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STAFF REPORT

Date: August 17, 2022  
To: TRPA Governing Board  
From: TRPA Staff  
Subject: Briefing on the Lake Tahoe Transportation Equity Study

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Summary and Staff Recommendation:

Staff and project consultants, DKS Associates, will provide a presentation on the ongoing Lake Tahoe Transportation Equity Study. This is for informational purposes and no action is required.

Project Description/Background:

In 2021, the TRPA Governing Board adopted the 2020 Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RTP/SCS includes a renewed approach to transportation access and identifies communities with greater needs for access to transportation. Appendix F of the RTP/SCS details TRPA's initial approach to a regional environmental justice assessment. The analysis ensures the programs, policies, and activities outlined in the 2020 RTP do not disproportionately and adversely affect individuals with a disability, people of color, or low-income residents, and that the transportation benefits and burdens are equitably distributed. TRPA is conducting a Transportation Equity Study to better understand travel barriers facing Tahoe's residents and visitors and to build on the environmental justice analysis ([Appendix F](#)) included in the RTP/SCS.

For this transportation equity study, equity means:

- Fair inclusion in the planning process in which all can provide input;
- Fair accessibility to transportation services and assets that allow all to benefit; and
- Fair protection from climate impacts and benefits from climate resiliency.

As the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) and as a federal grant recipient, TRPA has an obligation to analyze and address inequities in its programs, activities, and services. Federal and state funding for transportation improvements such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the Justice40 Initiative, are increasingly tied to environmental justice, requiring applicants to demonstrate how transportation and transit projects will benefit transportation disadvantaged communities.

For this study, transportation disadvantaged communities, or priority communities, are:

- **Persons without private transportation (zero vehicle households):** Lack of a personal vehicle is a significant factor for transit need. In 2022, 80 of Tahoe transit riders did not have access to a personal vehicle.
- **Seniors (individuals 65 years and older):** Elderly individuals may choose not to drive or can no longer drive due to age.
- **Persons living below the poverty line:** Purchasing or maintaining a personal vehicle might be difficult for households with limited income.
- **Individuals with a disability:** Disability status may impact an individual's ability to live independently, including driving a personal vehicle.
- **Youth (individuals 18 years and younger):** Most people under 18 do not drive and even those with driver's licenses often do not have the means to purchase and maintain a vehicle.
- **BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color):** People of color are more likely to live in densely populated neighborhoods, are less likely to have access to a car, and are more likely to bike, walk, or take transit to work.

Staff will assess transportation equity by identifying the needs, concerns, and vulnerabilities of all those living, working, and visiting the Tahoe Basin, with a particular focus on the identified priority communities. Staff is conducting various meetings with representatives from each of the priority communities to better understand transportation challenges and needs. Input from these meetings and transportation data will inform development of an equity index and resiliency index. Each index will be used to help TRPA evaluate existing and proposed transportation infrastructure, projects, and programs relative to burdens and benefits to residents, workers, and visitors, and for climate implications. The indices will help to sort the improvement priorities into immediate, near-term, and long-term needs. In addition to the indices, the Transportation Equity Study will provide recommendations to:

- Improve TRPA's public outreach and engagement through the Public Participation Plan,
- Incorporate equity considerations into TRPA's transportation program, policies, and planning processes,
- Reduce climate change impacts that affect transportation,
- Further incorporate equity into TRPA's Regional Grant Program, and
- Improve recreation access for transportation disadvantaged populations.

A final study is expected in June 2023. For more information, please review the project story map [here](#).

#### Public Comment:

The project includes multiple public outreach opportunities throughout each phase. To date, staff and project consultants have organized two focus group meetings, met one-on-one with 18 different stakeholders, and conducted pop-up surveys at farmer's markets, local churches, and in front of local supermarkets.

Pop-up workshops will be held on August 25<sup>th</sup> at Live at Lakeview at Lakeview Commons and on August 26<sup>th</sup> at the Kings Beach Music at the Beach event. Additional opportunities for public engagement will take place in the winter and spring.

#### Contact Information:

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