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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 17, 2012
To: TRPA Local Government Committee
From: TRPA Staff
Subject: Review, Discussion, and Recommendations to the Regional Plan Update Committee on Draft Policy CD-2.1 E, Signs

Requested Actions: Provide the Regional Plan Update Committee with recommendations on draft policy CD-2.1 E, signs.

Staff Recommendations: Staff recommends that the Local Government Committee review, discuss and provide recommendations to the Regional Plan Update Committee on draft policy CD-2.1 E, signs.

Description/Background: At their January 10, 2012 meeting the Regional Plan Update Committee referred draft policy CD-2.1 E, below, to the Local Government Committee for review, discussion, and any recommendations back to the Regional Plan Update Committee. At the last Local Government Committee TRPA staff, local government staff and members of the public provided input, but the committee members did not have adequate time to develop a consensus on a recommendation.

TRPA staff has since developed an alternative proposal shown below. Between the date this staff report is issued and the Local Government Committee meeting TRPA staff intends to meet with local government staffs to review, and if necessary amend, this new alternative. The results of those meetings will be reported at the Local Government Committee meeting. The new alternative proposed is:

- E. Area Plans may include alternative sign standards. For Area Plans to be found in conformance with the Regional Plan, the Area Plan must demonstrate that the sign standards will minimize and mitigate significant scenic impacts and move toward attainment or achieve the adopted scenic thresholds for the Lake Tahoe Region.
- F. In the absence of a conforming local plan that addresses sign standards, the following policies apply:
 - 1) Off premise signs should generally be prohibited; way-finding and directional signage may be considered where scenic impacts are minimized and mitigated.
 - 2) Signs should be incorporated into building design
 - 3) When possible, signs should be consolidated into clusters to avoid clutter
 - 4) Signage should be attached to buildings when possible
 - 5) Standards for number, size, height, lighting, square footage, and similar characteristics for on premise signs shall be formulated and shall be consistent with the land uses permitted in each district.

The policy, when finally adopted as part of the Regional Plan, will be used:

1. By local governments in preparation of their own plans and code to be in conformance with the Regional Plan; and
2. By TRPA to evaluate development applications in areas of the Region where local governments do not have conforming local plans and/or do not have jurisdiction to process those applications.

The following excerpts, particularly the underlined sections, from the bi-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Compact provide the parameters for the policy options and are provided as background for the Committee discussion:

1. Article V, (c) states "The regional plan shall be a single enforceable plan and include all of the following correlated elements:

(3) A conservation plan for the preservation, development, utilization, and management of the scenic and other natural resources within the basin, including but not limited to soils, shoreline and submerged lands, scenic corridors along transportation routes, open spaces, recreational and historical facilities.”
2. Article V, (g) states "The agency shall adopt ordinances prescribing specific written findings that the agency must make prior to approving any project in the region. These findings shall relate to environmental protection and shall insure that the project under review will not adversely affect implementation of the regional plan and will not cause the adopted environmental threshold carrying capacities of the region to be exceeded.”
3. Article VI, (a) states "The governing body shall adopt all necessary ordinances, rules, and regulations to effectuate the adopted regional plan. Except as otherwise provided in this compact, every such ordinance, rule or regulation shall establish a minimum standard applicable throughout the region. Any political subdivision or public agency may adopt and enforce an equal or higher requirement applicable to the same subject of regulation in its territory.”

Recommendations: Staff recommends that the Local Government Committee review and discuss Policy CD-2.1 E, and provide policy recommendations to the Regional Plan Update Committee.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, please contact John Hester, Planning Director, at jhester@trpa.org or 775.589.5219.