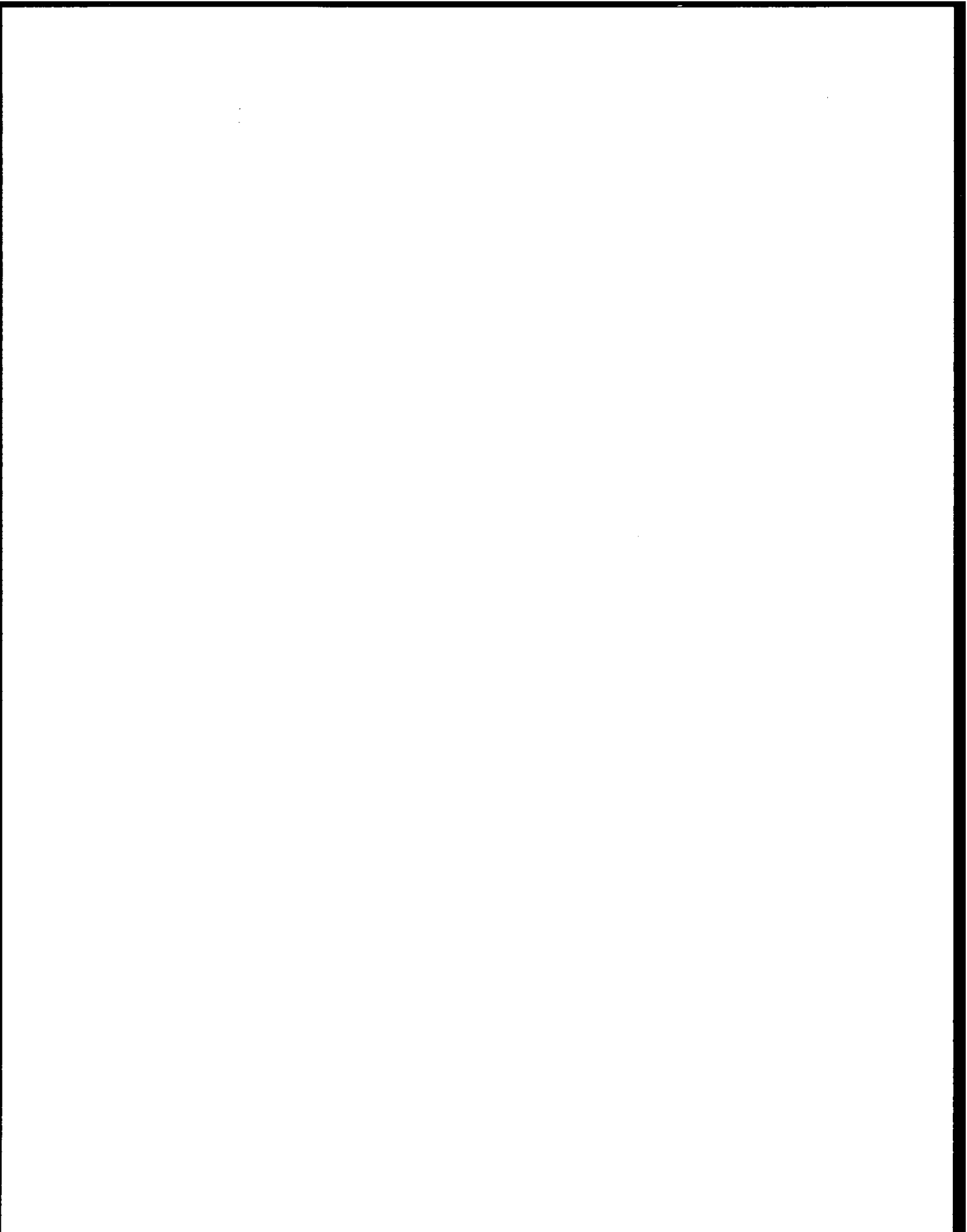


**TRPA
APC
PACKETS**

**AUGUST
2002**



TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Advisory Planning Commission of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency will conduct its regular meeting at 9:30 a.m. on August 14, 2002, at the North Tahoe Conference Center, 8318 N. Lake Boulevard, Kings Beach, CA. The agenda for the meeting is attached hereto and made a part of this notice.

