



“WAYFINDING IN SOUTH LAKE TAHOE”

A PROJECT FOR LAKE TAHOE’S SOUTH SHORE
IN COOPERATION WITH THE

EL DORADO COUNTY

THE CITY OF SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

and

THE NEVADA COMMISSION ON TOURISM

STATUS REPORT

PRESENTED TO EL DORADO COUNTY

MAY 2008

WAYFINDING IN SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

STATUS REPORT

PRESENTED TO EL DORADO COUNTY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PROJECT SUMMARY	3
PROJECT ACTIVITIES THROUGH MARCH 2008	4
PHASE 1 ACTIVITIES (Design Strategy)	5
Design Consultant.....	5
Public & Committee Input.....	5
Wayfinding Committee	8
Proposed Sign Options	8
Neighborhood Designation.....	9
Traffic or Street Light Option	10
CalTrans Issues	10
PROJECT SUPPORT AND UPCOMING ACTIONS.....	13
Project Support from Elected Officials.....	13
Test Project	13
Project Evaluation.....	14
PROJECT TIMELINE.....	14
PROJECT BUDGET	16
ATTACHMENTS	18

INTRODUCTION

This is a Status Report submitted to El Dorado County in accordance with the Request for Proposals and award of same to the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) for the Wayfinding project. This Status Report will review all activities performed since the project was approved.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project, "Wayfinding In South Lake Tahoe" includes the unincorporated portions of South Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County and the incorporated city of South Lake Tahoe. Following approval by the South Lake Tahoe City Council for the project, the Chamber submitted a similar proposal to El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in response to their Request for Proposals (RFP) to utilize promotional funds. The Chamber's proposal was awarded \$42,500 from El Dorado County to help complete the project. In April of 2008, the Chamber was awarded \$20,000 from the Nevada Commission on Tourism (NCOT) to continue the project along the South Shore into Nevada.

For purposes of this Status Report the "Project" includes Meyer's area (El Dorado County) along Highway 50 into the City's jurisdiction through the "Y" area and out to the Stateline/Conference & Event Center area. The funding from NCOT will allow the project to continue from Stateline to Zephyr Cove and up Kingsbury Avenue.

The goal of the Project is to design and install an engaging, clear and safe set of signs with a consistent and visual identity from beginning to end to enhance the visitor's experience by easily directing them to places they would like to visit. As a result, the visitor will more easily navigate the community and likely observe civic, cultural, commercial, conference, lodging and recreational amenities they might not otherwise have noticed. A good and effective Wayfinding signage program quickly becomes intuitive to the community and visitor and uses a thematic scheme to promote the identity of the community and activity.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES THROUGH MAY 2008

Agency Approvals / Funding Partners

City of South Lake Tahoe: The South Lake Tahoe City Council voted to set aside \$88,000 for the Wayfinding Project; authorizing a payment of the first \$22,000 on September 4, 2007. The remaining monies are being held in abeyance pending Caltrans project approvals.

El Dorado County: In accordance with the City Council's request to the Chamber to obtain additional funding from other agencies and sources, the Chamber submitted a similar Wayfinding proposal to El Dorado County in early September (RFP 08-918-027) which was funded in the amount of \$42,500.

Douglas County NV: In April of 2008, the Nevada Commission on Tourism awarded \$20,000 to continue the project from the California / Nevada Stateline area into Nevada (Zephyr Cove and Kingsbury Avenue). Additional funds will likely be needed to complete the project in Nevada.

Phase 1 Activities (Design Strategy)

Design Consultant

After the project was first awarded grant funds from the City of South Lake Tahoe in late summer 2007, the Chamber announced a Request for Proposals which resulted in the submission of six consulting firms submitting proposals. The Chamber's Wayfinding committee reviewed all the proposals and selected Design Workshop, a local design firm. Design Workshop was selected as the Consultant firm most responsive to the proposal and with the added benefits of an understanding of the complexity of local layers of government. The Agreement with Design Workshop includes the initial phase of evaluation and design strategy.

Public & Committee Input

Public Workshop

As with any community Project, public input is vital to achieve an outcome acceptable and desired by the community. On January 30, 2008, a public workshop was held at which participants heard from the consultants about design options and strategies. Notice of the Public Workshop was announced through Press Releases and in the Tahoe Daily Tribune (January 20, 2008). The Press Release was also forwarded to the email group list for South Lake Tahoe's 56 Acre Project. The TRPA also forwarded the Press Release to its email group list set up for persons interested in community notices. The notices were also posted on the Chamber's website and sent to all Chamber members with an email account (approximately 900 email account members). Approximately 23 community members attended the workshop along with approximately 12 committee members.

