

# **Summit Summit**

**December 16, 2006**

## Table of Contents

<b>Meeting Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Discussion of Key Issues .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Communication .....	2
Cultural.....	3
Economic development .....	4
Education .....	6
Growth .....	6
Infrastructure .....	8
Open space.....	8
Recreation.....	9
Safety and Emergency Services.....	11
Services .....	11
Transportation .....	12

## Meeting Overview

The Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA) and the Serene Lakes Property Owner's Association (SLOPA) cosponsored a meeting on December 16, 2007 to gather input for the Donner Summit Community Plan. The meeting was attended by approximately sixty-five participants representing Summit businesses, various organizations interested in the Summit, residents and property owners.

One purpose of the meeting was to educate the community on the planning process. Steve Frisch provided an overview and handouts of the county general plan, specific plan and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) processes. There is no specific plan for the Summit community. Right now the General Plans for both counties guide development.

Dan Wexler, DSAA President, explained that another purpose of the meeting was to collect information about the issues to be addressed in a regional plan. DSAA will lead the plan and has received two grants to help fund the regional community planning effort. Participants volunteering to be liaisons (communication links) with their geographic area or association and DSAA are:

Michael Rogers – Cisco/Eagle Lakes  
Bob Haydon - Palisades  
Cliff Busby – SLPOA  
Tom or Director - DSPUD  
Bill Krause – TTUSD  
Bill Thauvette – TDLT  
Steve Lieberman – Truckee Fire Protection District  
Gene Moore - Kingvale  
Susan Phebus – Pla Vada  
Chris Parker – Sugar Bowl  
Mike Livak – Royal Gorge

Other volunteers are needed to spearhead the planning effort. People interested in participating in the planning process, collecting/analyzing data, creating surveys, providing expertise, and making recommendations should contact Dan Wexler. Those that would like to be on the planning team should also contact Dan.

The community voice will be heard through surveys and meetings such as this as the process progresses. The easiest way to be updated on planning issues is to log onto the DSAA web site [www.donnersummitareaassociation.org](http://www.donnersummitareaassociation.org)

## Discussion of Key Issues

Participants worked in small teams to discuss the issues, formulate and provide the following responses. Community input has been organized by issue and sub-issue.

The following issues were discussed:

- Communication (telephone, mail delivery, Internet access, cable)
- Cultural (arts, faith communities, history of the summit)
- Economic development (businesses, jobs, tax revenue)
- Education (schools, access to early childhood education through college, busing)
- Growth (housing, rate/type of growth, expanded infrastructure, affordable housing)
- Infrastructure (drainage/flood control, water supply, sewer, sanitation/garbage, utilities, gas & electricity)
- Open space (environmental protection, wildlife habitat, access to public lands)
- Recreation (boating, hiking, fishing, hunting, horse-back riding, skiing, off road vehicles, snow mobiles, special events, facilities/parks, etc.)
- Safety and Emergency Services (police, fire, medical/ambulance, defensible space, lighting, pedestrian & traffic safety)
- Services (retail, markets, gas stations, laundromats, childcare, banks, social & government services, etc.)
- Transportation (roads, freeway access, rail/bus service, snow removal)

### Communication

#### *Internet, Cell Phone and Cable*

- What would you like to see in place in the future? High speed internet, cell phone service, high definition cable.
- Need high speed internet access.
- Internet access (broadband) is needed. Satellite service expensive and spotty due to snow. Cable modem not available. DSL is not available and probably never will be as Soda Springs Central office is a satellite repeater station even though the fiber optic cable is right in front of the office.
- Cable TV- expand and improve. Existing cable service has bad reputation and frequents outages. Cable TV is not available in many areas (e.g. subdivision S5/6 is Serene Lakes).
- What has not been thought of on this topic that needs consideration? Upgrade cable to include internet access (as of this summer we are at last receiving all the basic channels).

#### *Mail Service*

- Growth may require more postal services (more boxes, help, staffing)
- Do NOT want home mail delivery. Improve mail service out of Sacramento instead.

- We need more mail boxes at the post office. Some residents have waited 4 years for a box. We need a new post office that can be more assessable to all the residents of Donner Summit.
- Would like to see mailboxes clustered together in on central location.
- Is there a specific geographic area that is affected \ concerned? Serene Lakes, Soda Springs post office (local personnel are doing a pretty good job).