July 26, 2002



Juan Palma
Executive Director

This agenda has been posted at the TRPA office and at the following locations: Zephyr Cove and Stateline, Nevada post offices, and South Lake Tahoe Library and Al Tahoe, California post office. The agenda has also been posted at the North Tahoe Conference Center in Kings Beach, the Incline Village GID office, and the North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce.



TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

North Tahoe Conference Center
8318 N. Lake Boulevard
Kings Beach, CA

August 14, 2002

9:30 a.m.

All items on this agenda are action items unless otherwise noted.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
- II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- III. PUBLIC INTEREST COMMENTS (No Action)

Any member of the public wishing to address the Advisory Planning Commission on any agenda item not listed as a Public Hearing or a Planning Matter item, or on any other issue, may do so at this time. However, public comment on Public Hearing and Planning Matter items will be taken at the time those agenda items are heard.

NOTE: THE ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION IS PROHIBITED BY LAW FROM TAKING IMMEDIATE ACTION ON, OR DISCUSSING ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC THAT ARE NOT LISTED ON THIS AGENDA.

- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Page No.

- A. July 2002

Under Separate Cover

- V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Amendments to Code Chapters 2, 4, 30, 53, 55 and Related Chapters, Goals And Policies Chapter IV, and Design Review Guidelines to Implement a Shorezone Scenic Review System and to Further Regulate Colors and Roofing Materials Recommended by the 2001 Threshold Evaluation Report.

Page 1

- B. Amendment of the Ponderosa Ranch Community Plan to Designate it a Preferred Industrial Area

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- C. Amendment of Chapter 18 Land Use Provisions to Allow Threshold Related Research Facilities on Undeveloped Lands and to Amend PAS 008 Lake Forest to add Threshold Related Research Facilities and Government Offices as a special use on APNs 094-140-018 and 023. **(Time Certain 2:00 pm)**

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- D. Amend PAS 145 Fallen Leaf Lake to Eliminate Hotel, Motel, and Other Transient Dwelling Units as a Permissible Use.

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- E. Amend the Tahoe City Community Plan, Special Area 5, to Allow Single Family Dwellings as a Special Use

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VI. PLANNING MATTERS

- A. Report on Governing Board Action on The Resolution Issuing the 2002 Threshold Evaluation Report and Adopting The Amended Compliance Forms (Targets, Indicators, Factors, Compliance Measures, Attainment Schedules, and Related Items) Pursuant to Chapter 32 of the Code **Page 107**
- B. Presentation on Martis Valley EIR **(Time Certain at 3:30)** **Page 125**

VII. REPORTS

- A. Executive Director
 - 1. Report on Governing Board Actions Relative To APC Recommendations
- B. Legal Counsel
- C. APC Members

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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MEMORANDUM

August 6, 2002

To: TRPA Advisory Planning Commission

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Amendments to Code Chapters 2, 4, 30, 53, 55 and Related Chapters, Goals And Policies Chapter IV, and Design Review Guidelines to Implement a Shorezone Scenic Review System and to Further Regulate Colors and Roofing Materials Recommended by the 2001 Threshold Evaluation Report

Proposed Action: Staff is requesting the Advisory Planning Commission (APC) consider and recommend adoption of the 2001 Threshold Evaluation Scenic Resources Program Amendments to the TRPA Governing Board. The following items are being recommended for adoption:

- Amend Chapter 30, Design Standards, to adopt a new scenic quality review system for the immediate upland shorezone area that provides: consistency, quantification and accountability to meet Scenic Threshold Standards as prescribed in the 1987 Regional Plan for development in the immediate upland shorezone area.
- Amend Chapter 30, Design Standards, for buildings to specify the use of earthtone colors that fall within the Munsell® Color value of 0-6.
- Amend Chapter 4, Project Review, to elevate regular maintenance of structures that result in the placement of a metal roof to a Qualified Exempt activity. Further clarify that colors of metal roofs should be subdued dark tones that fall within the Munsell® Color value of 0-4 and chroma of 0-4.
- Amend the Design Review Guidelines to adopt Appendix F, Visual Assessment Tool, for the review of projects located within the immediate shorezone upland area.
- Amend the Design Review Guidelines to further define and clarify the use of earthtone colors.

