

2030 South Lake Tahoe General Plan
Revised Public Review Draft |
POLICY DOCUMENT

City of South Lake Tahoe

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INTRODUCTION

South Lake Tahoe is at a pivotal point in its history. The city has long been a premier destination for visitors from around the world, and has successfully created places that meet the needs of these guests. The city has also drawn residents who desire to live in a resort mountain community close to outdoor recreation. While the City has made great progress over the years in providing visitor services and amenities, there has not been as much progress in providing resident-serving commercial uses or housing for local workers.

The City of South Lake Tahoe's 2030 General Plan sets a new direction for how the community plans, manages, and implements change. The development of the General Plan began in 2005 based on the foundation of the City's Smart Growth Principles. In 2008, the City Council adopted a Sustainability Plan, which outlined a vision and policies to make South Lake Tahoe a leader in sustainability. These projects presented the philosophical and public policy framework for the concepts, strategies, and policies presented in this General Plan.

The 2030 General Plan was shaped over a two-year period by an extensive outreach process that engaged residents, businesses, stakeholders, and decision-makers. The following Introduction to the General Plan presents the Vision for South Lake Tahoe, explains the purpose and legal requirements of a General Plan, provides an overview of the General Plan's organization, and describes how the City's General Plan relates to other planning documents, including the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA) Regional Plan.

Most importantly the 2030 General Plan is designed to meet the needs of the present community without compromising the needs of future generations. South Lake Tahoe is blessed by being located in the heart of one the most important recreation and natural areas in the world—the Lake Tahoe Basin—and this plan will help ensure that future change builds upon these attributes. The goals, policies, and programs in this document outline a clear direction the City must take to move towards, and eventually achieve, a future that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.



VISION FOR SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

The following is the 2030 General Plan's Vision for South Lake Tahoe. This Vision describes how South Lake Tahoe should look in the year 2030 and is based on extensive public input received during various community workshops, stakeholder workshops, and a community survey, and from the Planning Commission, General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), and City Council.

Preamble

In 2030 South Lake Tahoe has become a vibrant and sustainable community that is the economic and social heart of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The following transformations have made this possible.

Community Identity Vision

In 2030 the City has been a leader in the Tahoe Basin for promoting land stewardship and sustainability. New and revitalized distinct commercial and social centers serve the needs of both local residents and visitors. The Y intersection in Tahoe Valley has become a mixed-use sub-regional center and is the main gateway for people entering South Lake Tahoe. Continued investment in recreational and commercial areas has added to the magnetism of South Shore as a premier visitor destination. In particular, the Lakeview Commons project has become the civic and recreational heart of the community through the consolidation of civic uses, and greater access to Lake Tahoe recreation via a new transit center. Each major district in South Lake Tahoe has a unique architectural style that provides transition and neighborhood character.

Land Use and Community Design Vision

In 2030 the Highway 50 corridor has been transformed into an interconnected series of compact mixed-use (commercial, office, residential, and tourist accommodation) districts that serve the needs of residents and visitors alike. The corridor is the heart of the community and contains year-round sidewalks and bikepaths. The transformation of the corridor has been fueled by the cooperative efforts of local, regional, and State governments, and private investors who share the vision for a prosperous and healthy region.

Economic Development Vision

In 2030 the new public and private investment has improved South Lake Tahoe's economy and helped to maintain a high quality of life while supporting environmental objectives. The city has a diverse array of locally-owned businesses that offer good wages and provide services and amenities that are needed and desired by the local community and visitors alike. This transformation has been possible due to the expansion and diversification of the local economy through new information, creative, environmentally-sound, and green technology businesses. The City has been successful in creating a regulatory programs along with economic

incentives that foster upgrades to existing businesses encourages new businesses to locate within the city limits.

Housing Vision

In 2030 there are a variety of new housing types and styles suitable for different family needs and incomes. High-quality new, revitalized, and renovated housing has improved neighborhoods and helped diversify the local economy by supporting permanent and seasonal employees. Various mixed-use and mixed-income developments have helped to create lively gathering places, a sense of community, and neighborhood identity.