#### *Emergency Communication*

- Emergency communication system is needed. Radio reception is spotty. Do we have adequate communication facility for emergencies? Do we have means to notify local residents? Currently, for example, the water district puts out a hand painted sign when there is a water problem. SLPOA has a website and phone message IF they are notified of emergencies (the fire district has been asked several times to keep SLPOA informed of summit emergencies but to no avail).
- Improve provision of current information to summit residents.
- Providing emergency information to local residents needs to be a priority because some Summit communities have only one road in/out to escape a fire. This problem coupled with the lack of TV, radio, Internet services puts residents at risk for a potentially catastrophic situation.

#### *Information Resources*

- What are the potential sources of information on this topic?
- SuddenLink cable
- SBC for DSL
- SuddenLink Truckee cable

### **Cultural**

#### *Community Center Connections*

- Community center, performance, class, yoga, bulletin board.
- Community center also ties to services category.
- A community center could provide a place for meetings, exercise during the winter, a place for childcare and childrens activities, funerals, weddings and for occasional government/social services which could be scheduled for certain days each month.
- Soda Springs market/post office connection to river front with picnic benches. (Uli Schmid Maybach is owner and he's interested) (SYRCL is interested too).
- Cafe - coffee shop
- Library - library example is West Marin bookmobiles.
- DSAA needs an office where information is shared and Internet can be accessed as many residents do not have access to DSAA information.
- A community center that would be a multi-functional facility. It should be large enough to house a new & expanded post office. It should have a

gymnasium sized room to hold meetings, ecumenical services, recreational & health programs. It should have daycare space with a small public playground. It could have the museum. And have leasable space for offices. This center should be in the community of Soda Springs as it is the more central point of usage.

#### *Access to Donner Summit History and Points of Interest*

- Donner Summit history center to speak to natural history, petroglyphs, geography.
- Perhaps a kiosk with info about the Yuba.
- Interest in maintaining history of summit and railroad history. Often overlooked because folks just pass by it. Enhance with an interpretive map or display including nature and historical information.
- Utilize the forest service museum at Big Bend.
- Access to historic sites - Emigrant Trail, Summit Tunnel 6, China Wall, petroglyphs, Lincoln Hwy, link to universal access to disabled (Rails to Trails)
- Train stop on summit

### **Economic development**

#### *Business Development*

- What kind of new business do you want in the future, if you do?
- Focus on small business and small development not new mega projects.
- Small business encouragement technological development (non seasonal)
- Direct aid from outside directed to existing businesses.
- Home based business development strategy.
- Encourage more full-season employment.
- Culture based economic development

#### *Services Hub*

- Petes coffee immediately.
- Keep Soda Springs "Downtown" as the "hub" for business rather than creating sprawl across the Summit.

#### *Support Existing Businesses*

- What kinds of businesses do we need? A couple good restaurants, a small general store, a laundromat and a bar or two. We don't need or want a multitude of "new" businesses, but need to make the existing ones successful.
- Infill - don't sprawl. Develop only existing business areas and encourage community developed business models. Public/Private projects as a development proposal.
- Tough to see it happen without a more diverse population. Scary areas are Squaw and Northstar.

*Jobs with Housing*

- Jobs/housing balance.
- Employee housing requirements.
- Job housing balance in Sugar Bowl, impacting the summit.

*Needs to Support Local Businesses*

- Local skills training
- By employee training/jobs training we mean customer service training specifically.
- Local business guide includes home based business
- Undergrounding utilities
- Local Chamber of Commerce for Summit Area (Nyack-Summit)
- Unified signage for the community and services available.
- Bringing outside events to use and develop existing facilities.

*Nevada and Placer Boundary and Participation*

- Is the 80/20 split as a western boundary this is an issue that needs to be clearly defined and a rationale for the boundary needs to be determined.
- The Nevada and Placer County boundary needs to be relocated so that the whole Summit is in one county. Right now the Summit is the “step child” to both counties and easily ignored. The Summit has evolved to be a community itself and should be treated as such.
- No matter which topic we choose, nothing will happen with any continuity until both counties participate...where are they today?!?!?
- Nevada and Placer County Planning, Transportation Officials and County Supervisors were invited. SR Jones, Nevada LAFCo did attend.

*Train Access*

- Train stop at the summit
- We need the train to stop on the summit. Encourage a train geared at transporting tourists from the bay and Sacramento area.
- Imagine what it would be like if hundreds of tourists came up to Donner Summit on trains instead of cars to go skiing at Sugar Bowl, Donner, Boreal, Soda Springs and Royal Gorge. The train could be augmented with an effective bus system connected all of these resort areas.