Advisory Planning Commission (APC) Recommendation: This item was presented to the APC on July 17, 2002 for consideration. At the meeting a number of concerns were raised by members of the public, as well as Commissioners, relating to implementation of the system. Staff was advised by the Commission to meet with the stakeholders to resolve outstanding issues or, at a minimum, to provide a response to the questions raised.

Staff conducted a workshop with interested parties on July 30, 2002 and August 5, 2002 to review the system as proposed by staff. Stakeholders raised a number of questions and staff has provided responses below.

Response to Comments: The following comments and questions were made at the APC meetings as well as at preceding workshops. Staff has attempted to find common ground and include all comments and recommendations for the proposed system; however, it is not possible. Recommendations from the public and stakeholders that are consistent with maintaining the adopted thresholds have been incorporated while those that are either inconsistent or are not applicable have been left off.

Comment: What is the problem?

Response: The problems are outlined in the Threshold Evaluation. The Evaluation indicates that scenic quality is declining in the shoreline scenic units. This is primarily due to development of structures that contrast with the natural landscape and has resulted in increasing visual dominance of the natural landscape by the built environment. Trends that have resulted in scenic degradation include increased mass of structures, the use of highly reflective materials, use of light colored materials and, in many cases, inadequate screening or setback from the backshore boundary line. This trend of visual dominance of the built environment was first documented in the 1991 Threshold Evaluation and reinforced by the 1996 Threshold Evaluation.

Comment: What is scenic equilibrium?

Response: Scenic equilibrium, as stated in the Compact, refers to the maintenance of the dominant, natural appearing landscape of Tahoe and to ensure that the built environment is compatible and does not detract from the scenic quality of the Region.

Comment: How can we quantify scenic impact?

Response: The system being proposed quantifies scenic impact. It is based on widely accepted design principles and the theory that designs that mimic the natural landscape will result in reduced contrast. The system is designed to reward and encourage designs that blend rather than contrast through the use of color, form, texture, line, and scale.

Comment: What is the goal? Is this the way?

Response: The goal of the system is to develop a quantifiable system that allows flexibility to applicants to reduce the visual dominance of the built environment and achieve the scenic threshold of maintaining the dominant natural appearing landscape of Tahoe.

Comment: Can the permitting process save time?

Response: The system will save time. The permitting process allows streamlined scenic review for projects that meet all standards. Projects that exceed the design standards will require additional review; however, it is expected to require less time than existing conditions. This is due in part to the adoption of a system that is an exercise in mathematics and not a qualitative analysis.

Comment: Scenic vs. fire safety? Other thresholds – vegetation/fertilizer

Response: Staff has discussed this issue with fire safety personnel and feel that a conflict does not exist. Trees which are used for screening in many instances can be trimmed back on the sides facing the house while still maintaining foliage facing the lake to provide screening. It is staff's opinion that a conflict does not exist with the vegetation threshold. The use of fertilizer is generally not required when using native plant species for screening purposes. Generally, only watering is required to ensure that native plant species survive to a mature stage.

Comment: Who are the experts in the system?

Response: The experts in the system are the scenic experts that have consulted with TRPA since the adoption of the Regional Plan. Sheila Brady, ASLA and Wayne Iverson, ASLA, assisted TRPA in development of the threshold standards in 1982 and participated in all three threshold evaluations. Dr. Stephen Sheppard has assisted TRPA in two threshold evaluations and has been instrumental in assisting the Agency in various scenic resource studies. All are recognized experts in the field of visual resource management.

Comment: Does the system work in the real world?

Response: Staff has evaluated various projects in the real world that have obtained previous approval from TRPA. In addition, TRPA has evaluated the system on projects that currently are in the system or yet to be submitted. The system works as intended and it is true that some potential projects will not meet the requirements of the new system and will require redesign. Staff will present real world examples at the APC hearing.

