



Royal Gorge Concept Plan Public Comment

May 2007

Plan Responds to Public Input

In 2005, Royal Gorge, LLC, a partnership led by Todd B. Foster and Kirk C. Syme, was formed and purchased Royal Gorge cross-country ski resort and about 3,000 acres of land at Donner Summit. The partnership hopes to develop portions of the land.

During 2006, the Royal Gorge partnership reached out to the community and solicited public input before creating a conceptual land use plan. In March 2007, Royal Gorge held three public meetings to introduce a Concept Plan for developing portions of the Royal Gorge lands. The meeting presentation outlined how the plan responds to the earlier public input received. Meeting attendees were asked for their comments and input on the Concept Plan. This report summarizes those comments.

Forms of Comment

At the three public meetings, attendees were asked to verbally comment on the proposed Royal Gorge development plans, with comments recorded on poster-size tablets at discussion stations following the presentation. Meeting attendees also were asked to fill out comment sheets. A copy of the comment sheet form is attached to this report. Approximately 300-400 people attended the meetings. 334 people signed in; most meeting attendees signed in, some did not. Some people handed in their comment sheets at the end of the meetings, others have faxed or mailed them since the meetings. In addition, several people e-mailed comments and others submitted them via a comment form on the website, www.royalgorgefuture.com. Some people sent personal letters. This report summarizes all comments received.

Website Information

Shortly following the meetings, materials from the meetings—including a Power Point presentation, written summary of the presentation and map of the Concept Plan—were posted on the website. This allows people unable to attend the public meetings to access meeting materials via the web.

Summary of Comments

A total of 100 comment sheets were turned into Royal Gorge, both at the meetings or mailed, faxed or delivered later. In addition, about a dozen written comments pertaining to the Concept Plan, or development in general, were received. These comments were contained in personal letters or in comments via the website.

Right direction/wrong direction

The comment form asked this question: "Would you say the Royal Gorge Concept Plan is generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?"

Based on 100 comment sheets received, here are the results:

54% Right direction

32% Neither marked

12% Wrong direction

2% Both marked

Majority say headed in right direction—Fifty-four percent of the people filling out comment sheets said they believe the Concept Plan is headed in the right direction, while 12 percent said it was headed in the wrong direction. Thirty-four percent were undecided, or chose not to respond to the question. A majority of people who took the time to fill out a comment sheet believe that the Concept Plan is headed in the right direction.

Top ranked features of the Concept Plan

Meeting attendees were asked to rank their top four of a list of 12 features of the Concept Plan, with #1 as most important. The comment form also asked respondents to mark an X in front of features they considered least important. Most respondents followed the directions. Some respondents marked all 12 features with a number 1, 2, 3 or 4. A few marked their top 1-4, but made no Xs. A few made no marks, and two marked everything with an X.

Features ranked among top four: It is most relevant that a particular feature was ranked in the top 4 in importance by respondents.

Top five features ranked 1-4 in importance:

These five features received the greatest number top 4 rankings:

1. Keep Van Norden Meadow in natural open space, trails, and picnic areas. 97% ranked in top 4.
2. Provide public access through Royal Gorge lands to popular public forest land destinations. 93% ranked in top 4.
3. Cluster new development in “camps” so more land is left undeveloped. 89% ranked in top 4.
4. Create a Royal Gorge Land Trust to preserve and maintain open space. 88% ranked in top 4.
5. Keep Royal Gorge for traditional outdoor recreation; don’t build a golf course. 84% ranked in top 4.

Features ranked among top two: The percentage of #1 rankings a feature received, or the percentage of #1 and #2 rankings combined help to refine the picture of overall importance to respondents.

Top five features ranked #1 by respondents:

The top five features ranked #1 by the greatest percentage of respondents are:

1. Provide a new elevated railroad crossing on Soda Springs Road. 53% ranked #1.
2. Create a Royal Gorge Land Trust to preserve and maintain open space. 51% ranked #1.
3. Keep Van Norden Meadow in natural open space, trails, playground and picnic areas. 45% ranked #1.
4. Cluster new development in “camps” so more land is left undeveloped. 45% ranked #1.
5. Support the long-term economic viability of Royal Gorge Cross Country Ski Resort. 39% ranked #1.

