



City of South Lake Tahoe Report to City Council and Board of Supervisors

Meeting Date: April 27, 2021

Title: 56-Acre Master Plan Project

Location: 1150 Rufus Allen Boulevard (APNs: 026-082-013, -14, -15)

Responsible Staff Member: John Hitchcock, Planning Manager (530) 542-7472

Background:

The project area, known as the 56-Acres (see Attachment 02), is within the boundaries of the Bijou/Al Tahoe Community Plan, which provides policies, allowable land uses, and development standards applicable to the project site. A fundamental cornerstone of this Community Plan is the conviction that Bijou/Al Tahoe area should serve as a family-oriented and recreation center, as well as a town center for the local community. Goals of the Bijou/Al Tahoe Community Plan also include reducing dependency on the automobile and improving the movement of people, goods, and services within the Bijou/Al Tahoe area, and the Lake Tahoe Region. The City General Plan also describes a vision and policy direction for the expansion of recreation and civic center facilities within the Bijou/Al Tahoe Community Plan area.

Master planning efforts for the 56-Acres began in 2006 when the California Tahoe Conservancy, in partnership with the City and El Dorado County, funded the development of a concept plan for the area. The conceptual planning process was overseen by two committees, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and a Steering Committee representing a number of interests within the community. The process resulted in an in-depth analysis of existing environmental, historical, and cultural conditions in the project area and several alternatives for future uses and development. Although the conceptual planning was never finalized, the process was the impetus to begin improvements to the site.

The 56-Acre site is located in the center of the City of South Lake Tahoe at the juncture where US Highway 50 meets the shores of Lake Tahoe. The location of the project provides an important gateway to vehicles approaching the City from the west. The property contains some of the largest remaining public open spaces within the city limits. It hosts a variety of existing features, including various recreational facilities, a museum, highway frontage, and a scenic lakefront park that drops off steeply leading to the beaches of Lake Tahoe (see Attachment 02). Just to the west of the project site is the Harrison Avenue business zone, which was improved by a streetscape project in 2015.

The Project site is comprised of four parcels totaling 56.35 acres. The County of El Dorado owns 73% of the project site (40.87 acres), while the City owns 27% (15.48 acres). In 1973, the grant deed conveying the 15.48 acres from the County to City was executed, stating the "property should be used exclusively for a public park, recreation, cultural and visitor information purposes."

An on-site campground occupies approximately 22.5 acres of the forested center of the site. Usage is seasonal from May through October.

In the late 80's the City enhanced the campground facilities by adding electrical and domestic water at some sites, and in 2001 the City built an indoor ice arena facility, but for the most part, the site remained in a static development condition until 2006 when the California Tahoe Conservancy, in partnership with the City and El Dorado County, funded a 56-Acre concept planning process. This process yielded several alternatives, and though never finalized, the process started the impetus to begin improvements to the site.

The first improvement project to come from the 2006 conceptual planning process was a shore zone project known as "Lakeview Commons." Phase 1 was built in 2012/13. The completed project provides a state-of-the-art lakeside gathering place in which music, festivals, outdoor events, and water recreation activities abound. This project has proven to be very successful. At this time, however, Phase 2 of the shore zone project has yet to be constructed and is being considered in the master planning process.

Upon completion of Lakeview Commons and the subsequent Harrison Avenue Streetscape Project, the City recognized the need for continued improvements at the location, and in 2015, the City Council deemed recreation development as one of their strategic priorities. The City began the process of conceptual design for a new, larger recreation/aquatics center to replace the existing antiquated facility. Conceptual planning for the facility concluded in 2017, with a proposed new facility of approximately 70,000 square feet in size.

The City, however, did not immediately begin formal design services due to uncertainty in another measure being proposed at the time that may impact project funding. Accordingly, the recreation center design was suspended until April 2019, when City Council again deemed the project a priority. During the suspension in design services, the City initiated dialogue with El Dorado County to complete the 2006/07 conceptual planning process for the site and finalize a master plan.