Comment: Not enough visibility allowed in the system.

Response: It is staff's opinion, with input from the scenic experts, that the permitted square footage is appropriate. The maximum permissible is 2,200 square feet of visual building surface (visible magnitude). This is equivalent to two highway billboards placed end to end.

Comment: What is the point for analysis?

Response: The Agency has two points of analysis: one point for parcel-specific analysis and one for analyzing the whole scenic unit. Parcel-specific analysis is conducted at 300 feet offshore. The scenic unit analysis, which is only conducted during each threshold evaluation period, is evaluated from approximately ¼ mile offshore. The greater distance is necessary to encompass the whole scenic unit, which may be one mile or greater in length. Parcel-specific analysis is conducted at 300 feet. This distance has been chosen because it relates to the field of view. At 300 feet, the field of view will encompass approximately 200 feet of shoreline. At this distance it is possible in most instances to capture the whole parcel in the field of view.

Comment: Blending materials/colors/background needs to be considered.

Response: The system does take this into account. The vast majority of the basin backdrop is comprised of dark earthtone colors such as browns and greens. The system rewards structures that use the darker earthtone colors with increased visual magnitude. For some sites browns and greens are not the predominant colors in the backdrop. This condition is generally found on very steep rock slopes that do not support vegetation growth. Staff is proposing to modify the Color Contrast Matrix to account for unique site characteristics.

Comment: Need appeal process (independent)

Response: All applicant may appeal a decision by staff to the Governing Board. Although no appeal process is adopted as part of the ordinances, a recommendation from the stakeholders to include a scenic panel review is being proposed. The scenic panel review allows an applicant to have a project reviewed with other professionally accepted methodology of impact assessment to determine if a project meets the scenic threshold standards. It is true that the current scenic review panel consist of experts that helped develop the thresholds and conducted many of the evaluations. However, staff

does not believe a conflict exist since the individuals are familiar with the thresholds and are experts in the field of visual resource management. The scenic experts are best suited to evaluate a project's impact using other methodologies since they are most familiar with the threshold standards and other accepted methodologies. The agency is willing to add additional experts to the panel provided they have the professional qualifications and has experience in visual resource impact assessment. However, the criterion for selecting other experts for the panel review has yet to be discussed and developed.

Comment: Additional square footage visibility for commercial and tourist projects

Response: Staff is proposing to amend the ordinance language to allow additional square footage for tourist accommodation and commercial use projects in Commercial/Public Service plan area. These plans areas are generally adopted community plans or have been designated a preliminary community plan areas. These areas of the shoreline are generally more developed and generally are areas targeted for consolidation of development. This change to the ordinance would be very limited in scope.

Comment: Additional square footage for large parcels

Response: The proposed system does permit additional square footage for larger parcels. As written, the system allows for an increase of up to 50% for every 100 feet of linear lake frontage in excess of 100 feet. However, staff has proposed a maximum cap of 2,200 square feet for any one structure. This is due in part to the fact that on large parcels a project may receive additional square footage of visual magnitude without having an increase to the overall contrast rating. It is possible to score a very low contrast rating score (light colored, high contrasting structure) and earns additional square footage for more visual magnitude without increasing the contrast rating score. Staff is open to discussing the potential of modifying the cap; however, any project regardless of parcel size would be required to meet a minimum contrast rating score.

Comment: Rural, transit, urban areas not addressed

Response: Currently, the roadway scenic corridors are segmented into different visual landscape character types. Each landscape character type has varying abilities to absorb visual impact with urban cores having the greatest ability; therefore, a greater range of material choices and colors are available. Although this is a sound concept for roadways, it has not been adopted for this shorezone review system. TRPA is proposing to study this issue and may develop a similar classification; it may not be identical to the roadway system of urban, transition, and natural. This is partly due to the uniqueness of the shoreline of Tahoe, which in many cases does not have the capacity to absorb impact like roadway units. Preliminary work on classifying the shoreline landscape has been completed for the shorezone EIS and may provide the baseline data for further work.