*Research and Planning Needed*

- What is the right mix of businesses?
- Jobs inventory
- Listing of all jobs held within the areas.
- Local based economic development data.
- Investigate a government structure to incorporate the whole summit under one entity. New county (Summit)?

## Education

### *Donner Trail School, etc.*

- An elementary "neighborhood" school is a necessary component of a community plan.
- Donner Trails should get the community involved in keeping Summit children on the Summit so that there will be a renewing resource to keep the school from having to go thru the "closing issues" every few years. This includes recreation options for children so that they don't always have to go to Truckee. Or, move to Truckee.
- Preserve Donner Trail School. Support new enviro-ed programs on the Summit.
- The concept of a "magnet school" offers diversity, program stability, and the potential for excellence.
- The Donner Trail School needs to stay on the Summit. It provides a community hub for meetings and for transportation of students attending middle school.
- If growth occurs, student transportation will have to be expanded and enhanced.
- More services for parents of pre-school children needs to be available. Expecting parents to travel to Truckee for childcare services does not support building community on the Summit.

## Growth

### *General Philosophy*

- Growth is inevitable but smart growth is essential.
- Overall philosophy for growth. Low impact and low rate of growth. Minimal visual impact. Low intensity of use and traffic impact.
- Rate of growth should be slow.

### *Housing*

- Mixed housing options (some condos ok - nothing over three stories and nothing over 6 units per building).
- More clustered and mixed use zoning
- Affordable housing around town center dense enough for pedestrians
- Mix of housing types, more dense housing and estate lots. Restrictions on heights to minimize visual impact. Must recognize impacts on access and traffic and infrastructure.
- Desirable to have housing for a variety of needs, recreation use, local employee use, etc.
- We have a sense that the current zoning allows too much housing.
- If hillside development is inevitable, require that minimal (but defensible) clearing as to avoid large home protrusion through the forest. Also require

that view side windows be of smoked variety as to reduce the amount of indoor light escaping. Also, all exterior lighting to be down lighting to avoid mountainside beacons.

- Encourage fire safe construction on all new buildings.

*Retain or Preserve*

- Keep historic feel on summit.
- Keep dark skies
- Keep historic feel
- Keep development off ridge lines
- Plan to preserve wildlife corridors

*Create or Improve*

- Create "town center"
- A commercial zoning area for small business from snow removal to coffee shops in the new development area.
- Break-up road to make summit feel more like a neighborhood rather than drive-through (i.e. roundabouts).
- Sustainable design - LEED
- Green belts around clustered communities with transportation links for bicycles, pedestrians, skiers, and shuttles.

*Things to Avoid*

- No big box store
- No chains
- No gated communities.
- NO high rise condos

*Mitigation or Conditions*

- Mitigation of construction traffic impacts regarding noise, dust on existing residents. Light pollution issues.
- All growth should handle its own water run off.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Water*

- Adequate water supply
- Develop full potential of Lake Angela, Ice Lakes and Lake Mary.
- Consider water potential of Lake Van Norden in any development process.
- Ensure growth does not exceed water supply.

### *Flood Protection and Access*

- Provide flood free access on Soda Springs Road at the Yuba River crossing.
- Secure additional access route from Donner Pass Road/freeway to Serene Lakes (flooding/fire).
- Improve rainwater/snowmelt runoff from roads and ditches.

### *Sewer*

- Provide adequate sewer capacity for existing, planned development.

### *District Coordination*

- Continue improved coordination and planning between DSPUD and SLCWD utilities districts.

### *Broad Band/Internet Access*

- Build broad band access to all.
- High speed internet access availability.

### *Garbage*

- Seek positive solutions to garbage issues.
- Seek funding to help reduce the cost of purchasing and installing bear resistant garbage receptacles and require that all homes have them installed regardless of whether the owner subscribes to garbage pickup or not. This should happen now.

### *Underground Services*

- Encourage under grounding of all electric and phone and cable wires.
- Coordinate water line and utility under grounding--get state and PGE funds to support.
- Work towards under grounding propane tanks--better overall engineering of facilities.

## **Open space**

### *Environmental Protection*

- Environmental protection is more inclusive than open space

- Unrenewable resources - flora, fauna, ridgelines, and view scapes - can be lost forever if development is allowed without strict control, and better review from Placer and Nevada Counties.

