

Opinion

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Saint Joseph responding to Tahoe Basin housing crisis

Jean Diaz
Guest column

Even before COVID-19, the Tahoe Basin was confronting a severe housing crisis. Technology has allowed for increased remote work and COVID-19 has resulted in an influx of remote workers to the basin seeking refuge from more populated urban centers.

There has been unprecedented competition for basin homes resulting in significant price increases, making homes even more unaffordable for much of the local workforce.

It is widely acknowledged that providing a diverse range of housing and support services is critical for the vitality and success of a community. This is especially true for resort communities like Tahoe.

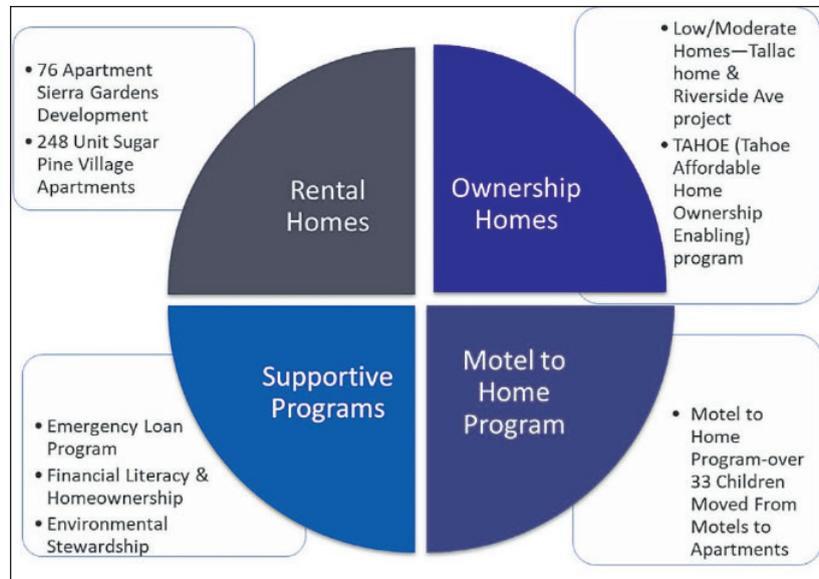
A balanced stock would provide rental and ownership housing that is affordable to the vital workforce supporting the basin's employers including first responders, teachers, hospitality and retail workers as well as for households that want to make the basin their full-time home and those who want to take advantage of the basin's seasonal recreational opportunities.

The South Shore Region Housing Needs and Opportunities study, commissioned by the Tahoe Prosperity Center prior to the arrival of COVID-19, concluded that the South Shore alone needed to add over 3,000 units by 2026 to address the deficit, including a mix of below market and market rate rental and ownership units to address the shortfall.

SO, WHAT'S BEING DONE TO ADDRESS THE SHORTFALL IN TAHOE BASIN HOUSING?

The Mountain Housing Council on the North Shore and the Tahoe Prosperity Center on the South Shore have assembled diverse stakeholders in their respective jurisdictions to not just study the housing deficiencies in the basin, but to do something about it.

Following on the South Shore Region Housing Needs and Opportunities study, a housing advisory group, composed of representatives from the regions' jurisdictions, agencies, non-profits, employers and community stakeholders was assembled



to develop the South Shore Region Local Resident Housing Action Plan. The plan presents a set of actions to address the range of local resident housing needs.

WHAT ROLE DOES SAINT JOSEPH COMMUNITY LAND TRUST PLAY?

Saint Joseph Community Land Trust is a nonprofit that was created in 2002 in response to the rising housing costs and negative impacts of these costs to the broad social fabric, well-being, and sustainability of communities around Lake Tahoe and was a member of the housing advisory group. As a community land trust, Saint Joseph provides:

- **Dual ownership:** Saint Joseph will build or acquire homes that will be sold to income-qualified households subject to a 99-year renewable, inheritable ground lease held by Saint Joseph removing the land from the speculative market.
- **Perpetual affordability:** resale restrictions in the ground lease preserve affordability for successive generations of homeowners
- **Stewardship:** homebuyer education, lease administration and supportive programs preserve assets for future generations
- **Community participation in leadership:** Saint Joseph bylaws call for board representation by its low and moderate-income members and beneficiaries.