Transportation and Circulation Vision

In 2030 Highway 50 has been redesigned into a multi-mode corridor that connects areas within South Lake Tahoe to neighboring communities. New investment has improved pedestrian, bike, and transit facilities. There are connected and geographically-distributed sidewalks and bike routes that provide convenient access to commercial and social centers. There are also low-emission transit vehicles, and strategic convenient access to walking and transit. Transit centers have been built which function as popular social gathering places. There are multiple options for convenient travel between home, work, and activity centers. There is also improved water-borne transit between South Lake Tahoe and neighboring communities and Federal/State parks. The City's green and environmentally sensitive airport provides convenient commercial air service options as an alternative to inter-regional automobile travel.

Public Facilities and Services Vision

In 2030 there has been an upgrade and expansion of public and quasi-public services and facilities in South Lake Tahoe. Interagency coordination has been successful at developing water supply infrastructure that provides improved and efficient services and fire flows to all parts of the city. Improved storm drainage systems have helped improve water quality and environmental health. Innovative and green infrastructure solutions in particular have helped create more sustainable and efficient solid waste, storm water, and drainage systems. In addition to infrastructure improvements the Lake Tahoe Community College has expanded to provide more classrooms, housing, and facilities that serve the community and foster the intellectual vitality of the community. Public and private partnerships have helped consolidate medical facilities within a core district near the present Barton Memorial Hospital.

Natural and Cultural Resources Vision

In 2030 South Lake Tahoe is a model community for its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote sustainability, improve the health of the forest, improve air quality, and improve Lake Tahoe's water clarity and restoration. In addition to achieving regional Environmental Thresholds, South Lake Tahoe has been successful in meeting the needs of its residents while not compromising the ability of future

generations to meet their own needs. The City is a leader in implementing sustainable policies and programs that have helped maintain and enhance the beauty of Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe Basin.

Recreation Vision

In 2030 South Lake Tahoe has become the premier tourist destination in the Tahoe Basin. The city attracts nature lovers, adventure sport enthusiasts, and families through numerous recreation and lodging options including the Lakeview Commons project, that provides multiple recreation amenities for residents and tourists alike. The project includes green building design, energy and water conservation measures, public transit, and state-of-the-art water quality improvements. The city has also become a premier ecotourism destination, with multiple businesses that highlight the natural and cultural environment of South Lake Tahoe. These businesses are also innovators in promoting recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation and other technology innovations.

Health and Safety Vision

In 2030 coordination with local, regional, State, and Federal agencies to create a healthy and fire-safe forest, open spaces, and built environment within the city limits and on surrounding public and private lands.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The General Plan Update included an extensive public outreach process to solicit feedback on major concepts, alternatives, and proposals throughout the process. The following is a summary of the 2030 General Plan's public outreach effort.

Meetings, Workshops, and Public Hearings

Between November 2007 and June 2009 the City held four community workshops, five Planning Commission/General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) meetings, six City Council meetings (including two Housing Element related meetings), and ten community and stakeholder workshops. A full listing of all General Plan update workshops and meetings, along with a brief description of the topics covered, is shown in Table I-1.

Latino Outreach Survey

In March 2009 the City conducted a survey of Latino residents as part of the public outreach effort for the General Plan. The survey, which contained questions about the positive and negative aspects of the city and its neighborhoods, was distributed to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the Family Resource Center in Al Tahoe. About 70 students responded to the survey and the input was used to draft policy concepts.

Community Survey

The City conducted a public opinion survey in 2008 that asked participants to rate the community's quality of life, service delivery, civic participation, and unique issues of local interest. The full summary of this survey is available on the City's website at: www.cityofslt.us.

Website

The City hosted an internet website for the Update that included an overview of the Update, workshop and meeting announcements, published documents and maps, and contact information. The website also had a feedback page where members of the public could write and submit comments on the Update.