#### *Open Space Access*

- Any community plan should take into account preserving as much open space as possible.
- Maximize the amount of open space with adequate public access. Define usage with signage, e.g. bikes, horses, motor vehicles. Need to understand the separation of Royal Gorge land and USFS.
- Small parking lots to accommodate access to public lands (i.e. cedars road is inaccessible in winter unless you are dropped off).

#### *Preserve and Maintain*

- Maintain current habitat from future development. Program to maintain trails that are torn up by bikes. Clearing of trees of trails. Control motorized bikes on trails. Open space- preserve viewsapes from development.
- Preserve rugged ethos

#### *Lake Van Norden and Meadow*

- Preserve Lake Van Norden, to remain a preserve.
- Preservation of Van Norden Meadow - I've been a resident for the past 4 years and enjoy it being so serene and I enjoy seeing the cross-country skiers and enjoy hiking out there.
- Preserve the ridge lines surrounding Serene Lakes. Minimize the impact of improving the infrastructure, although roads in the Serene Lakes community need more upkeep.
- Preserve the pristine atmosphere of the Summit and the rugged backcountry. Preserve Lake Van Norden
- Let's not forget that Van Norden Meadow is the beginning of a most historical watershed, and that many groups realize the need for it to remain undeveloped.

#### *Things to Avoid*

- Avoid becoming another Tahoe Donner or Northstar. Development to be low density in general, without higher density projects redefining the nature of the community.
- Protect quietness of settled areas
- Restrict high density commercial development to existing
- commercial/business zones so as to maintain the rugged open-space nature of the community as a whole.

## **Recreation**

*Develop or Improve*

- Picnic areas and parks in the general area.
- Parking and winter parking, with snow park program for access. Year round access. Who pays?
- Winter activities and trailhead entry points for certain types of activities.
- Provide designate off road access for certain types of activity.
- Off-road enthusiasts need access but have to stay off streets if not allowed.
- Snow mobile (motorized vehicles routes and human access trails should be kept separate).I would like to keep snowmobile trails with some controls....respect the trails so it isn't taken away.
- Snow mobiles and pedestrians do not mix.

*Specific Recreation Facilities*

- Park for little kids
- Playground area on Summit possible
- A lift from Crow's Nest to Royal Gorge is of interest.
- Most residents opposed too lift from Sugar Bowl to Royal Gorge.
- Indoor swimming pool nice
- Skating rink appealing
- Baseball field

*Preserve*

- Maintaining access to hiking trails.
- Keep access to public lands.
- Access to public and private pristine areas.
- Access to public lands should be maintained and preserved and enhanced where needed.
- Biking should be added to this list including mountain and road biking.

*Discuss and Define*

- Define recreation.....what is it...a community center or multi-purpose building? Natural outdoor activities snowshoeing, snowmobiling being separated.
- What is enhanced recreation?
- Motorized non-motorized?

*Things to Avoid*

- Strong anti-golf feeling.
- No enforcement of recreation issues regarding off road vehicles
- Access to cross country skiing across Royal Gorge possibly

*Training and Education*

- Education of recreational opportunities by Parks and Recs.

- Training and classes to enhance the experience. Snowshoe classes, training for the public on a variety of outdoor activities.
- Special event that highlights summit identity - could include schools, Fire Department, Ironman

## **Safety and Emergency Services**

### *Lighting*

- Outside lighting needs to consider motion detectors as a standard.
- Motion lighting keep the sky dark but provide light when needed for safety and security. Make motion detectors a building inspection requirement.

### *Traffic*

- Traffic signals, law enforcement to control high usage areas, e.g. ski area ingress and egress.
- Encourage creation of bike lanes.
- Improve speed control on Highway 40.
- Mitigate traffic! Three dogs recently killed on Donner Pass Rd.
- Extend old 40 through between Cisco to Eagle Lakes, and to hwy 20. This would encourage summer "slower" tourist traffic to take the 20 out of the Grass Valley/Nevada City area all the way to Truckee and stay off the freeway. This would create more driveby traffic for any local businesses.
- Widen Donner Pass Road from the freeway to the Judah entrance to 3 lanes. This would give safe bicycle/ped lanes for the summer. Also, a widened snow plowed area for winter peds. Also give "rush hour" options of 2 lanes of inbound traffic in the mornings & 2 lanes of outbound in the afternoons of busy ski days.
- Develop a year-round road out Pahatsi. Or maybe an over the mountain road east of Ice Lakes down passed Crows Peak.