Issue and Discussion:

On June 26, the California Tahoe Conservancy Board adopted Resolution 20-06-07, authorizing Proposition 68 grant funds to the City for up to \$425,000 to develop the 56-Acre Park Master Plan. The 56-Acre Master Plan Project is a collaborative vision of the City of South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County, and the California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC). Each agency is supporting this effort to turn the 56-Acre Project into a locally and nationally renowned civic space for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. The goals of the Master Plan focus on environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, provisions for recreational/civic needs, water quality, traffic mitigation, aesthetic improvements, and creating meaningful world-class facilities and public open space.

The purpose of the master plan is to develop a comprehensive strategy for the project site, facilities, programs, and services which is responsive to the community's demographics, social background, and multigenerational recreational needs. The plan will serve to guide the City in capital improvement planning, programmatic planning, maintenance and operational planning, and budgetary decision making.

Project objectives include:

- A Master Plan for future improvements, development, and operation of a locally and nationally renowned civic and recreational space for enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.
- A Master Plan that includes development of:
 - Multigenerational recreation center and aquatic complex
 - City government center
 - Outdoor event venue
 - Beach/Lakefront public facilities (Lakeview Commons)
 - Improved pedestrian access between the main portion of the project area and the beachfront portion of the project area
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle facilities connecting to surrounding destinations and the regional network
 - Active and passive recreation opportunities
- A Master Plan that provides for cultural and environmental preservation in future development and operations.
- A Master Plan that includes a clear plan for implementation including project phasing, necessary technical studies, regulatory challenges, permitting requirements, and potential funding sources.
- A master planning process that includes robust community participation and stakeholder support.
- Coordination with concurrent Recreation Center and Pool Complex architecture and engineering design.
- Completion of program level environmental impact analysis in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Since the conceptual planning process in 2006/07, several new elements or conditions have been discussed and recommended:

- Incorporate a new government center into the plan (approximately 30,000+ sq. ft.)
- Parcel lot line adjustments and/or merges as required to implement the master plan
- Relocation of the proposed multigenerational recreation and aquatic center from its current location to a new location adjacent to the highway
- Recommendations for future use existing recreation center facility
- Construction of an outdoor music venue/amphitheater
- Formally create a right of way for Rufus Allen Boulevard
- Consider a pedestrian overpass across US Hwy 50
- Incorporation of the Lakeview Commons Phase 2

The City has contracted with Design Workshop to assist in the development of the master plan, and they are responsible for project coordination and management, data collection & site assessment, public outreach and engagement, drafting the master plan, and preparing the environmental documentation.

Core Planning Team

A Core Planning Team (CPT) comprised of staff from the City Development Services and Public Works Departments, El Dorado County Planning, Parks and Recreation Departments and Chief Administrative Office, and the California Tahoe Conservancy was formed to assist in the development of the 56-Acre Master Plan. The role of the CPT was to help the consultant team in developing project goals and critical success factors, identifying key stakeholders and key elements for a successful community participation effort, and providing feedback throughout the planning process to ensure the project meets the goals of each organization and the overall goal of delivering a comprehensive master plan that is responsive to the community's and visitor's needs.

Public Outreach

A Public Engagement Plan (PEP) was developed to guide outreach efforts and engage a diverse range of park users, residents, visitors, community organizations, and local officials. The public engagement effort included focus group interviews with key stakeholders, an on-site self-guided tour, online line surveys, and three public workshops to listen, share ideas, and refine the master plan concept plans.

In total, ten online-focused stakeholder meetings were conducted, over 150 community members participated in the three workshops, over 50 community members participated in the on-site self-guided tour, and over 200 individuals participated in the online survey. Overall, 82 percent of the respondents have expressed that they are very comfortable with the proposed program elements of the 56-Acre Master Plan Project or somewhat comfortable.

Stakeholder Meetings: A list of stakeholders was identified by the CPT, and focus group meetings were scheduled early in the planning process to gather their thoughts on the areas' opportunities and challenges and program elements. The stakeholder groups included the following:

- City of South Lake Tahoe Park and Recreation Commission Subcommittee
- El Dorado County Parks and Recreation Commission Subcommittee
- El Dorado County Commission on Aging
- El Dorado County Library Staff
- El Dorado County Public Works
- Harrison Avenue Business Owners
- Lake Tahoe Historical Society
- Tahoe Art League
- Local Entertainment Promoter
- City of South Lake Tahoe Senior Management

Input and feedback provided by the stakeholder-focused group meeting were incorporated and considered in developing the conceptual land use alternatives for the 56-Acre Master Plan Project.