E-Mail Blasts

The City built a database of e-mail addresses collected from various sources (e.g., General Plan Update website, stakeholder workshops, community workshops, and other sources) and sent out e-mails to the entire contact list at key points in the process. This was done to keep the community current on the Update, maintain their interest, and create greater turn-out for community workshops and other outreach efforts.

Newsletters

The City published a total of four newsletters during the Update that summarized the status of the Update, recently published reports and documents, and announcements for upcoming workshops and meetings.

GENERAL PLAN AREA

The General Plan Area refers to the geographic area that will be analyzed during the General Plan Update process. The 2030 General Plan's Planning Area covers approximately 25,383 acres, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, and is coterminous with the City's 2009 sphere of influence (Figure 1). The 2030 General Plan Land Use Diagram (Figure LU-1) only applies land uses to parcels within the 2009 city limits.

Insert Figure 1: General Plan Planning Area

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PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Every city and county in California must adopt a general plan. A general plan is a legal document that serves as a community's constitution for land use and development. The plan must be comprehensive and long-term, outlining proposals for the physical development of the city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the City's judgment bears relation to its planning (Government Code Section 65300 et seq.). The plan must be comprehensive in covering all territory within the adopting jurisdiction and it must be comprehensive in addressing all physical aspects of the community's development. While State law does not define long-term, most general plans look 15 to 25 years into the future. South Lake Tahoe's General Plan uses a time frame of 2010-2030.

State law specifically requires that the general plan address seven topics or elements. These elements are land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The general plan may also address other topics the community feels are relevant to its development. In the case of South Lake Tahoe, those other topics addressed in this plan are community character, economic development, public facilities and services, and recreation. For each topic addressed, the plan must analyze the significance of the issue in the community, set forth policy in text and diagrams, and outline specific programs for implementing these policies. The format and structure of the general plan is left to local discretion, but regardless of the format or issues addressed, all substantive parts of the plan must be consistent with one another.

Preparing, adopting, and maintaining a general plan serves several important purposes:

- Provides citizens with information about their community and with opportunities to participate in setting goals and determining policies and standards for the community's development;
- Provides local decision-makers and the community with a forum for resolving conflicts among competing interests and values;
- Expands the capacity of local government to analyze local and regional conditions and needs in order to respond effectively to the problems and opportunities facing the community;
- Fosters coordination of community development and environmental protection activities among local, regional, State, and Federal agencies;
- Defines the community's environmental, social, and economic sustainability goals;
- Records the local government's policies and standards for the maintenance and improvement of existing development and the location and characteristics of future development; and

- Guides and coordinates the many actions and day-to-day decisions of local government that are necessary to develop and protect the community.

ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

This 2030 General Plan sets out a long-term vision for South Lake Tahoe’s physical change and outlines goals, policies, standards, and implementation programs to guide day-to-day decisions concerning South Lake Tahoe’s development, redevelopment, and environmental protection through the year 2030. Designed to meet State planning requirements, the General Plan consists of two documents: the Background Report and the Policy Document.

General Plan Background Report

The Background Report (found under separate cover) inventories and analyzes the existing conditions and trends in South Lake Tahoe, and provides the formal supporting documentation for General Plan policies. The Background Report addresses the following nine subject areas:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Land Use and Community Design
- Chapter 3: Demographic and Economic Conditions
- Chapter 4: Housing
- Chapter 5: Transportation and Circulation
- Chapter 6: Public/Quasi-Public Facilities and Services
- Chapter 7: Natural and Cultural Resources
- Chapter 8: Recreational Resources
- Chapter 9: Health and Safety

General Plan Policy Document

This General Plan Policy Document is divided into four main parts:

Part I – Introduction

Part I is a summary of the General Plan, describing the nature and purpose of the plan, highlighting the Vision for South Lake Tahoe. It does not constitute formal general plan policy, but is rather a guide to understanding and interpreting Part II, III, and IV of the Policy Document.