### *Defensible Space and Fire Protection*

- Defensible space education and enforcement.
- Ensure best practice forest fuels reduction.
- Require residential sprinklers for all new construction without year round road access.
- Require more fire resistant building practices such as stone work, cement based siding, tile or steel roofs. Ban the use of shake roofs and untreated wood siding/logs.

### *Emergency Access*

- Solution to emergency access/exit for Serene Lakes when crossing blocked.

## **Services**

- If more homes are coming it would be nice to have more shops, restaurants and other amenities.
- Expanded fresh food availability good.
- Concentrate business services in existing commercial areas in Soda Springs.
- Residents (full-time and weekend) must support local businesses with some of their purchases--grocery, dining, gifts, gasoline, etc.
- Reliable, robust internet service to the entire summit.
- Most services are available in Truckee and are accessible.
- Problem with access to Social Services because Placer County residences have to go to Kings Beach or Auburn.
- Childcare services are needed to keep young families on the Summit and provide workers for our businesses. There are resources available for funding, training, and certifying childcare providers through Prop 5 resources and funding through Prop 5 and TTCF. Local ski areas and/or Royal Gorge LLC may be interested in providing space. Forming Parent groups would be a way to start.

## Transportation

### *Road Repair and Snow Plowing Concerns*

- A concern is that many residents of the summit don't know who is responsible for which roads. The locals need to be able to get around...this is a more general statement of transportation needs.
- Get counties to coordinate road repair and snow removal across county lines. For example, divide Highway 40 into two contiguous sections from Truckee to Cisco and let each county handle all activities on their section. Now we see different timetables and levels of maintenance in each of the 4 or 5 sections where the road curves across the (straight) county line.
- Transportation, in general, is a complete mess. Does Placer County even own a snowplow? Does Nevada County? It seems the responsibility for plowing non-freeway roads is haphazard at best. It's also a level-of-service and safety issue, especially for a small-business owner. We need to hold the counties, especially Nevada, accountable. It would be nice to see more county involvement west of the Summit. As Highway 80 becomes more impacted, the level of service must become more available.
- Placer County does an adequate job with snow removal in Serene Lakes but the timetable and road plowing priorities are not known or shared with the community.
- The freeway over the Summit to Truckee where most people need to go for services is in poor condition.

### *Freeway Noise*

- Noise from the freeway: It's a huge quality of life issue on the summit...is there some technology that could help (different surface?), or some sort of limited sound wall? What about planting vegetation, probably only good during the winter, with snow as a noise insulator. What are the legal rights of the residents?

#### *Improvements Needed*

- Class II bike trail system.
- How about more walking, running, and biking paths, linked in a logical way to connect the various communities up at the summit. Donner Pass Road is EXTREMELY dangerous during the summer, with cars regularly going over 50 mph from 80 to the Summit.
- Bike lanes on Donner Pass Road are needed.
- Park and ride lot for shuttles.
- Connections to Sacramento/Reno airports.
- Better transport to Sugar Bowl winter weekends.
- Class needed to teach people how to drive in snow.

#### *Sugar Bowl Specifically*

- Sugar Bowl Responsibilities: Donner Pass Road, from the Summit eastward. Sugar Bowl buses are the only link from the Summit to Truckee on a regular basis. Sugar Bowl gets no help from either county for their service. They need to participate.
- Extend Sugar Bowl shuttle bus services into Serene Lakes.
- Sugar Bowl should provide more parking near the freeway and shuttle guests to the resort.
- Can Sugar Bowl, Soda Springs, and Royal Gorge work with the existing Amtrac train/bus system to encourage people to come in on that system and take the shuttle to the ski area? This would help alleviate traffic on Donner Summit Road and ski area parking problems. It also helps with air quality and traffic on down the road.

#### *Train Service*

- Train stops Sugar Bowl/Soda Springs.
- Info - Capitol Corridor is the 3rd busiest rail in nation - can't we link it?
- The Amtrac Bus from Soda Springs is a great way to connect to Sacramento and the Bay Area.
- As far as trains and the possibility of using UP tracks for connecting either eastbound or westbound to destinations, I'll be putting another report on the DSAA website by the first of the year. It will deal with a bit of history, the current situation, and what the future could hold.