Workshop #1 – Listen, Discovered and Learn: On November 10, 2020 the first online public workshop was conducted. The purpose of the first public workshop was to provide an overview of the project, the intended outcomes and to summarize/confirm the vision, goals and the types, sizes, and desired locations of site uses and facilities. The CPT and the consultant team provide a

summary of the information collected to date, establish expectations for the work moving forward, and inform the public of opportunities to provide input on the project's development.

Workshop #2 – Share Ideas: On January 20, 2021, the second online public workshop was conducted. During this workshop, the CPT and the consultant team presented three distinct alternatives (see Attachment 03 – Conceptual Alternative) for review and comment. The alternatives were based on the feedback received from focused stakeholder meetings and input from the on-site self-guided tours, the online surveys, and Workshop #1. The alternatives were presented through a webinar and live polling to ensure public ideas and comments were captured on the three alternatives. Based on the input received, there was a majority of support for Concept 3 (Mainstreet Concept) as providing the best conceptual layout for incorporating civic uses, play and gathering areas, vehicular circulation. Concept 3 proposes to locate a new multigenerational recreation/aquatic center and civic spaces on the northern portion of Lake Tahoe Boulevard and extends Tallac Avenue through the 56-Acres as a Mainstreet and relocate and upgrade the existing campground facility.

Workshop #3 – Share Ideas: On March 3, 2021 the third online public workshop was conducted. Building on input received in the second workshop, the CPT and the consultant team presented two recommended conceptual plans with detailed on-site improvements. Similar to previous efforts, the recommended master plan conceptual designs were presented through a live webinar and polling along with a video presentation of the webinar and interactive video survey. Both concepts are similar in design, with major facilities proposed in the same location, with the major difference being the incorporation of a Mainstreet that connects Tallac Avenue to Rufus Allen Boulevard. In this concept, the Mainstreet would provide access to all facilities located within 56-Acres as well as provide additional parking spaces and could be closed off for special events such as farmers markets, food, and food truck fairs (see Attachment 04). In the alternative concept, access to 56-Acres is provided via Rufus Allen Boulevard and the campground would be expanded in size. (See Attachment 05) Based on the input received, 95 percent of the respondents were comfortable or somewhat comfortable with moving forward with the Master Plan and associated alternatives.

With input from City, County, and CTC staff, participants at all workshops, and online feedback, the consultant team has developed a preferred conceptual site plan and one alternative to present to the Joint City Council and Board of Supervisors meeting for consideration and approval.

The preferred conceptual plan will illustrate the best aspects of the alternatives based on input and evaluation throughout the planning process. The preferred conceptual plan will include:

- Preferred areas for enhancement of open space, habitat enhancement, and sustainable native planting opportunities, and potential for community restoration projects
- Locations for public spaces, types of uses and activities, pedestrian, and vehicular circulation (including ADA accessibility)
- Location and space and capacity need for new and/ or renovated facilities to meet the identified need
- Location for recreational uses and facilities related to day use and overnight accommodations
- Maps, illustrations, before and after visualizations, and renderings of the conceptual plan to clearly communicate the aspects of facilities

On approval of the preferred concept or a hybrid of the preferred and the alternative concept, the consultant team will prepare a final concept plan and a public draft 56 Acres Park Master Plan report that will summarize and incorporate information gathered throughout the process in a document that will provide detail the future implementation of site improvements over the next 20 years.

The draft Master Plan will include but may not be limited to:

- Vision, mission, and objectives
- Summary of background research and information gathered
- Summary of public outreach process and community input, including evaluation and prioritization criteria
- Summary of the preliminary and preferred conceptual plan
- Connectivity Plan
- Infrastructure plan
- Recommended phasing of new development and/or renovations
- Necessary pre-project actions for implementation of each phase such as property or right of way acquisition, parcel reconfiguration, lease or contractual agreements, policy and/or regulatory amendments, project-specific environmental studies
- Opinion of probable costs for implementation phases
- List of potential funding sources
- Operational, maintenance, and use needs and/or polices

Upon completion of the draft Master Plan, the consultant team will commence the programmatic environmental impact analysis prior to preparing a final 56-Acres Master Plan for consideration by the City Council. The consultant team will incorporate feedback from City, County, and CTC staff and elected/appointed officials and programmatic environmental impact analysis in the final 56-Acre Master Plan.