Comment: Reward upgrading.

Response: The system is design to reward upgrading of structures. Structures that conduct regular maintenance activities can upgrade structures without requiring a TRPA permit or coming into conformance with the proposed system. The only requirement requires the use of earthtone colors that fall with an acceptable Munsell® color range. The system rewards structures that are designed to complement the landscape by allowing greater visual magnitude.

Comment: Is this proposed system the final answer regarding scenic attainment for the shoreline.

Response: No, this is not the final answer. The Threshold Evaluation has listed a number recommendation that need to be implemented in order to reverse the declining trend in scenic quality in the shoreline. This is a long-term process and other items that related to scenic quality in the shoreline that need to be accomplish include completion of the Shorezone EIS, conducting a visual perception survey, and implementing a scenic credit and off-site mitigation program.

Background: The 2001 Threshold Evaluation presents the results of the TRPA's third comprehensive evaluation of the environmental carrying capacities, which were adopted in 1982. The Evaluation provides information and recommendations to the TRPA Governing Board to assist in making necessary adjustments to the environmental threshold carrying capacities and the Regional Plan Package, in compliance with provisions of Chapter 32 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances and the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact.

This Evaluation found both improvement and increasingly troublesome trends for the scenic quality thresholds. The Region is widely known for its variety and quality of scenic resources. Scenic resources have been mapped and inventoried by TRPA and the Forest Service in several documents. The outstanding scenic attributes of the natural environment constitute a significant element of the Region's economic base by drawing visitors to the area for sightseeing and recreation. In the past five years, implementation of a regional design program has noticeably improved the quality of the built environment in the commercial core (i.e., community plans) due to redevelopment efforts; however, cumulative adverse impacts continue in certain transition and shoreline areas.

The new information from the 2001 Evaluation documents continued an accelerating decline in the shoreline scenic threshold attainment, due mainly to increased residential development on littoral parcels. The finding has indicated that continued scenic degradation is occurring in the shoreline scenic corridors. The Evaluation finds 19 shoreline units in threshold attainment and 14 units out of attainment with the travel route rating criteria. At the adoption of the threshold, in 1982, where only 3 units were out of attainment, in the 1996 Evaluation, 5 new units fell from threshold attainment and none were raised into attainment (although minor score improvements were noted in some areas). The negative trend in the shorezone is due in part to dramatic increase in the scale and mass of residential structures that often block lake views from the roadway and are rarely adequately screened or sited to reduce visual dominance as seen from the lake. In addition the increase in new piers and the addition of boatlifts is creating visual clutter along the shoreline. All this has reduced the scenic quality of the shorezone and was first identified in the 1991 Threshold Evaluation and supported by findings in the 1996 and 2001 Threshold Evaluations.

The current Evaluation highlights the deficiencies of the existing scenic review and monitoring/enforcement programs, and demonstrates the urgent need to implement the recommendations outlined in the Evaluation for the scenic resource program to assist in attaining and maintaining the Scenic Thresholds. Without the implementation of these recommendations or similar actions, TRPA cannot be found to be in attainment of the shoreline scenic threshold and, hence, projects affecting this threshold cannot be approved.

Proposed Scenic Resource Amendments: Beginning in December 2001 and running through June 2002, TRPA has held nine public workshops and presentations to various interest groups in the basin to receive input on the proposed scenic resources amendments. In addition, staff has presented the proposed amendments to the Advisory Planning Commission and the Governing Board. The purpose of these hearings and workshops was to review the documents and provide public input to the TRPA to assist in the preparation of the final draft for consideration before APC and Governing Board. The result of these meetings is the proposed scenic resources amendments and discussed further below. The scenic resources amendments are part of a package of amendments to the Regional Plan that staff is proposing for adoption at the July Governing Board hearing. The remaining amendments will come in June 2003.

