



Community Prosperity Summit

On November 8, 2008, ninety community members met at Sugar Bowl to discuss what they would like to see for the Summit in the future. The workshop was hosted by the Donner Summit Area Association. Placer County Supervisor Elect Jennifer Montgomery and Nevada County Supervisor Ted Owens welcomed the participants, reviewed the agenda and talked about the unique opportunities for the Counties to work together at Donner Summit.

During coffee time, residents and second home owners greeted each other and had an opportunity to review the results of the "Summit Summit" held on December 15, 2007. An overview of the Economic Study was presented by SBC President Steve Frisch. Regional Planning Partners, Darin Dinsmore presented information on existing conditions on Donner Summit. The walls were lined with poster examples of existing conditions and participants could review them throughout the workshop.

What is your vision for a more prosperous future?



Objectives:
 Discuss opportunities to improve the prosperity at Donner Summit while preserving the environment and improving quality of life and the visitor experience. Identify concepts for investment, reinvestment and restoration of the Summit.

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Overview

Teams worked together on several exercises, discussing what they treasure about places at the Summit, marking maps with those places. Each team presented their unique special places and they were identified on the map for all participants to see.

Groups were then asked to review and comment on the draft principles and to identify their top priorities, their relevance to economic prosperity, whether the reinvestment timing would be short, medium or long term, and to identify and constraints to implementation or additional comments. Groups were then asked to do the same exercise together to develop their top priorities.

The general sense of the group is that the most important asset to build upon for future economic development along the Old Highway 40 Corridor is the unique sense of place of Donner Summit from Emigrant Gap to Rainbow Bridge.

The top priorities identified were:

1. Protect, restore natural resources
2. Preserve community character
3. Develop a year round economy that will foster local business
4. Filter growth through the lens of sustainability
5. Value historic resources

There was obvious agreement over the need to focus future reinvestment along the Highway 40 corridor primarily in the core area of Soda Springs. There was a clear preference for development of small visitor experience related businesses and a gradual increase in local serving business. In the discussions there was a clear emphasis on the need to anticipate more year round residents and home-based businesses. There is also a clear need to match the vision with reality, and a desire to focus on infrastructure improvements to develop additional capacity.

The lunch provided by Sugar Bowl was great and allowed participants to share more ideas of possibilities for future improvements. Darin shared a slide show of some of the Best Practices for Place Based planning in rural areas to stimulate ideas.

Agenda

Donner Summit • Nov 8, 2008

Welcome and Introduction

- Process update
- History and background

Exercise#1 – Places of Donner Summit

Places of Donner Summit
Natural Areas / Recreational Opportunities and Connections

10 - Things we Love about the Summit (Preserve/Protect)

Areas of Opportunity and change (Evolve/Transform)

Exercise#2 – Prosperity Priorities and Constraints

- Guiding principles
Individual Review
- Group Exercise
- Present Back

Lunch – Case Studies

Exercise#3 - Resident and Visitor Experience and Mapping Improvements

- Experience - Today
- Review Community Interview Wishlist – select and map top 10 ideas
- Visual documentation
- Mapping Community Improvements for Prosperity

Break

- Resident and Visitor Experience – 2027
- Changes to GP and Priorities to implement the vision

Summary and Wrap up

The key features that came from the groups include:

Team #1 - Active/Heritage/Culture

Team #2 Improved Gateways and New Outdoor Family Activities

Team #3 Special Events to Attract Visitors – Opportunities for investment and retention

Team #4 Create a more walkable and interesting place with a great community center

Team #5 Train Destination with Winter and Summer Outdoor Activities

Visitor Experience Exercise Summary

Later in the day participants were asked to share what current visitors experience when visiting the Summit. They were given three hypothetical tourists and a local couple and were asked to describe the current (visitor) experience and (resident) quality of life. Then teams were asked to plan how improvements could be made to existing conditions over the next 20-30 years that would provide visitors with a better experience. Lively discussions took place at the tables and many ideas were discussed and documented on the maps.

The majority of those participating agreed that visitor experience on Donner Summit needs to be split into two areas: the natural environment, and the built environment. For the purposes of this discussion we will focus on the built environment.

Most agreed that the Summit appears shabby, run down and in need of some reinvestment. People want to retain the “funkiness” of the place, but with improved road character, property maintenance, a little more care for the buildings and more definition to the town center. Almost everyone agreed that the lack of lodging is a problem, but no one was advocating for chain lodging, rather expressing a clear desire for smaller discreet lodging opportunities. Almost everyone agreed that there was a need for more events, and an emphasis on the history of the area. Many expressed a desire for historic preservation as the cornerstone of retaining community character.