During the workshop participants heard from Design Workshop consultants about **Destination Categories** (Attachment 1). Workshop participants were provided a schematic layout of the South Lake Tahoe community and together, in teams, discussed ideas and concepts about the types of messages that should be considered at various locations in order to clarify points of interest to locals and visitors. Findings from each group were shared collectively. The consultants utilized the input to develop recommendations for sign messaging concepts, which ultimately resulted in the Draft Sign Plan.

The **Draft Sign Plan** (Attachment 2) is a detailed list of all the messages to be considered at various locations. The Draft Sign Plan concepts should be paired down to no more than 3 messages per sign (Caltrans & Federal Highway Standards) and only the highest priority messages should be considered.

Web Access for Wayfinding Project

In an effort to provide more access and input between the community and the progress of the Project the Chamber set up new pages on its website (www.tahoechamber.org/wayfinding.aspx) where all documents, handouts and design concepts are posted for public review. On the site are links to Chamber staff email and phone to receive project comments.

Wayfinding Committee

A Wayfinding Committee has been organized to discuss the Project on a periodic basis. The Committee is comprised of a wide range of public agency staff members including City of South Lake Tahoe Planning Director, Redevelopment & Housing Director, Sr. Engineer; El Dorado County Economic Director and Sr. Engineer; TRPA Sr. Planner, CalTrans Traffic Engineer, and members of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

The Wayfinding Committee has met on several occasions and communicated via electronic messages (e-mail) about the Consultant's recommendations, design strategies and message concepts. The Committee and in particular those from public agencies have spent considerable time discussing the various sign codes from CalTrans, TRPA, City and County, what types of signs would be permitted under CalTrans regulations.

Proposed Sign Options

On March 13, 2008, the Consultants presented several **sign options** (Attachment 3) to the Wayfinding Committee. It's **important to note** the sign options as shown in the Attachment contain *more messages than will ultimately be allowed on the signs*. The maximum number of messages allowed by CalTrans / Federal Highway Traffic Standards is three messages. However, the Consultant's proposed signs include up to five messages for the purposes of display and to show sign options.

The Wayfinding Committee reviewed all of the recommendations and the majority have chosen to focus on Option Number 4 (below), which includes a neighborhood designation (as shown below the "Bijou"). The option below also has been edited to show the maximum allowed of three messages per sign. The sign options and ideas were presented to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on April 1, 2008 along with a presentation providing a detailed status report on the project. Following the presentation, the City Council indicated continued support for the project although financial contributions are contingent upon Caltrans approvals.

Neighborhood Designation

From the beginning of this Project identifying neighborhoods (shown below) as a method to develop a sense of community and neighborhood spirit has been desired by a number of the community and committee members involved in the project. Local public agency members have seen the recommended options and have heard the desire to designate a community neighborhood. TRPA and City of South Lake Tahoe staff members have indicated local sign ordinances do allow for "neighborhood" designations; however, CalTrans officials have not determined whether or not such a designation could be accommodated.

Sign Option # 4



Traffic or Street Light Option

As shown on the photos to the right, it's possible to include a sign noting the Neighborhood designation on a traffic or street light, rather than embedded into the Wayfinding sign. This option is considered as a possible solution to developing a Wayfinding program within current government codified regulations.



CalTrans Issues

Most signs along Highway 50 would be installed in the CalTrans Right-of-Way (ROW) and therefore will require CalTrans approval. In response to the South Lake Tahoe City Council's request to approach this project conservatively pending CalTrans approvals, Chamber staff has communicated extensively with CalTrans department employees and officials.

CalTrans has expressed an interest in reducing the number of signs along Highway 50, particularly signs that contribute to driver confusion or signs with international symbols that can be misleading (eg: Boat launch signs for which there is no boat launch).

CalTrans traffic engineers have expressed an understanding of Wayfinding projects throughout the United States and have also expressed a desire to help the community obtain approval for a Wayfinding project design which meets the community's needs.

City, El Dorado County and TRPA officials have expressed similar interest in improving the condition of the signs in the South Lake Tahoe community, particularly to improve driver experience in finding their way around.

On April 22, 2008, Wayfinding Committee members, the design consultant and CalTrans , District 3 Traffic Operations Chief spent several hours "touring" the south shore community to evaluate in detail appropriate sign locations, sign content and sign standards. Although we were unable to reach a determination as to the type (specifically) of Wayfinding Signs that could obtain a CalTrans permit, the officials and committee members agreed upon a number of locations for which signage needed improvement.