Staff will present the proposed shorezone review system, which includes three components: Design Standards, Visual Magnitude/Contrast Rating, and Level of Review. The system is an attempt to create a practical, streamlined approach to processing projects that are within 300 feet landward of highwater or on littoral parcels, while safeguarding the overall scenic resources of Lake Tahoe. Staff developed the proposed system with input from scenic professionals, private consultants, and members of the public that attended the public workshops. However, a full consensus on the scenic amendments has not been achieved. Staff held numerous workshops on this issue and has taken input and amended the system accordingly. TRPA has attempted to address concerns of all partners while still maintaining and attaining adopted scenic threshold standards.

The proposed system introduces a new concept to the scenic review system of "acceptable baseline impact" or "visual dominance level". Projects that meet the baseline impact or meet the visual dominance level are approvable. Projects that exceed the baseline impact or visual dominance level are required to apply design technique to reduce the overall contrast and come into conformance with the acceptable level of impact permitted.

Design Standards: The first component is the incorporation of new design standards. Design standards are simple architectural techniques that can be applied in the design stage to reduce the overall contrast of the built environment in the natural landscape. Some design standards include those already adopted as guidelines in TRPA's Design Review Guidelines.

Contrast Rating/Visual Magnitude System: The second component is the use of the Contrast Rating/ Visual Magnitude system. The Contrast Rating/Visual Magnitude system is currently adopted as part of the Scenic Quality Improvement Program and is a tool to physically measure visual impact and visual contrast in the landscape. The combined measurements of contrast rating and visual magnitude are used to measure visual impact and can be expressed numerically. Numeric ratings are generally more compatible with other environmental impact assessment systems and allow for the quantification of visual impact. The system is based on the design principle of visual contrast. Structures that have high visual contrast in relation to the natural landscape will have a greater visual impact than a structure that employs design techniques to mimic the natural landscape. Structures that are designed to "fit the site" rather than "fit the site to the building" will result in less contrast and therefore create less visual impact or no impact.

Using this system all structures can be scored and assigned a contrast rating score. This score will then determine the amount of visual magnitude permitted. This allowed visual magnitude is the acceptable level of impact permitted for the structure. The system is designed in such a way that allows flexibility to the applicant and the designer. An applicant may choose to design a structure that creates a high contrast in the landscape (i.e., light colors, minimal articulation, and large expanses of glass), however the permitted visual magnitude will be lower. In many instances, the applicant would be required to screen a larger portion of his structures. Conversely, the applicant may choose to design with a low contrasting structure (i.e., medium to dark earthtone colors, maximum articulation, minimal glass, and use of natural materials), which would result in a larger permitted visual magnitude. Using the system for scenic review should result in structures that either are balanced or subordinate to the natural landscape, the original intent of the Compact.

Attachment B, Exhibit 9 Visual Assessment Protocol, outlines how this review system works and illustrates the acceptable level of visual impact based on the resulting contrast rating.

Attachment D illustrates the contrast rating score in relation to allowed visual magnitude on a graph. The line is known as the "Visual Magnitude/Contrast Dominance Line". Projects that fall in the area under the line meet the scenic threshold, while projects that fall above the line exceed the scenic threshold. There is a maximum cap established in the system. At some point, the visual magnitude is so great that no amount of design technique will result in a structure that is balanced or subordinate to the natural landscape.

Level of Review: The third and last component is the use of differing levels of review depending upon the design elements of the project and the overall visual mass visible from the shoreline scenic corridor. The three basic levels of review are streamlined, mid-level review, and full review. A fourth optional level of review that can be used if a disagreement occurs between staff and the applicant is the third-party expert review or the expert panel review. In either case independent scenic experts would evaluate a project and their findings and recommendations would be included in review of a proposed project.

The level of review is dependent upon the proposed project, the application of design standards, and its visual magnitude (visibility). Projects that meet all the design standards, meet a minimum contrast rating of 23 and limit visibility to 900 square feet or less is considered streamlined. The applicant would submit the project for review with a photographic inventory of the site. No visual simulation is required. Applicants have the option to exceed these limits, however, the level of review changes. Projects that fall within a contrast rating of 23 to 28 and 900 – 1800 square feet of visual magnitude are reviewed at the mid-level status. Applicants are required to submit a photographic inventory of the site and visual simulations for this level of review. A project that exceeds 1800 square feet in visual magnitude is reviewed at the full level status and requires the applicant to submit a photographic inventory of the site and visual simulations as part of the application packet.