Top five features ranked number #1 and #2:

These five features received the highest percentage of compiled #1 and #2 rankings:

1. Keep Van Norden Meadow in natural open space, trails, and picnic areas. 75% ranked #1 or #2.
2. Create a Royal Gorge Land Trust to preserve and maintain open space. 72% ranked #1 or #2.
3. Cluster new development in “camps” so more land is left undeveloped. 69% ranked #1 or #2.
4. Provide a neighborhood portal from Royal Gorge to Sugar Bowl downhill ski area. 66% ranked #1 or #2.
5. Provide a new elevated railroad crossing on Soda Springs Road. 64% ranked #1 or #2.

Features marked less important: The percentage of Xs marked on the comment form indicates which features are of lowest importance to respondents.

Top features considered “least important”:

These five features received the greatest number of Xs, indicating “of least importance”:

1. Create a new Summit Station Day Lodge in the Van Norden area that improves access to the most popular and beginner cross-country trails. 52% marked not important.
2. Provide greater housing diversity at Donner Summit, with cabins, duplexes, townhomes and workforce housing. 40% marked not important.
3. Create a Nature and History Interpretive Center at the new Day Lodge in the Van Norden area. 38% marked not important.
4. Provide a neighborhood portal from Royal Gorge to Sugar Bowl downhill ski area. 32% marked not important.
5. Create new jobs and new business opportunities for Summit residents that are focused on outdoor recreation, nature and history exploration. 30% marked not important.

Summary observations:

Van Norden is tops—The feature that appears on all three of the “top” lists is “**Keep Van Norden Meadow in open space, trails, playground and picnic areas.**” 97% of respondents ranked preserving Van Norden in the ‘top four’ position. This feature also had the fewest number of Xs, indicating “of least importance.”

Three features ranked most important—In addition to Van Norden, two other features appear on each of the “top five” lists above: “**Create a Royal Gorge Land Trust**” and “**Cluster new development in ‘camps’ so more land is left undeveloped.**”

Greatest split in opinion over Sugar Bowl connection—The feature over which there is the greatest split in opinion is “**Provide a neighborhood portal from Royal Gorge to Sugar Bowl downhill ski area.**” Interestingly, this was the only feature in the top five in terms of #1 and #2 combined rankings that was ALSO in the top five in terms of Xs, indicating “of least importance.” People who favor the Sugar Bowl connection tend to rank it #1 or #2. Of people who ranked it in their top 4, 66% ranked it #1 or #2; among people who ranked it in their top 4, its ranking drops to 9th place out of 12.

Highest Ranked 'Most Important' Features or Proposals

Here are the rankings each feature received, arranged in order of the percentage of #1 rankings. Ranking percentages are based on the number of #1 - #4 rankings.

1. Provide a new elevated railroad crossing on Soda Springs Road.

(59 marks, 47 ranks / 20% marked X, not important; **80% ranked in top 4 importance**; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (25) 53%

Ranked #3 – (11) 23%

Ranked #2 – (5) 11%

Ranked #4 – (6) 13%

2. Create a Royal Gorge Land Trust to preserve and maintain open space.

(60 marks, 53 ranks; 12% marked X, not important; **88% ranked in top 4 importance**; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (27) 51%

Ranked #3 – (8) 15%

Ranked #2 – (11) 21%

Ranked #4 – (7) 13%

Note: Several people qualified their rankings on this proposal, suggesting that the land trust should be the existing Truckee Donner Land Trust, not a new one.

3. Keep Van Norden Meadow in natural open space, trails, playground and picnic areas.

(61 marks, 59 ranks / 3% marked X, not important; **97% ranked in top 4 importance**; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (27) 46%

Ranked #3 – (6) 10%

Ranked #2 – (17) 29%

Ranked #4 – (9) 15%

4. Cluster new development in "camps" so more land is left undeveloped.

(65 marks, 58 ranks / 11% marked X, not important; **89% ranked in top 4 importance**; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (26) 45%

Ranked #3 – (11) 19%

Ranked #2 – (14) 24%

Ranked #4 – (7) 12%

5. Support the long-term economic viability of Royal Gorge Cross Country Ski Resort.

(50 marks, 38 ranks / 24% marked X, not important; **76% ranked in top 4 importance**; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (15) 39%

Ranked #3 – (14) 37%

Ranked #2 – (6) 16%

Ranked #4 – (3) 8%

6. Provide a neighborhood portal from Royal Gorge to Sugar Bowl downhill ski area.

(53 marks, 35 ranks / 32% marked X, not important; **66% ranked in top 4 importance**; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (13) 37%

