The Land Use News is a monthly electronic update of news, events, and notices regarding land use issues happening in or relevant to the Sierra. Articles of interest are hyperlinked. Click on the link to access the article online. Do you have an item that should be included in the Land Use News? Send it to kelly@sierranevadaalliance.org.

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I. SPECIAL FROM THE ALLIANCE

1. Funding available for Sustainable Planning. The Strategic Growth Council approved its final planning grant guidelines on March 17 - including some significant last-minute changes.

[thanks to ClimatePlan for additional information]

Sierra folks – take note! The Strategic Growth Council will soon (look for it in the next couple weeks) be issuing an RFP for proposals from local governments. Your transportation commission, COG, County or City are among those applicants eligible to apply. You think your County is already at capacity and doesn’t have staff time to devote to applying? If you’re a nonprofit or if you know a nonprofit you can help! Under the adopted guidelines NGOs are allowed to be sub-recipients, meaning – they can go in on grants with their local governments. This includes helping administer grants and helping apply for grants. Contact your local COG/CTC/County staff and make sure they know about this opportunity. We want to see some of this good money come into the Sierra to advance more sustainable planning. CHECK the SGC website for updates and for the RFP: www.sgc.ca.gov

Want some brief background on the Strategic Growth Council and what the funding they have is earmarked to support – read on:

The Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentives Program implements the vision of the Governor and Legislature to foster the development of sustainable communities throughout California. It is designed to help local governments meet the challenges of adopting land use plans and integrating strategies in order to transform communities and create long term prosperity.

Who can apply?
Cities, counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), Councils of Governments (COGs), or combination thereof, are eligible to apply.

How much funding is available?
Approximately $60,000,000 in State funds is available for awards, which will be distributed over three cycles beginning Fiscal Year 2010/11. It is anticipated that Proposals funded under this solicitation will be not less than $100,000 nor greater than $1,000,000 each.

What are the objectives proposals must achieve?
Improve Air and Water Quality; Promote Public Health; Promote Equity; Increase Housing Affordability; Promote Infill and Compact Development; Revitalize Urban and Community Centers; Protect Natural Resources and Agricultural Lands; Reduce Automobile Usage and Fuel Consumption; Improve Infrastructure Systems; Promote Water Conservation; Promote Energy Efficiency and Conservation; and Strengthen the Economy

What are some of the changes that were incorporated into the final guidelines on March 17 that I should know/care about?
At the March 17th hearing the Strategic Growth Council:
1. reserved twenty percent of the funds for planning to benefit economically disadvantaged communities
2. emphasized the importance of zoning updates in the scoring criteria
3. increased the amount of the money that goes to SB 375-related planning
4. added SCSs and "greenprints" as eligible planning projects.

CHECK the SGC website for updates and for the RFP: www.sgc.ca.gov and pass on to your local government.

II. NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA

1. Sac shuttle brings questions about Basin mass transit options, The Tahoe Daily Tribune
   http://www.tahoedailytribune.com/article/20100303/NEWS/100309972/1068&ParentProfile=1056

   By: Matt Welch
   March 3 2010

   Even though he came to Tahoe via Sacramento, Steve Witt said he wasn't interested in the shuttle bus from Sacramento to Stateline, Nev. that starts this month.

   “You don't have shuttle service like many ski areas do,” said Witt, a Minneapolis resident. “In this area, it's easier to drive around.”

   The shuttle runs twice a day from Sacramento International Airport to four stops in Stateline. The airport hopes it will bring numerous visitors to the South Shore who do not have cars, but for some tourists like Witt that's not appealing because the area's recreation is so spread out. Witt and his friends are staying on the North Shore but drove down to Heavenly Lake Tahoe Wednesday to ski, he said.

   “We found it was easier to rent a car,” Witt said.

2. Controversial Lode Project to go before Voters, The Record
   http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100309/A_NEWS/3090326/-1/A_COMM02

   By: Dana Nichols
   March 9 2010

   Voters in June will decide whether to overturn the City Council's approval of Gold Rush Ranch, a 1,334-home project that could double the town's size.

   The referendum is the work of Preserve Historic Sutter Creek, a group that opposes the project and wants "the size and scale of this development reduced to better fit our rural lifestyle."

