

Happy Homestead Cemetery District Sphere of Influence Update

District Profile

The Happy Homestead Cemetery District (HHCD) was formed on October 14, 1952 by Resolution of the Board of Supervisors. HHCD operates one public cemetery in the South Lake Tahoe region. The district stretches roughly from Stateline to the Alpine County line, Twin Bridges along Highway 50 and Emerald Bay, which includes the City of South Lake Tahoe. The area includes most of the Tahoe Basin on the El Dorado County side, with exception of the Meeks Bay area. The location of the cemetery is 1261 Johnson Boulevard near the intersection of Al Tahoe Boulevard.

The cemetery was originally located on nearly two acres that was dedicated to the County in 1952. In the early 1980s, the Happy Homestead Cemetery District acquired an additional eight acres, bringing the total cemetery area to almost ten acres. However, not all of the cemetery can be utilized due to environmental regulations; approximately two and a half acres are within an environmental stream zone and cannot be developed. Of the seven and a half acres of developable land, approximately three and a half acres are currently in use and four acres are available for future expansion. Happy Homestead Cemetery currently has approximately 3,000 occupied plots and niches and 4,000 available for purchase.

Land Use Character

The majority of the HHCD is within the Lake Tahoe Basin land use zoning area, which consists primarily of the Tahoe Agricultural District, clustered areas of Single- and Multi-family Residential housing, Commercial zoning and the urbanized City of South Lake Tahoe. The district is also largely under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), which has its own land use classifications for the area. These include Residential (along Highways 50 and 89 and within South Lake Tahoe), Conservation, Recreation and Tourist (mostly near and along the California/Nevada State line). The southern portion of the district is primarily federally owned U.S. Forest Service or U.S. Bureau of Land Management land. Areas not within the Lake Tahoe Basin land use zoning area have a Natural Resources land use designation.

Major land uses include recreation and tourism activities associated with Lake Tahoe, such as skiing, snowboarding, camping, hiking, mountain biking, fishing and summer water sports. The territory is heavily populated in certain vicinities, such as the City of South Lake Tahoe, and the areas immediately surrounding Lake Tahoe, Highway 50 and Echo Lakes. Beyond these population centers, the district is less inhabited and primarily undeveloped wilderness.

Level of Service

By all measures, HHCD seems to be very responsive to the needs of its residents, and is suitably structured and managed for the level and types of service it provides. The district appears to have sufficient personnel, equipment and land available to efficiently provide for cemetery maintenance and administrative operations. By all accounts, the

level of service provided to district residents appears consistent with the goals of the district.

Commission's Policies and Guidelines

LAFCO Policy 4.4 requires the Commission to review the following topics before making sphere of influence determinations. The Commission's recent review of public cemetery services addressed these requirements as noted below. All citations are from the Final Public Cemetery Services Municipal Service Review, which is scheduled to be considered and adopted by the Commission September 26, 2007.

1. *Service capacity, level and types of services currently provided by the agency, and areas where these services are provided*

Refer to page 50, "Background;" page 51, "Interment Operations;" pages 51-53, "Maintenance Operations;" pages 53-54, "Land and Infrastructure;" page 54, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 59, "Map 5: Happy Homestead Cemetery District;" pages 79-80 and 99-100, "Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies;" and pages 85-87 and 101, "Government Structure Options, Evaluation of Management Efficiencies & Local Accountability and Governance."

2. *Financial capabilities and costs of service*

Refer to pages 55-56, "Fee Schedule;" pages 56-59, "Funding and Budget;" pages 81-82 and 100, "Financing Constraints and Opportunities;" pages 82-83 and 100-101, "Cost Avoidance Opportunities;" and pages 83-85 and 100-101, "Opportunities for Rate Restructuring."

3. *Topographic factors and areas of social and economic interdependencies*

Refer to page 50, "Background;" pages 50-51, "Population and Growth;" pages 77-78, "Environmental Justice;" page 78, "Table 23: Study Area Population by Race;" and pages 79-80 and 99-100, "Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies."

4. *Existing and planned land uses, land use plans and policies, consistency with county and city general plans, and projected growth in the affected area*

Refer to pages 50-51, "Population and Growth;" page 51, "Interment Operations;" pages 51-53, "Maintenance Operations;" pages 53-54, "Land and Infrastructure;" pages 79-80 and 99-100, "Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies;" and pages 80-81 and 100, "Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area."

