TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 19, 2025

TRPA/ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Vice chair Mr. Settelmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

At this point in time, we do not have a quorum of the committee but are expecting a member to call in. However, we will allow the presentation to occur.

Quorum established at 3:17 p.m.

Members present: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Mr. Kieckhefer, Mr. Settelmeyer

Members absent: Ms. Leumer

Recused: Mr. Hoenigman

I. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Aldean made a motion to approve the agenda as posted.
Motion carried-voice vote.

III. Approval of July 23, 2025 Governing Board Minutes

Ms. Aldean made a motion to approve the July 23, 2025 minutes as posted.
Motion carried-voice vote.

IV. Discussion and possible recommendation for approval of the Placer County Individual Parcel Evaluation System (IPES) Buildable Line

Ms. Roll, Senior Planner with TRPA, provided the presentation.

Individual Parcel Evaluation System (IPES) is a key tool used to ensure that development stays within regional limits while encouraging preservation of some of the basin's most sensitive land.

TRPA adopted IPES as part of the 1987 Regional Plan as an alternative to the Bailey Land Capability System for evaluating the suitability of parcels for development. At the time, there was significant concern about declining water quality, and there were still more than 10,000 vacant residential lots. IPES was created to more accurately evaluate those lots and determine which were appropriate for development.

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IPES applies only to single-family residential development. The Bailey Land Capability System, developed in the early 1970s, is still used for evaluating parcels for multi-family, commercial, and other land uses.

Under IPES, properties are awarded points in eight categories based on a detailed field evaluation. Teams of experts evaluate factors such as soil permeability, topography, the influence of microclimates, and other characteristics that indicate how prone a parcel is to erosion and how well it could be stabilized if developed.

An example of one of the original IPES evaluation forms shows the types of factors considered in the field. IPES Scoring System. IPES scores range from 0 to 1150. When the program was first adopted, the minimum buildable score for any parcel in any jurisdiction was 726. This threshold is referred to as the IPES line or the buildable line, and those terms are used interchangeably.

As of 1989, any property with a score of 726 or higher was eligible to apply for a building allocation. IPES was designed so that the buildable line would lower over time as jurisdictions meet water quality and conservation goals.

Example: A parcel with a score of 896 received a high score because it is very flat, has well-draining soil, would require minimal grading for access, is not near the lake, and is not near a stream environment zone. These and other favorable factors result in low erosion risk. A parcel with a score of 675 has a steeper grade, would require more extensive grading for development, and is more prone to erosion. Currently, 675 is below the cutoff in Placer County for a buildable lot, so these properties are not buildable at this time. A parcel with a score of 0 indicates that it is 100 percent stream environment zone. This is determined by high groundwater, wet variant plant species, certain soil types, and similar factors. A zero score cannot be increased. Therefore, this property, or any parcel with a zero score, will never be eligible for development.

Five findings must be made to lower the IPES line in any jurisdiction, as outlined in Chapter 53 of the Code of Ordinances. Each jurisdiction must demonstrate progress on specific environmental and conservation goals before additional parcels can become eligible for development. Through analysis, TRPA finds that Placer County has met the requirements of each of these findings, as described in detail in the staff report. Finding Number 5 – The Vacant Lot Equation. Finding number 5 has been the primary barrier to lowering the IPES line in Placer County. The requirement is that the current number of sensitive parcels divided by the number of sensitive parcels as of January 1, 1986, must not exceed 20 percent. This is referred to as the vacant lot equation.

In 1986, Placer County identified 1,667 vacant sensitive parcels. To make this finding, more than 1,300 parcels needed to be retired or otherwise removed from that inventory of sensitive lots. This represents the numerator in the equation. Parcels are removed from the numerator through acquisition by a public agency, retirement through the Allocation Assignment Program, increasing IPES scores through the Limited Incentive Program, voluntary lot mergers, and other mechanisms. Placer County has taken longer than expected to meet the vacant lot equation for two primary reasons.

First, when the program was adopted in the early 1990s, parcels were being retired at a rate of approximately 89 per year. Over time, acquisition funds began to diminish. By around 2009, the retirement rate had slowed to approximately 25 parcels per year. This delay significantly slowed reduction of the number of sensitive lots, or the numerator of the equation.

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Second, Placer County has a somewhat unique practice of having one assessor parcel number, or APN, with multiple legal lots embedded within it. Each of these legal lots can be assigned its own separate APN, effectively splitting them into individual parcels.

Today, the number of sensitive parcels in Placer County is 322. This represents 19.3 percent of the 1986 total. Therefore, Finding Number 5 has been met. Douglas and Washoe Counties were the first to meet the required findings in 1994 and subsequently lowered their IPES line. Several incremental changes occurred over time, and both counties reached a score of 1 in 2006. This means that any property with an IPES score of 1 or higher is eligible for single-family development. Each incremental change was approved by Governing Board action.

El Dorado County first made the findings to lower its IPES line in 2006. It also reached a score of 1 in 2006, meaning that any parcel with a score of 1 or higher is eligible for development.

Placer County has not experienced any changes to the IPES line. The minimum buildable score has remained at 726 since the program's adoption. This is primarily due to the vacant lot equation. Although no changes were made in Placer County, annual progress updates were provided to the Governing Board until around 2010. At that time, it was decided that the item would not be brought back until analysis showed that the findings could be made.

Staff have continued monitoring progress and are now bringing the item forward because all five findings can be made.

Based on the five required findings and the procedures set forth in Chapter 53 of the Code of Ordinances, staff recommends lowering the IPES line in Placer County from 726 to 702. Staff requests that the Regional Planning Committee recommend approval to the Governing Board at their December 2025 meeting.