Ranked #3 – (5) 14%

Ranked #2 – (10) 29%

Ranked #4 – (7) 20%

7. Keep Royal Gorge for traditional outdoor recreation, instead of building a golf course.

(57 marks, 48 ranks / 14% marked X, not important; **84% ranked in top 4 importance**; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (16) 33%

Ranked #2 – (14) 29%

Ranked #3 – (7) 15%

Ranked #4 – (11) 23%

8. Provide public access through Royal Gorge lands to popular public forest land destinations.

(58 marks, 54 ranks / 7% marked X, not important; 93% ranked in top 4 importance; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (14) 26%

Ranked #3 – (12) 22%

Ranked #2 – (12) 22%

Ranked #4 – (16) 30%

9. Create a new Summit Station Day Lodge in the Van Norden area that improves access to the most popular and beginner cross-country ski trails.

(46 marks, 21 ranks / 52% marked X, not important; 46% ranked in top 4 importance; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (5) 24%

Ranked #3 – (5) 24%

Ranked #2 – (4) 19%

Ranked #4 – (7) 33%

10. Create new jobs and new business opportunities for Summit residents that are focused on outdoor recreation, nature and history exploration.

(47 marks, 33 ranks / 30% marked X, not important; 70% ranked in top 4 importance; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (7) 21%

Ranked #3 – (10) 30%

Ranked #2 – (6) 18%

Ranked #4 – (10) 30%

11. Create a Nature and History Interpretive Center at the new Day Lodge in the Van Norden area.

(45 marks, 27 ranks / 38% marked X, not important; 60% ranked in top 4 importance; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (5) 19%

Ranked #3 – (9) 33%

Ranked #2 – (6) 22%

Ranked #4 – (7) 26%

12. Provide greater housing diversity at Donner Summit, with cabins, duplexes, townhomes and workforce housing.

(45 marks, 27 ranks / 40% marked X, not important; 60% ranked in top 4 importance; 1=most important)

Ranked #1 – (4) 15%

Ranked #3 – (6) 22%;

Ranked #2 – (7) 26%;

Ranked #4 – (10) 37%

What People Liked Most, Least

The comment sheet also asked people to describe what they like most and least about the Royal Gorge Concept Plan. The most often-cited likes and dislikes were as follows:

What people like the MOST:

Using the comment sheets, here are common themes concerning what people like most about the Concept Plan, in order of the number of times mentioned:

1. **Clustering**—People like that the development is clustered into “camps.”
2. **Vision**—People like the overall vision of the Concept Plan as a “conservation community,” with an emphasis on the outdoors, access to the wilderness and green building.

3. **Open space preservation**—People like that more than 70 percent of the land will be protected as open space.
4. **Sugar Bowl access**—People like a proposed access to Sugar Bowl.
5. **Protect Royal Gorge ski resort**—People like the emphasis on protecting the Royal Gorge ski resort.
6. **Overpass**—People like the overpass across the railroad tracks.

What people like the LEAST:

Here are the common themes concerning what people like least about the Concept Plan, in order of the number of times mentioned:

1. **Traffic, access road**—The most often-mentioned concern is traffic, specifically the fact that one access point is proposed to serve the community, despite inclusion of an improved railroad crossing.
2. **Ski Camp**—People expressed numerous concerns about Ski Camp, including the density and number of housing units, the height of buildings, the fact that condominiums and timeshares are included, the proximity of Ski Camp to the existing Serene Lakes subdivision, and the perception that the culture of downhill skiing conflicts with Nordic skiing.
3. **Size, number of people**—People expressed concern about the number of units, and the prospect of many more people coming to the Donner Summit area.
4. **Risk to Serene Lakes**—Serene Lakes' residents fear that the new residents will further overcrowd Serene Lakes in the summer, trespass across private property and degrade the water quality of the lakes.