5. *Potential effects on agricultural and open space lands*

As stated above, most of the HHCD is within the Lake Tahoe Basin land use zoning area, which consists primarily of the Tahoe Agricultural District. This area is also simultaneously under the jurisdiction of the TRPA, which regulates growth near Lake Tahoe and has designated approximately 85-90% of the territory for conservation or recreation. Residential, commercial and tourist areas are concentrated in the City of South Lake Tahoe and along major roadways (Highways 50 and 89). Building within the district is severely restricted, and only approximately 115 residential permits are issued within the entire Lake Tahoe Basin each year. Consequently, it is extremely unlikely that the land use within HHCD will change significantly.

The services provided by HHCD do not induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural land to urban uses. In the event that the district pursued the acquisition of additional cemetery land, it could convert undeveloped land to a more urban use; however, the insignificant acreage necessary for expansion would not be expected to impact the economic viability of agricultural operations.

6. A description of the services that will be provided to any areas which may be added to the sphere and the timing and method for funding expansion of facilities or services

No additional areas are proposed to be added to the HHCD sphere of influence at this time. For information relating to the timing and method for funding expansion of facilities or services, refer to page 51, "Interment Operations;" pages 51-53, "Maintenance Operations;" pages 53-54, "Land and Infrastructure;" pages 58-59, "Endowment Care Fund;" pages 79-80 and 99-100, "Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies;" and pages 81-82 and 100, "Financing Constraints and Opportunities."

7. An analysis of the effects of a proposed sphere of influence on other agencies and their service capabilities:

Refer to pages 85 and 101, "Opportunities for Shared Facilities."

DETERMINATIONS

In determining the sphere of influence for each local agency, Government Code §56425(e) requires the Commission to consider and prepare a written statement of determinations with respect to four factors. Staff recommends the following determinations for amending the sphere for DSP:

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.

Present land use in the HHCD area includes residential, recreational, commercial and tourist-related uses. Primary residential areas within HHCD tend to follow the major highways and roads that bisect the district. Growth and development potential is limited largely by TRPA regulations and there are not expected to be any substantial changes in the planned land use as a direct result of this review. There are no known development proposals expected to occur outside of the cemetery district boundary within the immediate vicinity that may require a future amendment to the HHCD sphere of influence.

2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

Presently, there are approximately 30,500 people in the HHCD service area based on projections by the TRPA and population estimates from the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District. If the projected growth rate continues as is, HHCD could be serving 33,550 residents by 2025.

HHCD is the only known cemetery service provider, public or private, in the El Dorado County portion of the Tahoe Basin; the nearest active cemeteries are located in Placer County or in the State of Nevada. Although the Tahoe Basin

population increase is not projected to be as significant as the increase in the Western Slope, given the lack of cemetery facilities in this isolated region, it is reasonable to assume that people from outside the district may rely on HHCD for cemetery facilities because that is the only option available to them. Therefore, the number of residents utilizing the public cemetery services in the area could be larger than its service boundaries suggest. However, because of the high percentage of vacation homes in the Tahoe Basin, the population base for the district could be less than the above numbers indicate.

3. *The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.*

HHCD appears to provide exceptional public cemetery services that are funded primarily through property taxes and direct service charges to customers. Happy Homestead Cemetery currently has approximately 3,000 occupied plots and niches and 4,000 available for purchase. In addition, HHCD has taken proactive measures such as installing retaining walls that serve dual purposes as niche spaces and contemplating the purchase of additional land to ensure interment capacity can keep up with future demand.

4. *The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.*

In addition to the City of South Lake Tahoe, HHCD serves multiple distinct communities including Fallen Leaf Lake, Meyers, Phillips, Twin Bridges, Strawberry and Kirkwood. The City of South Lake Tahoe is the primary concentrated, social or economic community of interest that is within the district. Due to TRPA land use regulations, these communities' populations are expected to remain relatively stable.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the Happy Homestead Cemetery District sphere of influence be updated to affirm the original sphere (as shown in Attachment A2), which is coterminous with its current boundaries.