

Nevada Legislative Committee on TRPA Presentation – March 8, 2006

Rachelle Pellissier ED with the Workforce Housing Association of Truckee Tahoe – WHATT for short.

History

I will give you just a brief history.

- About 5 years ago when I was President/CEO of the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce, Breeze Cross came to me to discuss the problem that he was having recruiting and retaining employees, saying that he thought it might have to do with a lack of affordable workforce housing.
- Resort Association and the Chamber got together and surveyed our members asking if they were having a problem recruiting and retaining employees because of the lack of affordable housing.
- We found that over 80% of the employers stated that they were have a problem recruiting and retain employees at all levels -- front line, middle management and the top executive level.
- We then facilitated three forums to discuss our findings – inviting both the private and public sector from Western Washoe County, Eastern Placer County, Eastern Nevada County, TRPA and Truckee.
- After looking at the results from the surveys and listening to the community through the forum process, it became apparent that if we were going to address the affordable workforce housing shortage in a region like ours with so many different jurisdictions, we were going to have to form a organization whose main focus is advocacy for the creation of affordable workforce housing.

What is Affordable Housing?

√	EXHIBIT K TAHOE	Document consists of 5 pages.
	Entire document provided.	
		Meeting Date 03-08-06

There are three levels of affordable housing that we talk about:

- Very Low Income housing which is affordable for those making up to 50% of median income
- Low Income Housing which is affordable for those making 51 – 80 % of median income
- Moderate Income Housing which is affordable for those making 81 – 120% of median income.

The median income for a family of 4 in our region is \$64,500. With a 5% down-payment, that allows for an affordable home purchase price of \$260,000.

The median sales price of a house in 2005 on the North and West Shore of Tahoe was \$681,000, in Truckee it was \$685,000, and in Incline Village it was \$1,140,000.

The high cost of purchasing a home trickles down to rental costs also. This is just a small snap shot of the beginnings of a real social and economic crisis in our region.

The Widening Gap

- Census statistics show that from 1990 to 2000, employment within the Basin increased by 1,421 jobs. Renter occupied housing increased by only 25 units.
- In 2001, 68% of resident voters indicated that affordable housing was a “very important” improvement priority for Tahoe.
- In the same survey, 59% indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the housing options available to them.

- Placer County Court System records show that the number of full-time residents living in the Eastern Placer County area declined by 20% in the last two years.
- *48% reduction of Northshore school pop in last 10 years*
- The School District, Hospital District and PUD's state that a large percentage of their employees are nearing retirement age in the next 5 years. They do not know how they will replace those workers without affordable housing.
- *Great % of workers live outside the basin.*

Luckily, WHATT in its short existence has made a lot of headway.

But, with the headway, we have found that a lot more needs to be done than just advocacy. We have expanded our roles to include those of a developer of affordable housing.

In order to facilitate the building of affordable housing in the Basin, some changes to the TRPA codes must be made.

I have brought along with me Deb Howard who is a real estate broker in South Lake Tahoe who had been working with the Lake Tahoe Housing Coalition to develop changes to TRPA's codes and ordinances that will facilitate the building of the much needed affordable housing.

She will run through her group's findings for you.

Thank you Rachelle,
And Thank you again,

We've heard and talked about the state of affordable housing in the Tahoe basin and drastic need for new and refurbished housing units to accommodate the middle core and workforce, seniors and students of our communities. Our business community, large and small employers including; LTCC, Barton Hosp, City police and fire, County, USFS, LTUSD, just to mention a few, all are having difficulty both to retaining and recruiting quality employees due to housing costs out of reach.

The Lake Tahoe Coalition, a group of basin wide community members volunteers and organizations, private parties and developers, Chambers of Commerce and STAR, whose mission over the past few years has been to identify and overcome the remaining barriers to the development of quality housing affordable and deed restricted to the qualified local resident. We've identified several TRPA and City code restrictions that have been central to the lack of development and working with the TRPA and City staff and LGC we've found common ground and made recommendations for reasonable changes. Our goal is to see the code changes approved and implemented allowing for the demonstration housing units to be built, with many more to follow, and ultimately to see our workforce retained or returning in the hopes of homeownership and quality rentals.

It has been a busy and long few years, I'm pleased to announce through the good work of these parties and others is hopefully soon to see fruition. The code changes are being forwarded through the TVCP once the EIR/EIS completed which hopefully supports the code changes, we'll move to the City Council and TRPAGB for approval. Many of the demonstration projects are prepared to break ground this Spring/Summer and build.

The code changes consist of;

Annexation, land coverage, subdivision of moderate units of use, height and TAU conversion.

While we are on the brink of creating positive environment for change and will hopefully see many quality affordable housing projects flourish under these new policies and incentives, my biggest regret is that it has taken so long to make reasonable changes. What have we lost, over the past few years ... look to the population growth in the Valley, ask your business owner and employers, and ask anyone who has to commute.

We certainly need to create an environment within our TRPA and government jurisdictions to implement reasonable change within a reasonable time, a system that is more responsive and creates invites not restrictions for a better community. What we have in the South Shore is a dying infrastructure, 7 miles of strip commercial that is dying for change reasonable change.

Unfortunately the current code restricts one from making changes rather than encourages or incentivizes. I'm encouraged by the P7 and the place based discussions, but when it comes to housing and many of the commercial changes, we can't wait. We need balanced change now.