Summary of Meeting Comments by Topic

Here is a list of comments received during the meetings and via comment sheets, website comments and personal letters:

Traffic, transit

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about traffic, specifically whether a single access road can accommodate the amount of traffic, despite the proposed railroad bridge. • Concerns that improvements at Soda Springs and Donner Pass may not be enough to mitigate the increased traffic. The problem is not the trains, but the number of cars on high traffic days. • Consider accessing Lake Camp from I-80. • Place limits on outside traffic. • Peak traffic congestion is when Sugar Bowl and Soda Springs empty out. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better location coming into the community is needed. • Concern about traffic created by a new general store. • Consider creating a shuttle system that has tiered fares, a lower fare for locals versus visitors. • Better transit to get to the Donner Summit area is needed, such as reopening the Amtrak train stop at Van Norden Station. • The proposed community shuttles should be electric, they should not use hydrocarbon fuel. • Concerned that Pahatsi, a 2-lane road, would be the main access to a new neighborhood. Some people expressed support for widening Pahatsi, others did not want Pahatsi widened. |
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- Concern about the traffic created by people driving into Ski Camp.
- Trips need to be reduced at Donner Summit/Soda Springs intersection. A shuttle bus is a good start.

Risk, impact to Serene Lakes

- Over-use of the existing Serene Lakes for boating and swimming is a big concern.
- Find some way to mitigate summer usage of Serene Lakes. It gets so crowded now.
- Prevent the new community from using Serene Lakes.
- Concern about trespassing, dogs and noise at existing Serene Lakes.
- Concerned that all the people at Ski Camp will end up using Serene Lakes, and it's already crowded.
- Study the impacts on the existing Serene Lakes. Concerned that this was not mentioned in the meeting presentation.
- Greater enforcement and monitoring of the area will be important because of more people.
- The current population leaves a mess of boats—kayaks and canoes. Consider adding boat storage racks.
- Define clearly what amenities will be for public versus private use.
- Concerned already about members of the public who try to and do park in our driveways and in our neighborhood.

Water, services

- A water study is needed.
- Concern that creating the new lakes will lower the water table.
- Existing water districts divide communities.
- Look into wind power.
- Place power lines underground.
- Make sure the water system takes into consideration all people, not just new residents.

- Concerned that new water needs will drain Serene Lakes.
- Be aware that water flows from the Soda Springs parking area ice over.

Historic preservation

- Concerned that Dutch Flat historic road and Lincoln Highway on Lake Van Norden be preserved.
- Should get in contact with the Emigrant Trail group based in Reno.

Environmental, wildlife

- Preserve wetlands, lakes and wildlife crossings.
- Opposition expressed to creating lakes in an area believed to be critical wetlands. Opposition expressed to location of Ski Camp, believed also to be a wetland area, an area critical to erosion control for the Serene Lakes area and an area that could affect the Onion Creek Experimental Forest.
- In establishing green building principles, Royal Gorge should select one of the two competing systems for certifying that lumber was grown sustainably. A preference was expressed for Forest Stewardship Certified (FSC), versus Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Use the Sierra Club as a resource. The Sierra Club has a national committee on green certification, and there are local Donner Summit residents on it.
- Use recovered wood.
- Consider creating a bio-mass facility. There's one in South Lake Tahoe.
- Concern expressed about natural flood plain disruption. There were floods in the area in 1986. Keep the terrain as natural as possible.
- Concern expressed about hydrology. The appropriate data needs to be collected upfront.
- Concerns expressed about global warming, bringing in more people for skiing.
- Consider using small power plants; use of wood pellets.

Ski Camp

- Explain in greater detail how Royal Gorge will prevent Ski Camp from becoming a point for all the public to access Sugar Bowl.
- Concern expressed that this development will look like Northstar Village.
- Concern expressed about 3- to 4-story buildings being able to withstand the snow load.
- Look at underground, below-grade parking for condos. The advantage is less snow removal.
- Don't make Ski Camp like Northstar Village. When you say "high density," that is what people think. At Northstar Village, they can't see the mountain because the buildings are too tall. Might as well be at the mall.
- Concern expressed that Ski Camp could cause run-off and flooding for nearby residences.
- Opinion expressed that the proposed ski access to Sugar Bowl is not realistic with kids.
- Ski Camp should be just like Squaw, maybe one story less.
- Ski runs are not an improvement to the view.
- Figure out how to make sure that members of the public do not have access to Ski Camp's Sugar Bowl portal. For example, provide local residences with permits.
- The ski lifts are in the view shed for existing residents.

Timeshares

- Opinion expressed that timeshares and fractional ownership do not reflect the tone and expectation of the existing community.
- Timeshares will always be occupied, and that increases the population. High density residential creates more impacts.

Commercial

- Concern expressed that people will come in off I-80 to buy their supplies.
- Limit restaurants that would attract a number of people.