In addition to expanding affordable home ownership like the three homes to be built on land provided by the city of South Lake Tahoe on Riverside Ave, Saint Joseph also participates as a partner in low-income rental workforce housing projects like the existing 77 unit Sierra Garden workforce rental project and the Sugar Pine Village project being planned for South Lake Tahoe. With Saint Joseph's new TAHOE (Tahoe affordable home ownership enabling) program, it will extend beyond adding affordable ownership and rental units to preserving existing homes for the affordable housing stock.

HOW WILL THE TAHOE PROGRAM PRESERVE EXISTING HOMES?

The TAHOE program has three components that seek to preserve existing homes to be added to the affordable housing stock including:

- Providing financial assistance to low/moderate-income employees and full-time residents of the Tahoe Basin that will help them purchase an existing home for their primary residence
- Enabling Saint Joseph to directly purchase homes that are for sale
- Providing financial assistance to existing low/moderate income homeowners that are at risk of losing their homes.

Jean Diaz is executive director of the St. Joseph Community Land Trust.

KUDOS

BREAD & BROTH'S THANKSGIVING MEAL KUDOS

Bread & Broth's holiday Thanksgiving meal giveaway on Nov. 23 was a tremendous success thanks to the kindness of many generous community supporters.

In addition to the regular bags filled with fresh fruit and vegetables, milk, eggs, butter, bread and pastries, 170 holiday meal "fixings" bags were handed out on Monday between 3-5:30

p.m. at St. Theresa Grace Hall foyer and provided a Thanksgiving meal to 549 very grateful individuals and family members.

Thanks to monetary contributions by over 120 generous donors, Bread & Broth purchased turkey breasts, stuffing, gravy, yams, green beans and sparking apple cider. These thanksgiving meal staples were supplemented with freshly baked rolls donated

KUDOS, 23

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MCCLINTOCK'S OP-ED RAISES QUESTIONS

Dear Editor:

On Friday, Nov. 27, Congressman Tom McClintock wrote an op-ed maintaining the critical importance that voters believe that an election is fairly conducted. His main concern was that there may be some questioning of the results centering around votes being cast in some manner other than in a traditional voting booth on a singular "Election Day."

Could it be that our congressman feels this way because those who vote otherwise may be more likely to vote for the opposite party to which he belongs? Working members with responsibility for others working normal daylight hours may have difficulty with voting on the one day.

There are times when the lines are long and people do not have the time to wait. What about those who are homebound or elderly? The military and legitimate voters who are at a prohibitive distance from the polling place? Is requiring voters to only vote on "Election Day" yet another method of voter suppression making it less likely the outcome reflects the popular will?

Congressman McClintock ends his op-ed by stating that an election's results should speak for the

"will of the people."

If he believes that to be the case, does he favor a constitutional amendment abolishing the electoral college, and allowing the nation's popular vote to determine what the "will of the people" really is? After all in the United States, the longtime proponent of the superiority of democratic government, should not the winner of any election be the person who gets the most votes? Do we only have faith in the "will of the people" some of the time Congressman McClintock?

Kevin Hollier, South Lake Tahoe

TAYLOR, TALLAC CREEK PROBLEM MAY BE ARTIFICIAL WATER FLOW

(Editor's note: This letter is a response to an article published in last week's Tribune about the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency starting work to remove invasive plants)

Dear Editor:

I wonder if part of the problem at Taylor and Tallac Creeks is that the water level is kept artificially high throughout the summer to keep water available for the spawning run of the non-native Kokanee salmon?

It's definitely not a natural flow regime now in Taylor Creek.

Linda Chaplin, South Lake Tahoe

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- Form letters, libelous letters or letters in poor taste will be rejected.
- We reserve the right to edit all letters and columns.
- Letters must be 300 words or less. Guest columns must be 750 words or less.

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