The key features that came from the groups include:

- Active/Heritage/Culture
- Improved Gateways and New Outdoor Family Activities
- Special Events to Attract Visitors – Opportunities for investment and retention
- Create a more walkable and interesting place with a great community center
- Train Destination with Winter and Summer Outdoor Activities

Big ideas included:

Improvements

Community center
Community beautification
Improve walkability
Day care center
Tourist trolley/train

Gateways

Gateway at DS Exit on Hwy 80
Visitor and info kiosk at Exit
Gateway at beginning of Soda Springs

Events

Ice Lake Lodge Ice Carving Competition
Biking/Skateboard comps/
music festivals
Local Artists Display at café or
Community Center
Gaper Days trick competition
Many Summer/Winter events/
competition

Ideas were organized under the following categories:

- Attractions & Uses
- Heritage Culture and Environment
- Active & Interactive
- Heritage Culture/Env.

**Exercise one:
Places we love about
Donner Summit**

Group 1:

- ski areas
- Pacific crest Trail
- all trails
- Lake Van Norden
- Lake Mary
- tunnel six
- the rail road tracks
- Castle Peak
- Peter Grubb hut

Groups 2 & 3:

- snow shed wall
- catfish lake and Yuba headwaters.

Group 4:

- Rainbow bridge, old Highway 40
- Northern Vista

Group 5:

- night sky
- the DT grocery
- pet club list
- wall flowers,
- the supervisors,
- the sheep pen
- Lincoln Highway
- Jenn's house
- grinding rocks.



Key Features Team #1 - Active/Heritage/Culture



Big idea

Ice Lake Lodge Ice Carving Competition

Attractions & Uses

- Museum/Train Station/Community Center/Shops/Gallery
- Climbing School-shop
- Lincoln Highway and Rainbow Bridge
- Increase Bed Base

Heritage Culture and Environment

- 1867 Tunnel
- Petroglyphs-grinding rocks
- Solar & Sustainable

Active & Interactive

- Walking Tour – history
- Running Trails/hiking trails
- Put up signs: trails and vistas
- Visitor Info
- Bike corridor – marked
- Chinese wall-Emigrant Trail (Judah and Roller Pass)



Key Features Team#2 Improved Gateways and New Outdoor Family Activities



Big ideas

- Gateway at DS Exit on Hwy 80
- Visitor and info kiosk at Exit
- Gateway at beginning of Soda Springs

Attractions & Uses

- Some Lodging
- Mixed Use redevelopment

Active & Interactive

- RR Station
- Park near focal point on Yuba River
- Horse Stable

**Exercise one:
Places we love about
Donner Summit
(Opportunity Sites)**

Group 4:

Majestic Resort across
from Donner Ski Ranch/
Sugar Bowl

- A vision of a mixed use condominium Resort
- With whole and fractional ownership
- With efficient use of floor space
- Bringing the most economic stimulus to the community
- Sustainable
- Solar heated and run
- A model for Green building





Key Features Team #3 Special Events to Attract Visitors – Opportunities for investment and retention

Big Ideas

- Biking/Skateboard comps/music festivals
- Local Artists Display at café or Community Center
- Trick competition
- Many Summer/Winter events/competition

Attractions & Uses

- Hotels (1 in Soda Springs, 1 near Sugar Bowl)
- Affordable housing/apts
- Office Space/Commercial
- Retail downstairs/residential upstairs
- Restaurant/Bar
- Espresso kiosk or Internet Café
- Grocery/Deli Store/Gas/Mdse/Ski Rental/ATM
- Gas Station/Café/Souvenirs/Music
- Rec Center/Community Center/Tourist Info

Active & Interactive

- Covered Boardwalk with Daycare area in the Town Center
- Plaza
- Park with playground
- Parking area
- Emigrant Trail Head and Park
- Public Restrooms
- Snow Park with restrooms
- Bike Trail

Heritage Culture and Environment

- Train Station

**Draft Guiding Principles
November 8, 2008**

Source: Summit 2007 guiding principles and growth and development principles

- GP 1: Enhance Sense of Place/ Quality of Life
- GP 2: Improve Stewardship of the Natural Environment
- GP 3: Improve Economic Sustainability
- GP 4: Improve/Manage Recreation and Outdoor Activity
- GP 5: Improve Infrastructure: Transportation, Wastewater,
- GP 6: Provide Communication Choices – Safety, Internet,
- GP 7: Ensure Housing Choices and Affordability
- GP 8: Encourage Sustainable Development
- GP 9: Partnerships for Success
- GP 10: Other Environment



What Absolute and Fundamental Principles do We Want Future Growth and Developments to Adhere to... to meet the Desires and Needs of Our Community?