   The City Council on Jan. 4 approved a subdivision map, a development agreement and other key documents for the 945-acre project along Highway 204 southwest of the historic downtown

3. AB32 plays on economic fears, San Francisco Chronicle
   http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/03/09/EDSQ1CD92B.DTL
Petitions are being circulated for a November ballot initiative that would undercut California's landmark legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it appears that the seed money for the petition drive is coming from two oil refiners, Valero Energy Corp. and Tesoro Corp., based in San Antonio. Each owns refineries in California, including the Valero facility in Benicia.

The campaign to repeal Assembly Bill 32, signed into law by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2007, is expected to play to fears that the changes in lifestyle and commerce required to slow climate change would have a negative effect on the economy.

4. State transit projects may be U.S. models, San Francisco Chronicle
http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/03/12/BA921CEDUA.DTL&feed=rss.news#ixzz0iMLMHLFP

By: Carolyn Lochhead
March 12 2010

The Obama administration said Thursday that it is looking at projects in the Bay Area and potentially Los Angeles as a model to build and repair hundreds of billions of dollars of rail, road, bridge, port and other projects as the nation's infrastructure is crumbling but new federal funds are drying up.

The idea is to use federal loans, backed by local tax revenues, to speed up huge transit and other local projects while taking advantage of bargain-basement prices in the recession-hit construction industry and creating jobs at the same time.

One model is the $171 million federal loan for San Francisco's Transbay Transit Center, a rail passenger hub that Department of Transportation Undersecretary Roy Kienitz touted Thursday at a hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee as "the first transit center of its kind."

5. Alameda land-use ruling could reshape state, San Francisco Chronicle
http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/03/16/MNGH1CGQ9H.DTL#ixzz0j1SST9hm

By: John King
March 17 2010
When an Alameda County judge this month ruled that Pleasanton must loosen its development rules to allow large amounts of new housing for all income levels, he sent a message that could ricochet around the state.

The ruling by Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch found the prosperous city of 68,000 at fault for a voter-approved cap on the number of housing units allowed within its borders. Roesch based his decision on a California law that requires cities to make land available to accommodate their share of regional housing needs - and that is a standard that most municipalities don't meet.

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6. [Freeways Responsible For Emptying Out Cities](http://www.planetizen.com/node/43413), Planetizen
[forwarded from Climate Plan Weekly Newsletter]

By: Tim Halbur
March 18 2010

There's a lot of anecdotal evidence we see out there in metropolitan cities that a lot of jobs exist in the suburbs, and that that wasn't nearly as true 40 or 50 years from now. But amazingly enough, there's not a lot of systematic, empirical evidence about the extent of which that employment decentralization has occurred, and their isn't a lot of empirical evidence about how commutes have changed over time. In the process of writing my first paper about highways and suburbanization, I tried to read everything I could about this and I couldn’t find anybody who’d looked at this in a systematic way across metropolitan areas.

And it turns out that not only has the nature of residential and employment locations have changed dramatically, but the nature of commuting patterns have also changed dramatically. Now, the vast majority of commutes do not involve the central city at all, even commutes made by people who live in metropolitan areas, whereas in 1960, the majority certainly involved central cities either as origins or destinations or both. And that’s a major change. I think the next step is to try to understand all the things that generated that change.

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7. [Lassen Officials, Investors, Losing Hope in Stalled Resort Plans](http://www.sacbee.com/2010/03/18/2615103/lassen-officials-investors-losing.html), Sacramento Bee

By: Jane Braxton Little
March 18 2010

The development agreement is signed and the fees are paid, but local officials and investors remain skeptical that a controversial four-season resort planned for Dyer Mountain ever will deliver the jobs and economic boon it promised.

California Mortgage and Realty Inc., a San Francisco-based financial company that has assumed ownership of the project, is mired in a dysfunctional real estate market that has contributed to the troubled history of what local opponents have dubbed "Dyergate." A decade after Lassen County voters approved zoning to allow the development, no buildings have been erected, and none is in sight.
8. Why Must Resorts Bulldoze the Slopes?, Sacramento Bee
http://www.sacbee.com/2010/03/21/2620601/why-must-resorts-bulldoze-the.html

By: Jennifer Williamson Burt
March 21 2010

For many, being "green" means finding high-tech – and, by extension, high-cost – fixes for familiar environmental problems.

But sometimes the greenest solutions lie in reviving sensible and economical practices from the past.

Ski run construction presents one clear example.