- Concern expressed about the impacts of over-use by outsiders.
- Soda Springs Country Store should be preserved.
- Opportunities for small businesses are needed. Suitable space for small businesses and a business center are needed.
- Try to help grow businesses that are here now.
- Opportunities are needed for entrepreneurs. Don't create a company town where everyone works for the same employer.
- Keep the location of commercial establishments on Soda Springs Road.
- Concern expressed that commercial space at Ski Camp will increase traffic along Soda Springs Road and also will negatively impact existing Soda Springs commercial establishments.

Trails

- At the Summit trailhead, more than one ticketing station is needed.
- Use bar-coded tickets at trailheads.
- No snowmobiles on trails.
- Restrict use of OHVs on the Royal Gorge property.
- Support expressed for accessing Kidd Lake and other lakes.
- Royal Gorge should deed the trails to the Land Trust.

Architecture, design

- Architectural standards are needed to achieve an overall uniformity.
- Monitor the CCRs and the footprint of the homes.

Amenities, recreation

- Unstructured recreation is what we do and what we want here.
- In the grassy areas at Van Norden, consider providing playing fields so that the community can have a summer softball league.

Housing

- Figure out a way to help resort employees work toward home ownership.
- Workforce housing is needed to support the workforce.
- Royal Gorge needs to work to try to develop more of a full-time community.
- Concern expressed about the need for housing employees.
- Affordable housing is a priority for long-term residents.
- Concern expressed that ¼-acre lots do not provide enough room for snow storage.
- “We liked that you considered diversity of housing!”

Environmental

- Concern expressed that old-growth forest will be cut.
- Minimize the introduction of any plants that are not natural or native to the region.
- Consider creating a carbon-neutral community.
- Use Truckee Donner Land Trust rather than creating a separate Royal Gorge Land Trust.

Miscellaneous

- Find a way to keep the taxes paid by Donner Summit residents in the community, instead of sending it to larger communities like Auburn, Tahoe City and Truckee.
- Bear and garbage issues have been overlooked. Consider a holding/transfer station that is bear-resistant, especially for second homeowners who put out their garbage on Sunday evenings.
- Consider a Swiss concept trail system. And have coffee shops/warming huts at the end of trails to warm and relax.
- Desire expressed for an ecumenical chapel/community room to be used for worship and community meetings.
- Focus on families, not just second homeowners. To do this, there needs to be a

place for childcare and strong support for the existing school and transportation from Serene Lakes to the existing school. Bus service to the school has been discontinued. This creates problems at the intersection.

- Restrict the use of lakefront property by dogs. Provide a dog park on Royal Gorge land, away from Serene Lakes.

Long-term

- What happens if Kirk and Todd sell? Assurances are needed that the vision will be carried through.
- A Memorandum of Understanding is needed with existing property owners.
- There is a need to educate new people about stewardship of the land.
- Creating a land trust was mentioned. A plan is needed for what would be preserved. It's important to preserve Point Mariah.
- There is a need to plan out and commit to the mechanism that will protect the open space in perpetuity.
- Concern expressed that new people to the Donner Summit area, such as general contractors, do not know what they are getting themselves into up here. Businesses don't make money up here. Only the hardy survive.
- Mark the US Forest Service land so people know the boundaries of private and public lands.

Lake Van Norden

- Rebuild the dam at Lake Van Norden. It's a dying lake.
- Get rid of the proposed 18 lots. Don't pave the road that would access these lots either.
- The idea of a park, picnic area, day lodge is fine—but not in Van Norden.

Services, impacts of more people

- Concern expressed about the effects of bringing in too many people to the commercial area.

- Law enforcement will need to be increased as a result of more people.
- There needs to be a study of the impacts of more people on existing trails.
- Concern expressed about fire and having only one access road.

Construction

- Concern expressed about run-off damage to the lakes and wildlife.
- There is a need for Best Management Practices (BMPs) in construction.
- Concern expressed about the effects of construction. Monitoring is needed during construction.

Trails

- Concern expressed about conflicting uses on trails – hiking, biking, horses?

- Concern expressed that motorized vehicles not be allowed on trails.

Cross-country ski resort

- Multiple access points for trails are needed. Desire expressed for more than one check-in point for pass holders.
- Consider realigning some xc trails, making them less steep.
- Make access easier for pass holders.
- A place is needed at Summit Station to get lattes.
- There should be higher elevation cross-country ski access above Van Norden.

