



**CHAPTER 5**  
**MOVING**  
**FORWARD**

## Moving Forward

### IMPLEMENTING THE CONNECTIONS 2050 VISION

The Connections 2050: Regional Transportation Plan (RTP/the Plan) advances the region’s transportation vision by meeting current and anticipated travel demand and developing a system that ensures access for everyone. Access is achieved by prioritizing expanded transit services, active transportation connections between communities and along recreation corridors, and implementing safety measures that benefit all travel modes. This approach to transportation planning is aligned with TRPA’s commitment to reduce regulatory barriers to affordable and workforce housing through the Tahoe Living Initiative.



The transportation system described in the Plan helps the Tahoe Region meet its sustainability goals and environmental threshold standards established by the TRPA Bi-State Compact. Recognizing that the transportation sector is one of the biggest contributors to air pollution, the RTP serves as the mitigation tool to meet the State of California’s greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The Tahoe Region has made progress over the last four years to reduce reliance on the automobile, decreasing average vehicle miles travelled by residents and visitors. The region is committed to continuing this with the RTP as the roadmap.

Regional collaboration to advance implementation of the Plan will continue to focus on building capacity and supporting partners in securing discretionary grant funding and establishing new revenue streams. The region’s public and private partners continue to contribute more local funds, and progress is being made with federal and state support for improvements in transportation. While recent increases in discretionary funding for capital improvements have bolstered the system, partners recognize that identifying funding for transit operations and maintaining the transportation system is necessary to meet service demands.

A sustainable system must also include funding for maintenance and upgrades to existing infrastructure to ensure the system is accessible through all seasons and resilient when natural disasters impact the transportation system. It’s important to continue working with local partners to ensure the system is operating, basic transportation needs are met for communities, and that projects are fully funded and maintained. The Tahoe Transportation Implementation Collaborative (TTIC) is the venue for this collaboration and project prioritization.

As Lake Tahoe’s federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, TRPA is responsible for managing federal and state transportation funds through the [Regional Grant Program](#). This competitive program helps fund and implement the region’s projects that create additional transportation options, improve safety, and provide social and environmental benefits. TRPA releases a call for projects every two years that includes multiple funding sources averaging an estimated \$12 million spanning several federal fiscal years. These funds are eligible for infrastructure projects and transit operations. Once

awarded, TRPA works with the recipient to ensure the funds are properly programmed in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program and authorized in a timely manner. If a project experiences a schedule delay, TRPA will work directly with the agency to redirect program funding to ensure funds do not lapse. TRPA will continue to refine this grant program so that projects that benefit communities, enhance safety, and create a more resilient system are advanced. Measuring performance of the system, setting and tracking milestones, and adjusting priorities to achieve transportation objectives is critical to successful Plan implementation. Engaging TRPA's Governing Board Transportation Committee and providing avenues for public input through this transparent process also informs program priorities.

In addition to the continued work with partners to fund, implement, and track performance of the Plan, TRPA will focus on the following initiatives over the next four years:

### *Transportation System Resilience*

Tahoe is experiencing increasingly intense, wet winters followed by periods of prolonged drought. This results in more susceptibility to catastrophic wildfires and more people coming to Tahoe to escape the heat in nearby areas. These impacts pose significant and growing risks to the safety, reliability, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Tahoe Basin and its transportation network. Many impacts are already occurring, and Lake Tahoe communities need to adapt to become more resilient to these changes.



*Photo: Tom Lotshaw*

Together with regional stakeholders, TRPA plans to assess the basin's transportation system resilience and vulnerabilities in the face of wildfires, extreme winter weather events and other natural hazards with funding from the

Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) program. The project will include an assessment of necessary upgrades to the region's communications infrastructure to ensure integrated, efficient, and safe evacuations occur during all emergencies.