In bygone days, when skiing operations were smaller in scope, ski runs were mostly created in ways that avoided long-term environmental degradation. In forested areas, ski area operators simply cut down trees and tall shrubs in the path of the new run, creating an open slope through the forest. Skiers flew over unseen snow-buried stumps, small shrubs, and undisturbed soils. Because the soils were left undisturbed, these ski runs were not subject to great erosion, and native plant communities regrew vigorously from the existing seedbank.

9. Sierra Nevada Conservancy Asking for Public Comment on Sustainable Sierra Nevada Initiative, YubaNet
http://yubanet.com/regional/Sustainable-Sierra-Nevada-Resolution.php

By: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 29 2010

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is soliciting public comment on a proposal to focus on sustainably managing forest lands in the Sierra Nevada. The Sustainable Sierra Nevada Initiative has two primary objectives:

• Creating ecologically healthy forests and watersheds, thereby protecting and enhancing habitat and water quality while reducing the risk of catastrophic fire; and

• Creating sustainable local economic activity in the Region through increasing the sustainable production of renewable biomass energy and a variety of wood products.

"Many of our public forests are dangerously overgrown and in very poor health, increasing the risk of catastrophic fire, which has an extremely harmful impact on public health, our environment, our water and our economy," said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. Noting that forest management issues have historically been highly contentious, Branham added, "Our goal is to bring a wide variety of interests together, and focus on what we all agree on to take action on the ground. We recognize it won't be easy, but the alternative of the status quo is unacceptable."

10. CEQA Guidelines now effective!, California Natural Resources Agency
http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/
Thursday (March 18), new state guidelines to address global warming in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) became effective. The move caps more than two years of preparation, initiated by the passage of SB 97 in 2007.

The new guidelines make it clear that the heat trapping gasses that cause global warming must be thoroughly addressed in the environmental review process. They also begin to grapple with the challenges posed by an increasingly warmer world, emphasizing the need to assess potential impacts of locating development in areas susceptible to hazardous conditions.

The guidelines and the accompanying Statement of Reasons should provide additional impetus for local, regional, and state decisionmakers to minimize the environmental impacts of new projects to help California meet its climate goals. We hope the next round of guideline amendments delves even deeper into the subject, assisting decisionmakers and the public in choosing the most effective approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and integrating anticipated climate impacts such as sea level rise and wildfire risk into the planning process.

III. NEWS FROM NEVADA

1. Lake Tahoe Redevelopment Plans in Dispute, ABC News

By: Jennifer Olney
February 24 2010

Lake Tahoe may be one of the most beautiful spots in the world, but the buildings that surround it are not. Many are old, ugly and harming the environment. A lot of people in the Tahoe Basin want change, but as you might expect, not everyone agrees on what that change should look like.

At first, Lake Tahoe was a natural paradise known for clear water and soaring mountains. The ski resorts and casinos came later, bringing 50 years of glitz and glamour and a hodge-podge of development.
"Over 204 motels and a collection of over 4,500 rooms, we counted them," the announcer in a past ad boasted.

Most of the building was done with little thought about the environment. Now, the government has strict standards for the Tahoe Basin, but they are hard to reach with a legacy of bad development.

2. Reno and Tahoe Making Pitch for 2022 Winter Olympics, Sacramento Bee

By: Ed Fletcher
March 2 2010
Before Reno and Lake Tahoe boosters launch their international pitch to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, they must convince their communities it's a good idea.

After spending a week rubbing shoulders with Olympic officials and athletes in Vancouver, British Columbia, Nancy Cushing, chief executive officer of Squaw Valley USA, is shifting her focus locally. Boosters envision spreading events between Reno and Lake Tahoe, with Reno providing most of the housing and hosting indoor ice events, while Lake Tahoe's world-renowned ski resorts would host outdoor events.

And they hope to turn potential opponents into allies with the "greenest" Games in the history of the Olympics.

3. Countwide draft Master Plan unveiled at seven community meetings, Reno-Gazette Journal

By: Karren Rhodes
March 17 2010

Residents of Lyon County's seven unincorporated communities gathered recently at their various citizen advisory board meetings during March to review the draft Lyon County Comprehensive Countywide Master Plan --and according to the county planner the reception has been good.

Lyon County Planner Rob Loveberg and planning department staff took their work on the road to gather community input and give people the ability to have their input considered for incorporation in the final plan.

"Silver City wanted to have mining activities incorporated in the plan," Loveberg said, adding that Mound House residents wanted to make sure a future park was noted on the map. Stagecoach residents last week discussed how to grow while keeping the area "rural" and how the NV Energy proposed transmission lines will work into the master plan.