Unanswered Questions, More Information Needed

Because Royal Gorge chose to come back to the community for additional input before finalizing details and studies, there are necessarily quite a few unknowns about the plan and many questions cannot be answered until further information is available. People wanted to make sure that Royal Gorge took note of their questions so that when answers are known, they are shared with the public.

Here is a summary, organized by topic, of the questions people want answered:

Traffic

- What number of trips will be generated by the new development?
- Will Soda Springs Road be widened?
- Will the bridge over the railroad tracks be two- or four-lane?
- Based upon single family homes versus fractional ownership, how will traffic be increased as a result of fractionals?
- How will existing roads be impacted by the development, especially in winter?
- How will you address snow removal? Will the County plow the new roads?

- Are roads to the new development going to go through the existing neighborhood?
- Where are the shuttles going, who will operate the shuttles, and what assurances are there that they will continue to operate after the development is completed?
- Will there be parking for the shuttles?
- Will there be any skier parking?
- Can people drive to the proposed Wilderness cabins?
- Is a railroad overpass really the best way to go?
- How can you build an overpass in the given distance between Donner Pass Road and Soda Springs Resort? Please explain how this would be possible.

Relationship between Royal Gorge and existing neighborhood

- How will Serene Lakes' existing residents be able to take advantage of the new amenities in the new community?
- Will the spa and restaurants be open to the public or members only?
- Will Serene Lakes and Royal Gorge be integrated?
- Will there be a secondary beach? The current beach at Serene Lakes is overcrowded. A great place for a second beach would be near the existing pump house.

Protection of Serene Lakes, beach access

- What are the impacts to Serene Lakes?
- How will Ski Camp affect Serene Lakes' beaches and the lakes?
- Won't doubling the population around Serene Lakes overcrowd an already crowded area and how will this be remedied?
- There are already more than 50 boats left at Serene Lakes. This will be increased with more people. How will you address this?

Ski Camp

- Why such a large number of units at Ski Camp? Why not move some to Lake Camp?
- Any discussion of adding a lake at Ski Camp?
- Who will maintain the lifts?
- How soon will the lifts in Ski Camp be accessible?
- What percentage will be fractional ownership?
- How will you keep the public from trying to access Sugar Bowl at Ski Camp?
- How will the connection between Royal Gorge and Sugar Bowl work?
- Explain the lifts, how they will work, where the transit lift goes.
- What kind of amenities will there be at Ski Camp?

- Who will operate the downhill area?
- Is the development above Ski Camp integrated with Serene Lakes? How?
- Ski Camp development is on a flood plain. How is that being addressed?

Commercial

- How much commercial development?
- Is a grocery store feasible?
- What is the general store model?
- What's at the store? What's the scale, the location?
- Are you planning a health/fitness center?
- How large of a commercial center is being planned?

Lake Camp

- Are the lakes for recreation? Fishing? Swimming? Are they too small for boats?
- What is the water supply for the lakes?
- Are facilities planned for the beach?

Water, sewer, services

- How do you propose to supply enough water?
- What's the location for sewage treatment expansion?
- Do you have water rights to support this level of development?
- Are you going through the existing PUD, or creating a new water agency? Will the PUD be expanded?
- How would you find water to fill new lakes without draining the water table?
- What about providing free wireless?
- Is Section 3 in or out of the Truckee fire district?
- What about natural gas? Will you bring in natural gas?
- Will your sewer permits supersede access to sewer permits by SLPOA?
- How will the Wilderness Camp area get power?

- Did you find water in the test wells that were drilled?
- Where is the water coming from for the proposed lakes? How large are the lakes?
- Will water and sewer be combined with Serene Lakes, or a separate entity?
- Since you cannot access water from Serene Lakes, how do you propose to supply it to all those new homes and condos?
- The development off Soda Springs Road will create huge water runoff/silt problems for Serene Lakes.

Wildlife

- Are wildlife corridors being created?

Housing

- How do you define “cabin”? Will square footage be limited?

Trails

- Is access to Palisades Peak dirt or paved?

Construction impacts

- Is there a phasing plan for construction?
- What is the timing for infrastructure?

Views, aesthetics

- Will buildings be screened from the road?
- What themes are being considered for the architecture?

Long-term

- Who will maintain what people can/cannot do on your land?
- Who will enforce recreation on trails?
- What are the details concerning long-term forest management? Explain more.