Approximately 76 parcels could become eligible for development as a result of this proposed change. This action lowers the IPES buildable line only. It does not rescore any properties or change the scoring system in any way. The IPES line simply determines which parcels are eligible to apply for a building allocation. The number of allocations available and how they are distributed by Placer County would not be affected by this action. Lowering the IPES line does not change the requirement that any eligible parcel must obtain a building allocation and development rights and must go through the standard permitting process. Each project would continue to be individually reviewed for compliance with all applicable regulations, including land coverage, zoning, water quality, BMPs, height, density, and other requirements.

Committee Comments & Questions

Mr. Settelmeyer asked if IPES scores change over time or are they a one and done. For example, if there was a fire event.

Ms. Roll said typically, yes, once you get an IPES score, those do not get re-evaluated. There is a little bit of wiggle room in one of the categories up to 50 points is awarded for the "Need for water quality projects." Those points are awarded for any jurisdiction, Placer County in this case, completes water quality projects through the Environmental Improvement Program, for example. As those projects are completed if they're in the direct project area where a parcel is then a property can receive up to 50 points. That's specified in the Code of Ordinances Chapter 53.

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Ms. Regan said that's if the score is not zero.

Ms. Roll said that is correct. A score of zero doesn't increase, it's not subject to changes with the water quality points or anything else.

Ms. Holloway wants to understand the Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) versus legal parcel issue a little bit better. I know in the Kings Beach area with the original layout of the grid lines and the small parcels that we have in that area, is that a significant factor in this overall equation? Is there a remedy for that that you think would have a recalculation effect?

Ms. Roll said if you look back at old staff reports for Placer County, it was thought that this was the primary reason. As TRPA has done more analysis, our opinion has shifted that it had a lot more to do with just the declining rate of parcels being retired, but it is a combination. It's not that it's a problem, or it's inherently bad, it was just something that wasn't foreseen when the IPES program was adopted. At this point, it might not matter anymore since we've got to this point where we've retired enough and made the findings.

Ms. Beckman, Senior Planner, Placer County said I previously worked for TRPA in the land capability and IPES program. TRPA deals more with parcels, and on the California side, the California Subdivision Map Act, we deal with the legal lots of record. That's where the lots being able to get their own new smaller legal lots of record embedded in one parcel number can then be pulled out and given their own parcel number, changing that equation. About 18 years ago, when Tim Hagen was at TRPA and George Rosasco was with Placer County, we tried to figure out if there was a way we could recalibrate and adjust for the parcel versus lots disconnect. And unfortunately, because of all of the litigation that occurred around IPES back in the 1987–1989 timeframe, the work we did with the California Attorney General at that time said, no, we can't adjust anything, and we had to wait until this point in time where we've met the vacant lot equation.

Ms. Holloway said moving forward, the goal in my mind would be to get to one. Is this a factor that we need to keep working towards to continue to lower the line?

Ms. Roll said the plan is moving forward and that we will bring this back annually. As stated in the staff report, the line is lowered based on the number of allocations that are used in Placer County over the previous year. In 2027, we would look at the number of allocations that were used in Placer County in 2026 and then go through this step again, and then ideally lower the IPES based on that.

Ms. Aldean asked how many of the 76 parcels that are now eligible to apply for evaluation still have development rights.

Ms. Roll deferred to Mr. Kasman.

Ms. Aldean said I would imagine some people getting frustrated with their inability to develop those lots and have sold the development right.

Mr. Kasman, Reporting and Accountability Department, said they didn't look specifically at that but can do so before next month's meeting. In general, most of these parcels likely do still have their development rights, because a lot of these property owners have held onto them with the intent to develop in the future. Probably over 90 percent of them still would still have it. Once they are eligible, then they could transfer in a unit if they needed to do so.

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Motion:

Ms. Holloway made a motion to recommend approval to the Governing Board to approve the Placer County Individual Parcel Evaluation System Buildable Line reduction.

Ms. Aldean confirmed that the vote is to recommend the Governing Board make the required findings shown in Attachment A.

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Mr. Kieckhefer, Mr. Settelmeyer

Absent: Ms. Leumer

Recused: Mr. Hoenigman

Motion carried.

Mr. Settelmeyer read the motion to recommend approval of the lowering of the Placer County IPES line from 726 to 702 and adoption of the proposed resolution included as Attachment B.

Ms. Holloway moved approval.

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Mr. Kieckhefer, Mr. Settelmeyer

Absent: Ms. Leumer.

Recused: Mr. Hoenigman

Motion carried.

V. UPCOMING TOPICS

Ms. Regan said there is no Regional Planning Committee meeting scheduled until March. At that time, the committee will hear a preview of the Meyers Tahoe El Dorado Area Plan. It will cover the whole county outside of Meyers all the way to the Placer County line so we'd have a lot of discussion around the Fallen Leaf Lake properties. The county has been busy engaging the community around that.

Committee Comments & Questions

None.

VI. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

No report.

VII. PUBLIC INTEREST COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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Ms. Holloway made a motion to adjourn.
Mr. Settelmeyer adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marja Ambler
Clerk to the Board

The above meeting was recorded in its entirety. Anyone wishing to listen to the recording of the above-mentioned meeting may find it at https://www.trpa.gov/meeting-materials/. In addition, written documents submitted at the meeting are available for review. If you require assistance locating this information, please contact the TRPA at (775) 588-4547 or virtualmeetinghelp@trpa.gov.

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