Financial Implications:

To fund the 56-Acre Park Master Plan Project, the City submitted a request to the California Tahoe Conservancy for Proposition 68 grant funds. On June 26, the California Tahoe Conservancy Board adopted Resolution 20-06-07, authorizing a grant to the City for up to \$425,000 to develop the 56-Acre Master Plan.

Environmental Considerations – California Environmental Quality Act:

A programmatic Initial Study (IS) is envisioned to be the appropriate environmental document for evaluation of the master plan pursuant to CEQA. Our approach would integrate master planning and environmental review by considering environmental constraints early in the planning process and incorporating appropriate environmental protection measures and enhancements into the master plan to create a self-mitigating plan, to the extent feasible. For purposes of this proposal, it is assumed that all potential environmental impacts of the master plan could be mitigated to less-than-significant levels and that the IS would support a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). If the IS identified the potential for significant and unavoidable impacts, such that an EIR was required, the approach to preparing an initial study as proposed by the consultant team could be modified.

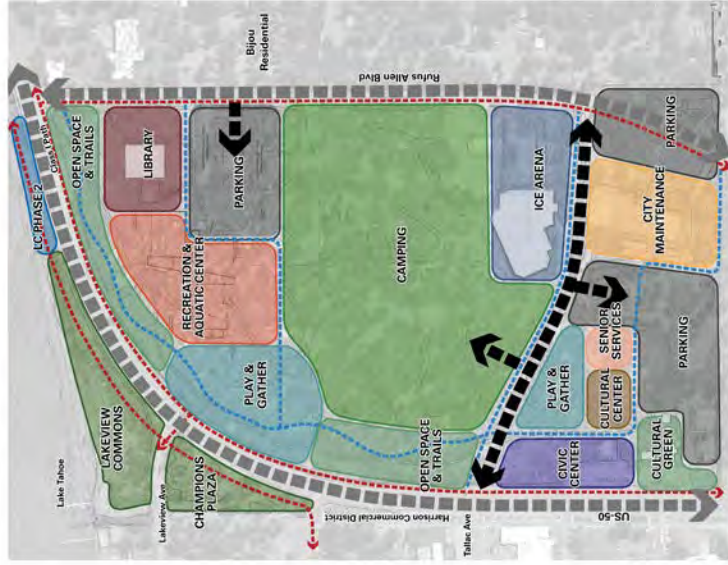
ATTACHMENT 02
LOCATION MAP



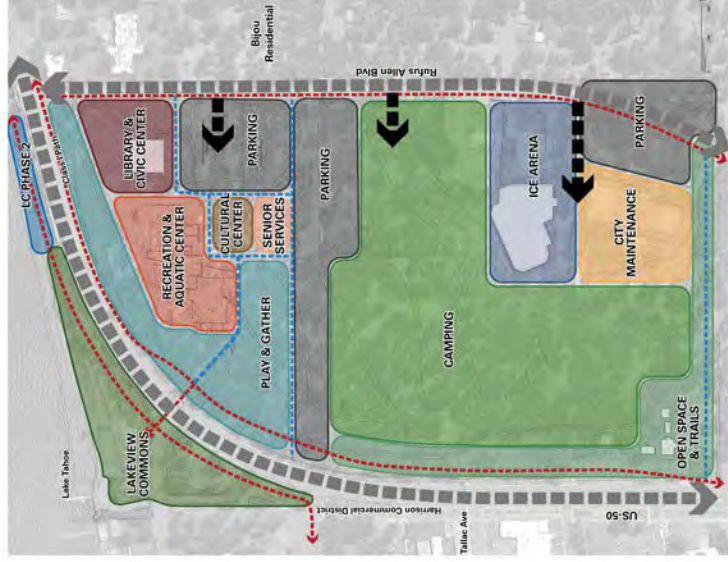
What We've Heard

In which concept do you feel best represents the program locations?

ATTACHMENT 03 CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES



Concept 1:
19%



Concept 2:
15%



Concept 3:
54%



