRPA approved method) during the cutting process or immediately thereafter. Discharge of waste material to surface drainage features is prohibited and constitutes a violation of this permit.

5. Soil stockpiles shall not be placed on top of existing vegetation. All excavated material shall be placed uphill of trench locations. All temporary stockpiles shall be contained by temporary erosion control fences or fiber roll logs (12” minimum diameter) and covered with non-permeable material at the end of the work day and/or during periods of precipitation of high winds.

6. Drop inlets and storm water conveyance and treatment facilities located downslope of excavated material shall be protected by temporary erosion control fences or fiber roll logs (minimum 12 inch diameter).

7. Temporary erosion control structures must be maintained until disturbed areas are stabilized or sufficiently revegetated. Temporary erosion control structures shall be removed once the site has been stabilized or revegetated.

8. All temporary erosion control and vegetation protection fencing shall be maintained in a functioning condition during construction staging activities and until the site is revegetated.

9. Asphalt cuttings and soil tracked onto pavement shall be removed through regular sweeping at the end of each business day.

10. Any normal construction activities creating noise in excess to the TRPA noise standards shall be considered exempt from said standards provided all such work is conducted between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 6:30 P.M.

11. This site shall be winterized in accordance with the provisions of Attachment Q by October 15th of each construction season.

END OF PERMIT