- Are you just selling lots or building the homes too?
- Will Royal Gorge ski resort be marketed better in the future?
- How will you address the issue of snow storage?
- How will you guarantee to the community that these plans won't be abandoned and the land resold in the future?

Van Norden

- What about the water level in Lake Van Norden? Will it be changed by the development project? Will it be drained?
- What happened to the ice skating rink plan? Is it still viable?
- Are the 18 home sites at Van Norden going away?
- What will be submitted to Nevada County?

Cross-country ski resort

- Where can locals pick up their trail pass when Summit Station is relocated?
- Why move Summit Station?
- Why can't we access the trails anywhere when we have a season's pass?
- Will access to Cascade change?
- Any plans to connect into Soda Springs downhill skiing?
- What cross-country trails will be eliminated for downhill?

Review process, timeframe

- What is the timing for the EIR process?
- What is your timeframe?
- What is the phasing plan?

Examples of Comments

Here is a small sample of written comments received, representing a variety of themes and opinions:

Against downhill skiing: “I don’t want the degrading energy and vibe of a downhill ski area in Serene Lakes. The density, pollution, traffic, noise, crime and congestion are not welcome in our very small and finite community. If Foster/Syme cannot live without a ski village, then let them build a European style alpine village based on time honored designs from the Alps and let it be centered around Nordic skiing, not downhill...As the world gets more and more crazy there will be a growing market for peace and tranquility in favor of the frantic “joneser” mentality of the modern downhill ski area. Please do not pollute our Nordic community with the ethos of the modern downhill ski area...”

Ensure good intentions carried out: “For the moment, the plan seems headed in generally good directions. The heart seems to be in the right place but there is a chasm between the saying and the doing. It will be vital to build in provisions to ensure that the good intentions are carried out. I believe a second access road somewhere near Sugar Bowl is vital for public safety and to keep the huge increase in traffic created by Summit and Ski Camps off Serene Lakes residential streets. Binding provisions with regard to the land trust, green building practices, the sanctity of Lake Norden and public access to trails and national forest lands are needed if this conservation community concept is to get off the ground. It is very important to keep the promise to avoid any construction on or near ridge lines. The less visible any of this is the better.”

Downhill culture doesn’t mix with Nordic: “Basically reduce the scope of the downhill area on Razorback Ridge. Its impact is overwhelming. Accessing Sugar Bowl from here is merely a marketing ploy. What a dumb idea. Getting first chair on powder days requires driving. Downhill ‘culture’ does not mix with Nordic culture. If we wanted to live the ‘corporate lifestyle,’ with shiny packaging and 2.5 kids, we wouldn’t be full-timers here...”

Some want more diversity: “SLPOA does not represent the majority of Serene Lakes residents with respect to new development. A very negative group took over the SLPOA board positions this year, and they are ‘anti’ just about everything. They want to maintain an elitist atmosphere in Serene Lakes. Some of us would like more diversity.”

Thankful full vision presented: “We especially appreciated that the full vision for development was presented.”

Look to Sea Ranch: “You have a chance to be tasteful. Look at Sea Ranch. Lose the corporate veneer...”

Opposes Sugar Bowl connection: “I do not want any alpine skiing in the Serene Lakes region. I’m concerned about the impact that this development will have on the erosion into Serene Lakes, and the potential effects of this development on the Onion Creek Experimental forest. I’m also very concerned that the connection to Sugar Bowl will cause additional traffic impacts on the Serene Lakes region despite your promise to ‘limit parking’ at Ski Camp.”

Plan is an improvement: “We view this plan as an improvement and one that will help more people be able to enjoy the beauty that is here. If done well, as it appears that you desire to do, it could benefit us all and many others. As a bird lover, I would like to see Van Norden remain as natural as possible. I’ve seen eagles, white pelicans and ospreys as well as many other birds use the lake. I’d hate to see that change.”

Wants to be away from resort areas: “More downhill skiing? C’mon. Are you kidding?? You call yourselves conservationists? Your proposal is too big and a slap in the face to the reason people want to be here – SERENITY—to be away from the hub-bub of the resort areas.”

No parking at Ski Camp: “I would prefer to have zero parking in the Ski Camp development. Instead, I would like to see parking added to the Summit Camp and the requirement that all access to Ski Camp be via the shuttle system.”