Effects of Amendments on TRPA Work Program: The following elements proposed for adoption are expected to have a long-term positive effect on the TRPA work program. Initially there will be an increased effort to educate and train staff and the public. The

Performance Review requirement will cause additional staff time and \$5,000 in consultant assistance. The amendments are designed to streamline the scenic quality review process. Currently, the agency evaluates potential scenic impacts using a qualitative analysis process. The process generally results in subjectivity and many hours spent debating or compromising on scenic mitigation measures. Past evaluations and the current evaluation have noted that this process is not working. Scenic quality continues to degrade at an alarming rate and recommends a new approach to scenic quality review.

The proposed amendments result in a number of improvements to the existing system. They further clarify language relating to the use of earthtone colors and implement a color system that is measurable. The amendments will result in implementation of a quantifiable review system for scenic impacts. This will generally result in less time debating scenic impacts and appropriate scenic mitigation since it is a mechanical scoring process. This should reduce the amount of staff and applicant's time spent arguing the impact a project is having on scenic quality. The amendments further clarify and establish protocols for the preparation of visual simulations. This will help applicants and consultants in preparing visual simulations that are accurate for scenic review.

Required Findings: The following findings must be made prior to adopting the proposed ordinance amendments:

Chapter 6 Findings

1. Finding: 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.

Rationale: The Scenic program amendments are intended to provide a quantifiable mechanism within the Code to evaluate project applications and gain consistency in review of projects. As indicated in the 2001 Threshold Evaluation Report, the current process of evaluating scenic impacts based on a qualitative analysis has shown to be ineffective in meeting the threshold. The amendments are designed to remedy this situation and are intended evaluate project impacts in a quantifiable matter in order to ensure attainment and maintenance of the Scenic Threshold standards.

2. Finding: The project will not cause the environmental thresholds to be exceeded.

Rationale: The amendments will not cause the environmental thresholds to be exceeded. As indicated in the 2001 Threshold Evaluation Report, the current process of evaluating scenic impacts based on a qualitative analysis has shown to be ineffective in meeting the threshold. The amendments are designed to stop the continuing scenic degradation occurring in the shorezone by providing a quantifiable mechanism within the Code to evaluate project applications and gain consistency in review of projects. The amendments are intended to evaluate project impacts in a

quantifiable matter in order to ensure attainment and maintenance of the Scenic Threshold standards.

Finding: Wherever federal, state, and local air and water quality standards applicable to the Region, whichever are stricter, must be attained and maintained pursuant to Article V(d) of the Compact, the project meets or exceeds such standards.

Rationale: Any proposal that may come forth due to this provision will be required to meet air and water quality standards as set forth in the TRPA Compact.

4. Finding: The Regional Plan, as amended, achieves and maintains the thresholds.

Rationale: See findings 1 and 2 above.

5. Finding: The Regional Plan and all of its elements, as implemented through the Code, Rules and other TRPA plans and programs, as amended, achieves and maintains the thresholds.

Rationale: See findings 1 and 2 above.

Required Findings: The following findings must be made prior to adopting the proposed amendments to the Design Review Guidelines:

Chapter 6 Findings

1. Finding: 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.

Rationale: The 1996 and Draft 2001 Threshold Evaluation Report indicates declining ratings for shoreline travel units. The movement away from threshold attainment for these units is attributable in part to the absence of a coherent and consistent project review system. The amendment to the Design Review Guidelines to adopt a new project review system will not adversely affect implementation of the Regional Plan. The proposed amendment is intended to clarify the process for review of projects located within the immediate shorezone upland area in order to maintain and attain the scenic resource threshold. The amendment is consistent with the Regional Plan Package.

2. Finding: The project will not cause the environmental thresholds to be exceeded.

Rationale: The amendment will not cause the environmental thresholds to be exceeded. The amendment is intended to evaluate impacts to environmental thresholds and to assist with the attainment of the Scenic Resource Threshold.