Part II – Goals and Policies

Part II contains explicit statements of goals, policies, and standards that, along with Parts III and IV, constitute the formal policy of the City of South Lake Tahoe. Part II is divided into ten elements as follows:

- Land Use and Community Character
- Economic Development

- Housing
- Transportation and Circulation
- Public and Quasi-Public Facilities and Services
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Recreation and Open Space
- Health and Safety

Each element includes a vision and several goal statements relating to different sub-issues or different aspects of the topic addressed in the chapter. For each goal statement there are several policies that amplify the goal statement and provide direction to City staff and decision makers.

The following definitions describe the nature of the statements of goals, policies, standards, implementation programs, and quantified objectives as they are used in this document:

- **Goal.** The ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable.
- **Policy.** A specific statement in text or diagram guiding action and implying clear commitment.
- **Standard.** A specific, often quantified guideline, incorporated in a policy or implementation program, defining the relationship between two or more variables. Standards can often translate directly into regulatory controls.
- **Implementation Program.** An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy.
- **Quantified Objective (Housing Element only).** The number of housing units that the City expects to be constructed or the number of households the City expects will be assisted through Housing Element programs and based on general market conditions during the time frame of the Housing Element.

Part III – Neighborhood Priority Lists

Part III shows a priority list for each neighborhood to focus the City’s attention on needed improvements and amenities to make them a “Complete Neighborhood”. These lists are based on goals and policies located throughout the 2030 General Plan, but provide more specific direction on where these improvements are needed.

The city is made up of a series of unique and distinct neighborhoods. While all of these neighborhoods have different attributes and characteristics, one of the goals of the 2030 General Plan is to create “Complete Neighborhoods” for each part of the city. This includes promoting livability and safety for residents of all ages, incomes, and cultural backgrounds.

Part IV – Implementation and Evaluation

Part IV contains all the implementation programs for the 2030 General Plan. The programs are broken down into separate tables for each element in Part II. Each program describes the proposed action, which policy(ies) it implements, the City agencies or departments with primary and supporting responsibility for carrying out the program, and the time frame for accomplishing the program.

Environmental Impact Report

In addition to the General Plan Background Report and General Plan Policy Document, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) analyzing the environmental impacts and implications of the General Plan was prepared following publication of the Draft Policy Document. The EIR, which is not formally part of the General Plan, was prepared to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. This report is prepared under a separate cover.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TRPA’S REGIONAL PLAN

All land in the Lake Tahoe Region falls under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) as defined in the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact. This includes land that also falls under the local jurisdiction of the City of South Lake Tahoe. The Compact requires that all local jurisdiction planning be consistent with a series of Environmental Thresholds. The Compact also allows local jurisdictions to develop, adopt, and implement regulations so long as they are consistent with TRPA’ Regional Plan, or, address issues not covered in the Regional Plan.


TRPA is currently (2009) in the process of updating the Regional Plan for the entire Lake Tahoe Basin. The 2030 General Plan has been developed in close coordination with TRPA, and it is anticipated that the plan will be incorporated into the updated Regional Plan. As such, the 2030 General Plan will be used as the primary planning document guiding future change in South Lake Tahoe for both the City of South Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.


HOW TO USE THE GENERAL PLAN

The 2030 General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community including residents, businesses, property owners, stakeholders, and decision-makers. The organization of the plan allows users to find topics or sections that interest them and to quickly review City policies; although, users should realize that the policies throughout all elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively and must be considered together when making planning decisions.

Policy Identifiers

Various policies throughout the General Plan have been tagged with “icon” identifiers. These identifiers are used to help the reader easily identify policies that directly related to other important planning documents. These include:

City of South Lake Tahoe Sustainability Plan Policies. The General Plan includes a “” icon to show which policies come directly from the City’s 2008 Sustainability Plan. The Sustainability Plan is founded on ten Guiding Principles that provide a starting point for sustainable decision-making in South Lake Tahoe..