We are surrounded: “I think the ‘conservation community’ and ‘camps’ are just P.R. terms for widespread development. I was hoping for high density housing in one area, but we are surrounded by 4 developments, with in-fill in between (forest homesites).”

Look forward to controlled change: “Plan well thought out. Zoning has been here for a long time! Ignore the negative. We live here full-time and are looking forward to controlled change.”

Wants place to shoot: “Provide a range (informal OK) for rifle, pistol and shot gun practice.”

Know what we’re getting with Kirk and Todd: “I think residents presume your development puts more risk into the future quality of life around Serene Lakes than existed previously. A better tack to take might be to say under previous ownership, any number of adverse future developments might have been allowed to occur—but with Todd and Kirk at least everyone knows what they’re getting.”

Don’t use existing roads: “I would like you to know my biggest complaint about your project. It is the use of our existing neighborhood roads to access your planned development within Serene Lakes. Please go back to your drawing board and build new access roads to your lands. I know that with some creative thinking this challenge could be met...Please make the effort to study and solve this challenge.”

Likes current Sugar Bowl access: “I am a downhill/backcountry skier with a pass at Sugar Bowl. Your proposal for lifts connecting Ski Camp to Sugar Bowl do not appeal to me at all. My current access suits me just fine.”

Sellout for internet: “FYI—I will not sell my soul for high speed internet (although I may be tempted).”

More than one access road needed: “As someone who lives on Soda Springs Road and sees the traffic speeding past us daily, having that be the only access is very scary. Please consider other roadways.”

Opposes density: “This community cannot handle this density, and the reason we came here, ‘to get away,’ will be jeopardized.”

Density OK if single-owner: “I am more inclined to propose that multi-story buildings be single-owner units than timeshare. Increased density OK, to recoup costs vs. larger development is OK.”

Supports shuttle: “I really like the idea of a shuttle to take people to various venues in the area. If properly thought out this could be a very nice feature of the local community (bus to Truckee?).”

Concern is overcrowded lake: “Main concern: Overcrowding on Serene, both on water and at beach, due to 600+ homes at Ski Camp. Walk to closest lake would be to Serene, not Lake Camp. Too many sailboats, kayaks, etc. would be unsafe and unpleasant, as would too many swimmers and fishermen. Also a concern: Access road.”

Put more density in Summit Camp: “Build more condos at Summit Camp and fewer at Ski Camp (lower density overall at Ski Camp). Besides land trust, have conservation easement ‘built’ into residential areas (more enforceable than CC&Rs). Use your clout to keep Donner Summit taxes for Donner Summit.”

Wants local feel: “I don’t believe this is conducive to a time-share environment. I want a ‘local’ feel, ownership, not tourism...The educational emphasis is nice, but not if the intention is to draw crowds and tourists. Affordable/workforce housing needs to be affordable, not over \$300,000.”

Second access road needed: “In my opinion, we need an additional point of entry to provide for adequate emergency vehicle access and to reduce traffic. I believe that any new egress must address the dual concerns of traffic and safety. To that end, I do not feel that an additional egress onto Donner Pass Road between Sugar Bowl and the current intersection with Soda Springs Road would fulfill these requirements.”

Doesn't agree with skeptics: “Generally the plan is acceptable to me personally. I think the details of the plan are critical. Most importantly, the development needs to support a local community that lives here permanently, year-round. The winter snow makes relying on a Truckee-based workforce infeasible. And seasonal help won't support critical amenities like restaurants, grocery store, gas station, etc. The main ingredient for a permanent, local workforce and economy is affordable housing. I very much appreciate that you have involved and listened to the community. Components of the plan like a community center, park and playground are very much appreciated. I'd like to see these parts of the plan implemented early—I think that will help increase community support. I hope that you are true to your word about respecting the area. A land trust is a great way to show that respect and reassure the community that today's proposal is the sum total of your plans. I'd also like to see pedestrian and bicycle improvements to ease traffic. Shuttle service to the new lifts to Sugar Bowl is critical. I would even go so far as to say there should be no parking lot at the lifts to keep traffic at a minimum and force people to use the shuttle. Market it as 'European style' if you want. Eventually a train stop on the Summit would really round out the development. I personally like the idea of lift access to Sugar Bowl, though I know others may disagree. I also very much appreciate the clustered style development. I know there is a lot of skepticism about your idea of a 'quant conservation community,' but I tend to believe you. Hopefully I won't be wrong.”