4. County land trust leader sees more easements, more members on the horizon, The Union

By: Dave Moller
March 18 2010

Even Nevada County politics couldn’t stop new Nevada County Land Trust President Dave Palley from his quest to preserve green space in the Sierra.

Twenty years ago, Palley was one of the founders of the trust to protect agriculture, habitat and green space in Nevada County with conservation and working agriculture easements. Now, he is the new board president, hoping to reinvigorate the nonprofit organization by expanding membership and adding more easements.

“Most land trusts arise out of controversy,” Palley said. “This one formed when a bunch of people got together for Earth Day in 1990.

“Someone said, ‘other places have land trusts,’ so we started talking about it, and we took our time.
IV. OTHER NEWS

1. 'Smart Growth' Taking Hold in U.S. Cities, Study Says, New York Times

[forwarded from Climate Plan Weekly Newsletter]

By: Gabriel Nelson
March 24 2010

Redevelopment of urban centers has continued to outpace construction in the outskirts of suburbia, according to a recent U.S. EPA study, suggesting a "fundamental shift" has begun in the real estate market as the Obama administration pushes denser development through its "livability" initiative.

Though the nation's urban centers emptied for decades as suburbs sprawled outward, developers in many large cities are increasingly looking inward for building opportunities, according to the study (pdf), titled "Residential Construction Trends in America's Metropolitan Regions." In 26 of the nation's 50 largest metropolitan areas, the share of residential construction taking place in central cities more than doubled since 2000.

2. Obama Administration Officials Announce White House Conference on America’s Great Outdoors, YubaNet

By: USDA
March 27 2010

Obama Administration Officials announced today that they will host a White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors on Friday, April 16, 2010. Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior, and Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture are leading the conference, which will address the challenges, opportunities and innovations surrounding modern-day land conservation and the importance of reconnecting Americans and American families to the outdoors.

"America's outdoors are part of our national identity. They are the farms, ranches and forests that we take great pride in, and the neighborhood parks, trails and fields where we spend memorable time with our families and friends," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "Too many of these places are disappearing. In launching this conversation, we strive to learn about the smart, creative community efforts underway throughout the country to conserve our outdoor spaces, and hear how we can support these efforts."

V. EVENTS

1. Western Wilderness Conference 2010

   When: April 8-11 2010
   Where: Berkeley, California
If you haven’t already, register to attend the Western Wilderness Conference 2010 to be held April 8-11, at UC Berkekey. The web site is: www.westernwilderness.org.

From Bob Schneider, Senior Policy Director, Tuleyome:

“I believe the first wilderness conference was the inspiration of Norman "Ike" Livermore and David Brower in 1947. Many have been held since then, the last in California was the California Wilderness Conference 2000. From that conference came the enthusiasm, friendships, dedication, knowledge and hard work that has lead to the permanent protection of 1 million acres of wilderness in California.

This conference has a broader vision: to protect landscapes throughout the west necessary for climate change adaptation. Of particular importance is Rick Ridgeway’s presentation on FREEDOM TO ROAM (http://freedomtoroam.org/). This is truly a must see.

Come see old friends, meet new ones, shares stories and plan new campaigns.

Tuleyome will talk about the proposed 470,000 acre Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area and diligently work to recruit you for that effort.”

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2. “Toward a Just Metropolis,” Planners Network Conference

When: June 16-20, 2010
Where: San Francisco East Bay Area
(exact location TBA)

This joint conference of Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility, New Village Press, Planners Network, Young Planners Network, Association for Community Design, and The Center for the Living City merges the annual conferences of these national and international organizations, which have brought together progressive urbanists and innovative ideas for more than three decades. Presentation, workshop, and poster proposals are due March 16th.

Visit the website for more info: http://justmetropolis.doodlekit.com/home

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3. Save the Date! Sierra Nevada Alliance 17th Annual Conference!

When: August 27-29th, 2010
Where: Mammoth Mountain

Join us at Mammoth Mountain in Mammoth Lakes for a weekend of inspiring speakers, informative workshops, fun field trips, and terrific networking with Sierra conservation leaders. Save the Date to attend the best conservation conference in the region.

Visit the Annual Conference section at www.sierranevadaalliance.org for more information on the program and camping/lodging options. Mammoth Mountain offers plenty of recreation, so while you’re in workshops friends and family can have fun too. Lodging/Camping spaces fill up early - so reserve your accommodations now.
For More Information:
530.542.4546
www.sierranevadaalliance.org