Hostel for Hikers, Bikers, and Snowboarders  
Lake Tahoe, Nevada
Spring 2017 Comprehensive Studio, Prof. Bruce Goodwin

The program is for hostel-style lodging for about 100 people. The site is a steep slope across from the base lodge at the Stagecoach lift at the Heavenly Valley Ski Area in South Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

Lake Tahoe is the largest alpine lake in North America, and the one of the deepest and clearest lakes in the world. The Tahoe Basin is a region of spectacular natural beauty in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, on the California-Nevada border. Tourism is the major industry and is centered on outdoor activities: in the winter, skiing and snowboarding; in the summer, golf, boating, mountain biking, and hiking.

Snowboarders, mountain bikers, and hikers are generally younger and less affluent than skiers, golfers, and boaters. They are often priced out of lodging near ski lifts and trailheads, so they find accommodations farther away and drive to get to parking lots at the base lodges and trailheads. One of the goals of this project is to offer that market and demographic the minimal, shared housing and convenient location that are characteristic of European hostels, so that they are not dependent on a motor vehicle. An environmentally enlightened and financially rational private developer is considering the project.

More than three-quarters of the Lake Tahoe watershed is National Forest. Development in the rest is closely regulated by the bi-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. The ecology of the area is an issue of extreme sensitivity to residents and to the unique constellation of government agencies that are entrusted with protecting it.

The first week of the semester will involve research into the site, building type, and regulations, in order to determine the legal size and specific functional requirements of the program.

An important goal of the semester is to integrate a serious and ambitious environmentalism into all phases of the design process to achieve a net-zero-energy building. The instructor has experience working as an architect and carpenter in Lake Tahoe and the challenging topography, weather, climate, and regulations that are unique to it.