On June 9, 2009, Committee members and South Lake Tahoe City officials have scheduled a meeting with Caltrans to review proposed sign options in order to understand the specific parameters allowed within the CalTrans right-of-way.

/ / /

/ / /

/ / /

PROJECT SUPPORT AND UPCOMING ACTIONS

Project Support from Elected Officials

The Project has received support from various elected officials including the South Lake Tahoe City Council, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, Douglas County Commissioners. In addition, Assemblyman Ted Gaines and Senator Cox support the project in concept (See Attachment 4).

Test Project

The Wayfinding Committee recommended a 'test project' be conducted. The Test Project will include production of a Test Sign to be installed at an intersection of importance, but not Tahoe Valley ("Y") or Ski Run (likely location is Al Tahoe & Lake Tahoe Blvd/Highway 50).

The Test Sign will be of appropriate height and width. The sign will be installed in a temporary fashion for a short period of time. A video camera will be used to film a driver's perspective coming up to the intersection where the sign will be installed. The video will show before and after installation. The sign will be up only for a short period of time. City, County, TRPA and CalTrans staff will be notified and participate in the installation. Opinions about the effectiveness of the sign from public agency officials, passer-bys and persons viewing the video will be solicited. Results of the collective opinion will be provided to the Consultant, included in future reports and provided to funding agencies.

Project Evaluation

In accordance with the County and City's RFP and subsequent proposals submitted by the Chambers, a community survey was conducted throughout March and April. More than 300 people completed the survey (Attachment 5) including visitors and local community members. The survey results are being tabulated at the time of this report and the results will be provided in future reports. The results will help to provide a project evaluation component to the City Council (as requested in the RFP) as to the efficacy of the project.

PROJECT TIMELINE

In response to the City Council's request to proceed conservatively pending CalTrans collaboration and eventual approvals, the timeline has been adjusted to account for the length of time spent meeting with CalTrans and attempting to move the project continuously forward.

Summary of Phases:

- Phase 1 "Design Strategy" is **complete**. Modifications to the strategy will continue through the rest of the Project.
- Phase 2 "Contract and Fabrication" is ready to begin with Caltrans approval.
- Phase 3 "Sign Review" will include presenting the sign designs to the City and County.
- Phase 4 "Installation" could begin by late summer pending approvals by local public agencies.

PROJECT BUDGET

Project Funding

\$ 88,000	City of South Lake Tahoe approved funding (\$66,000 held in abeyance)
<u>\$ 42,500</u>	El Dorado County (not yet received)
\$130,500	Total funding

Additional funding from Nevada Commission on Tourism recently awarded for Nevada portion (\$ 20,000) This amount is not included in Table 1: Budget Projections

Expenses Budgeted and Invoiced

\$ 25,070	Contract Agreement With Design Workshop
\$ 2,500	Additional design expenses related to Caltrans processes
\$ 3,000	Survey professional
<u>\$ 589</u>	Copies for Wayfinding handouts
\$ 35,159	Total expenditures to date

In Kind Contributions

\$ 6,500	Project Manager: Director of Public Affairs for LTSSCC
\$ unknown	LTSSCC Board of Director members, document preparation and review
\$ unknown	City of South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County & TRPA staff member participation
\$ unknown	CalTrans staff members meeting attendance, document review, participation

Budget Projection

Table 1: Budget Projection as of May, 2008

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>
<u>Funding & Expenses to date</u>		
Funding Committed to date	City (\$88,000) County (\$42,500)	\$ 130,500
Expenditures to date	Consultant, Survey & Copies (see above)	\$ - 35,159
	Subtotal available	\$ 95,341
<u>Future Projected Expenditures</u>		
Consultant Sign Design	Artistic Design	\$ 34,000
Sign Fabrication	45 signs/\$1,300 per sign	\$ 58,500
Sign Installation	Projects CalTrans Collaboration	\$ 5,000
General Administration	Copies & Handouts	\$ 1,000
	Subtotal Future Expenses	\$ 98,500
	BUDGET OVER/UNDER PROJECTION	\$ 3,159

ATTACHMENTS

1. Destination Categories Handout provided at January 30, 2008 Public Workshop
2. Draft Sign Plan as provided by Design Workshop, Project Consultant
3. Sign Options as provided by Design Workshop, Project Consultant
4. Letter of Support from Assemblyman Ted Gaines to CalTrans Director Will Kempton
5. Community/Visitor Survey