



The Truckee Way

Since incorporation, the Town of Truckee staff and decision-makers have embraced a set of operating principles known colloquially as “The Truckee Way.” The following provides the essence of this philosophy.

We will treat everyone, and their point of view, with respect, courtesy, and fairness. We will approach issues with creativity and innovation. We will conduct ourselves, and the Town’s business, according to the highest ethical standards. We will encourage the free exchange of ideas and information by open and honest communication. We believe that non-adversarial dispute resolution results in the most effective community, decision-maker and employee involvement in the Town and its future.

A set of core values shape the Town’s approach:

Clear Priorities – When the Town incorporated, the citizens made it clear that their priorities included roads, snow removal, law enforcement, and land use planning and building. Considerable efforts over many years have combined to fulfill those priorities. While the Town’s priorities have expanded over time to include services like bike paths and trails, solid waste and transit support, establishing clear priorities continues today, with an annual Council priority-setting retreat, transparent budget workshops and robust community participation, outreach and communication efforts.

No Surprises – Everyone working for the Town and making decisions is committed to a “No Surprises” policy. Early warning of potential problems or upcoming issues is mandatory.

Community Outreach, Involvement and Transparency – The Town views itself as part of a larger family which makes up the community. When a community concern arises, the Town believes its role is to reach out and actively engage all segments of the community in an open and transparent dialogue.

Non Adversarial Decision Making - The Truckee Way relies on a consensus-seeking decision making process modeled on the concept of interest based negotiation, developed some years ago by Roger Fischer and William Ury of the Harvard Negotiation Project. Interest based policy negotiations relies on six fundamental principles:

1. Separate the people from the problem – no personal attacks or assignment of blame.
2. Focus on the interests of those involved, not positions they may take - the process looks for a “wise” outcome that tries to meet multiple interests.
3. Invent options for mutual gain – many options will be considered to solve the problem or develop the policy.
4. Use objective criteria to create and measure potential options and solutions – entrenched positions, inaccurate or misleading information and simply the “loudest voices” will not be the basis for decisions.
5. First, listen carefully to understand; then speak to be understood – listen actively, communicate openly and transparently.
6. Solutions are built upon establishing trust and working relationships between interested (and sometimes opposing) participants.

As with any dispute resolution mechanism, applying these principles is not a panacea. It is, however, preferred over the other alternatives available to the Town. Applying the Truckee Way requires constant re-commitment, effort and learning. The rewards to date for both the Town and the community have proven well worth the cost.