### *Technology Improvements*

Technology is always at the forefront and changing at a rapid pace. TRPA will update the regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan. Through the ITS plan, TRPA will develop a systems management approach to transportation and plan the technology that is needed to support management of the transportation system, which is essential in an area where building new highways is

not possible. The ITS plan will be completed in tandem with the PROTECT program plans to ensure improvements identified in the updated ITS plan support resilience planning.

TRPA's partner agency, the Tahoe Transportation District, is implementing the USDOT's Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) program with region-wide sensors to collect transportation and traveler related information. This project will integrate data collection infrastructure, while maintaining anonymity, to create a central database to share and use more robust and real-time data.

The transportation agencies also continue to improve real time travel information to make transit more accessible and easier to use. Transportation data, trends, and monitoring systems have become more transparent and accessible through the Lake Tahoe Info [Transportation Tracker](#), the Tahoe [Open Data](#) platform, and the [Climate Resilience Dashboard](#).

### *Housing and Transportation Connections*

The Plan bolsters community revitalization and housing initiatives by enhancing overall mobility. Utilizing its unique land use authority, TRPA continues to revise regional policies and local requirements in collaboration with housing working groups. TRPA is working to create incentives for deed-restricted housing projects, while looking for ways to bring funding to the basin to build more affordable and workforce housing. The RTP emphasizes improving the transportation system in town centers and improving transit along corridors to support more housing opportunities.

Encouraging redevelopment in town centers will continue through policy changes and prioritizing multi-benefit projects that reduce vehicle miles travelled by adding housing density in areas where jobs and services are located. There are several planned housing and transportation projects that will create vibrant town centers with complete streets including low-stress bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and safe connections to transit.

### *Managing Recreation Demand*

While providing vibrant and connected town centers continues to be an area of focus, managing access to recreation in the heaviest traveled highway corridors will also be a priority. Building on the momentum of the East Shore Trail from Incline Village to Sand Harbor, TTD, the USDA Forest Service and Nevada Department of Transportation will advance a mobility hub at Spooner Summit and trail connections along State Route 28 between Sand Harbor and Spooner State Park. Along State Route 89 on the West Shore, partners are building momentum to complete the next segment of the Tahoe Trail from Meeks Bay to DL Bliss State Park, and to implement transit and parking management at Emerald Bay.

The private sector is also pivotal to managing recreation demand and is a valuable partner in achieving the transportation vision. Ski resorts around the region have implemented parking reservation systems that encourage transit, carpooling, and other methods of reducing VMT. They also provide shuttles that link to inter and intraregional transit and incentivize employees to use alternative transportation.

### *Transportation Demand Management*

Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies provide incentives to shift travel patterns from the single occupancy automobile to walking, biking, transit, and carpooling. Strategies and incentives can also help shift car travel to less busy times when there is more capacity on roadways and at recreation sites.

Both the North and South Shore transportation management associations (TNT/TMA and SSTMA, respectively), are key partners in developing and implementing TDM strategies for Tahoe. The growing employee vanpool programs sponsored by these transportation management associations serve an important role, providing affordable transportation and sustainable travel options to Tahoe for employees living outside the region. The TMAs also work closely with the ski resorts to connect transit to park-and-ride locations, and with the business community to provide shuttles from town centers to special events, reducing seasonal and weekend recreation travel congestion. TRPA continues to implement the Commute Tahoe program that provides a platform to expand employee travel options, collect employee travel data, and provides incentives, education, and tools for employers.

Education and outreach campaigns such as Linking Tahoe, Lake Tahoe Bike Month, and the Safe Routes to School program support and encourage all members of the Tahoe community to participate in alternative modes of transportation.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Connections 2050 is the blueprint and framework for the Tahoe Region to deliver a resilient and accessible transportation system over the next 25 years. Once complete, Tahoe will truly be a sustainable destination for year-round living and outdoor recreation with a world-class transportation system that complements local communities and helps preserve the region’s unique natural environment.



*Photo: Rachid Dahnoun*