Key Features Team #4 Create a more walkable and interesting place with a great community center

Big Ideas

- Community Beautification: NOW
- Improve walkability
- Community Center
 - Classes
 - Play ground
 - Conference rooms
 - Social activities-dances
 - Day care center



Attractions & Uses

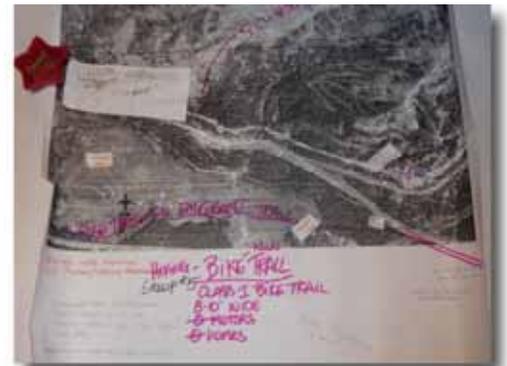
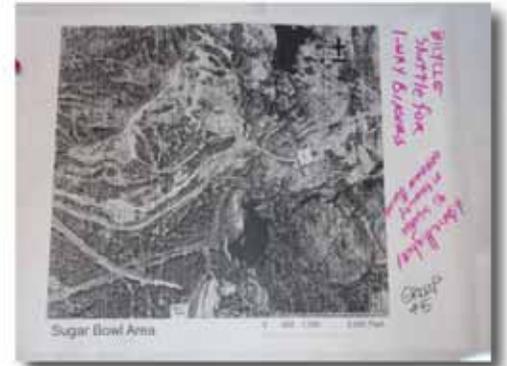
- Ski in-Ski out condos designed in a sustainable manner
- Mixed commercial and residential
- Laundromat
- Gift Shop with local artisans
- Coffee shops
- Specialty restaurants take home for weekend
- Pizza
- Sporting goods offers climbing classes/hiking
- Soda Springs Saloon
- Placer County to negate ordinance that doesn't allow Mother in law units to rent out
- Require affordable housing units in each development

Active & Interactive

- Recreation ideas:
- Bikers at Sugar Bowl
- Campground near center/rivers
- Think out of the box
- Climbing classes
- Skate park
- Sidewalks
- Parking in back
- Plazas
- Bike Path

Heritage Culture and Environment

- Train stop, incorporating historical train ride
- Keep historic like signage and plaques saying what was there in the past



Key Features Team #5 Train Destination with Winter and Summer Outdoor Activities

Big Ideas

- Tourist trolley/train

Attractions & Uses

- Community Center for library, socials, small kids, church services
- Open space
- Mixed use zoning, no Tucson/Valley architecture
- Bike Rental and Shop
- Historic Highway 40 signage at freeway entrance to Donner Summit

Active & Interactive

- Bicycle Shuttle for one way bikers
- Hiking/Bike/Run Trail: class 1 bike trail 8-10' wide, no motors, no horses
- Keep Old Highway 40 safe for cycling
- Outdoor Ice Skating Rink (like a Currier & Ives photo)
Gazebo

Heritage Culture and Environment

- Reroute major railway and privately finance light railway with up to 10 stops to promote pedestrian traffic—hop on, hop off concept through
- Major /big parking lot should not be near railroad stops
- Major railway stops 2 or 3 at Hwy 80/Old 40 and Norden ends at Sugar Bowl/DSR interchange
- Neat garbage bear proof pick up

Prosperity Planning Exercise Results

Team 1 Notes:

- gas station/digital gateway/coffee shop
- Kodak moments
- improved shopping
- commercial center
- museum
- train station
- ice carving event
- world class art
- ice carving art.

Team 2 Notes:

- redevelopment kiosk for visitors/gas/food/recreation
- equipment
- touring, camping at Northern Lake
- viewpoints
- ASI-Sugar Bowl Academy
- rebuild roundhouse and picnic area
- info Center/gathering place
- raise the dam a little bit
- take advantage of the views
- education tours, rock climbing, school museum with.
- Gas Station Plus.

Team 3 Notes:

- gas station plus groovy accessories
- music/food/souvenirs/restaurant/Internet café
- grassy area/deck for bands
- condos, lodging/two-story retail spaces/mixed-use office too.
- train stop
- commercial centers with people mover
- playground/family play area/fun snow park
- train museum
- biker amenities
- public restrooms
- trail head close to road, history of the area
- pedestrian footbridge over trail tracks
- 2 hotels/apartment complexes with off street access
- affordable housing and pocket park.