City of South Lake Tahoe and TRPA Mutually-Adopted Policies. The General Plan includes a “” icon to show which policies in the plan will be mutually-adopted by the City of South Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). Any changes or amendments the City of South Lake Tahoe makes to these policies would also need to be adopted by TRPA’s Governing Board. *[Note: The analysis for which policies will be mutually-adopted by TRPA will be performed once TRPA has prepared a draft Regional Plan.]*

Difference between “Shall” and “Should”

Policies and implementation measures throughout the General Plan begin either with the phrase “The City shall...” or “The City should...” The following describes the legal difference between “shall” and “should”:

- **Shall.** The word “shall” indicates an unequivocal directive for the City. Policy makers will typically use or employ the term “shall” to communicate a mandatory requirement. Although most policies use the word “shall,” the language of the policy still often provides the City flexibility in terms of how the policy is to be carried out.
- **Should.** The word “should” signifies a less rigid directive, to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations. “Should” communicates a clear commitment that permits flexibility if circumstances so dictate. Policies containing the term “should” remain effective and enforceable. They are clear expressions of the policy-makers’ (i.e., City Council) intent to rely on the subject policy to guide relevant decisions.

Goals and Policies Readers’ Guide

The following guide shows how sections, goals, and policies are organized in each of the Policy Document’s “elements” (Part II). This guide is designed to help the reader understand the structure of the Policy Document. *(Note: The Public Review Draft Policy Document includes original sources for all goals, policies, and implementation programs, including adopted City policy, staff and consultant input, public input, and decision-maker input. These source identifiers are for reference purposes and will be removed once the Policy Document is adopted by the City Council.)*

SECTION HEADER
Identifies the part or element and section name on every page.

GOALS
Each goal has one or more policies associated with the goal. Each goal number starts with the element abbreviation and is followed number of the goal

POLICIES
Each policy is associated with a specific goal.

POLICY TITLE
Each policy contains a leading title in bold for a quick reference to the policy text. Continuing from the goal numbering, the policy number is shown as the last number; supporting the goal it follows

PAGE NUMBER
Shows the element abbreviation and page number

South Lake Tahoe General Plan Land Use and Community Design Element

Tahoe. The City should also consider transfers into El Dorado and Douglas counties on a case by case basis. Source: Stateline/Ski Run Community Plan

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The City of South Lake Tahoe seeks to adopt public policies and make land use decisions that are open to public review and are equitable to the whole community. The goal and policies in this section ensure that South Lake Tahoe will make land use and environmental decisions that are equitable to every resident, regardless of race, culture, and income.

Goal LU-11 To ensure the fair treatment of all visitors and residents, regardless of race, culture, and income with respect to land use and environmental decisions. Source: GPU Consultants

Policy LU-11.1: Environmental Justice
The City shall ensure the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of land use and environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The City shall ensure that no part of the community suffers disproportionately from adverse human health or environmental effects, and all people live in clean, healthy, and sustainable communities. Source: GPU Consultants

Policy LU-11.2: Equal Public Participation
The City shall ensure that all community residents have an opportunity for public participation in the decision-making process. Source: GPU Consultants

Policy LU-11.3: Equitable Distribution of New Public Facilities and Services
The City shall plan for the equitable distribution of new public facilities and services that increase and enhance the entire community's quality of life. Source: GPU Consultants

Policy LU-11.4: Quality of Life for all Age Groups
The City shall develop a strategy to provide amenities and facilities that support a high quality of life for all age groups. Source: Sustainability Plan.

Policy LU-11.5: Social Equity Promotion
The City shall promote social equity. Social equity is important when dealing with sustainability issues because successful implementation is all about making appropriate choices and having the opportunity and ability to make those choices. Source: Sustainability Plan.

GENERAL PLAN MAINTENANCE

The effectiveness of the General Plan ultimately depends on how it is implemented and maintained over time. State law requires that most actions of local government

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