Enhancing the visitor experience and resident quality of life?

Step 1 consider the 3 visiting couples and one local couple- where on the summit would they visit, stay, spend money?

Consider:

- List of places that can be thematically connected
- Transportation approaches
- Visitor services and spending
- Unique/authentic experiences

Step 2 Once your plan is implemented how would their experience improve?

Scenario 1: In search of food and art

Kent (retired state employee) and Emily (former health food store owner)

Scenario 2: Extreme Camping

Jeff (accountant) and Ellen (nurse)

Scenario 3: UFO's in a Winnabego

Bob (former science teacher and track coach) and Loretta (beautician)

Scenario 4: Biking without helmets

Jake (local carpenter) and Candice (local mama)

Prosperity Planning Exercise Results

Team 4 Notes:

- Gateway at Highway 80/visitors center/gift shop/ transportation center with train station access to buses
- Hotel with side walks to Green Lakes Road
- path or lane from Highway 40 to Serene Lakes to old Highway 40
- accommodate walkers/hikers
- Bakery, local artisans for services
- gas needed near Soda Springs Road (bring into town)
- signage/history plaques (historic trail to follow, walking and bike tour maps)
- Laundromat/restaurant/ commercial center/day care, conference.
- Playground/park at train station/lake
- Railroad through tunnel (like the one in Maui through the sugar cane fields).
- Lake Mary open to public with park in picnic area museum and PCT trailhead or at the Emigrant trail
- Gondola to Sugar Bowl from Highway 40
- Private Developer Project
- 8 acres across from Sugar Bowl zoned resort
- Opportunities for Condos powered by solar energy with a goal to make the resort 100 percent efficient with mixed use/fractional ski in and ski out to Donner Ski Ranch.



Team 5 Notes:

- bike and shuttle for hikers/bikers
- two gateways: entry sign over road at 80 exit and a gateway at the train station, Donner Summit Lodge
- Parks and open space close to bike trails and the Soda Springs train station
- Commercial Center
- Train station at Lake Van Norden or a diversion of rail road
- Side walks, blocks, bio swales to protect you from the Yuba river
- Pick up the garbage! And Bear proof the garbage containers
- New trails and pave part of the Emigrant Trail for bikers hikers
- parks along the way
- bike rentals in summer, and ski rentals in winter.

Ideas & Questions

- Finance housing and make Mother in law units legal
- commercial community center
- co housing
- narrow houses with DSL
- high speed Internet
- get employees to stay here around fill in the vacant housing, high-speed communication DSL line, get get kids out of their houses need families living here , have a fence here around ice carving.
- Think about the communities, Cisco, Rainbow ... and put the Highway 40 corridor designated as a scenic bypass

Action Items - Now

In six months, what are the things that we can do for economic prosperity?

- better signage
- bike rally
- historic preservation
- old 40 keep it open
- scenic bypass
- ice carving competition
- support young families
- summer mountain bike rallies
- repeal the granny flat ordinances
- shop local
- bike designation
- climb in winter

Other Items

- we may also want to think bigger than just land use
- move towards a Donner Summit sustainability plan and a climate change action plan for a viable future

Appendix 1 - Background materials

Appendix 1 includes a background report from Adam Krivasty of Regional Planning Partners and a second report that organizes the interview/survey results survey results of business owners under the following Categories:

PERCEIVED NEEDS
THE VISION
A YEAR-ROUND
RECREATIONAL
PLAYGROUND & VISITOR
DESTINATION
ACCOMMODATIONS

ATTRACTIONS
FACILITIES
COMMUNITY CHARACTER
MAKING THE VISION A
REALITY

Existing conditions photo documentation. The existing conditions documentation included the following: Soda Springs, Rural Corridor, Donner Summit, Signage, Roadway Character/Travel Experience, Ski Areas, Infrastructure Landmarks and Historic Images.

Appendix 2 - Other workshop results

Appendix 2 includes a summary of the principles exercise and a sheet of comments plus scans of individual input.



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Appendix 1



Background materials

Contents

Background report I

Categorized Survey Results II

Existing Conditions III



Appendix 1 includes a background report from Adam Krivatsy of Regional Planning Partners and a second report that organizes the interview/survey results survey results of business owners into useful categories. The third document is the photo documentation of existing conditions.

Appendix 2



Other workshop results

Contents

Summary I

Comments II

Individual Sheets III



Appendix 2 includes a summary of the principles exercise and a sheet of comments plus scans of individual input.