



STAFF REPORT

Date: September 21, 2022

To: TRPA Governing Board

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Keeping Tahoe Moving: Transportation and Destination Stewardship Strategic Initiative Update

Summary:

The Governing Board will receive an update on the *Keeping Tahoe Moving Strategic Initiative* beginning first with a presentation on the status of the Destination Stewardship Partnership, including a USDA Forest Service representative, followed by Transportation planning updates, including updates from a Tahoe Transportation District representative. The item will be informational only and no action is required.

Background:

Transportation and destination stewardship are pillars of a resilient Lake Tahoe. This initiative implements the Regional Plan and Regional Transportation Plan by enhancing efficient movement of people and goods, managing the Region's recreation offerings, ensuring equitable access, and fostering better, collective user management strategies (i.e., behavioral changes). The initiative contributes to climate goals, creating a sustainable and resilient region, and encouraging all to take care of Tahoe.

The allure of accessible outdoor activities and climate change impacts (such as extreme weather and wildfire events) will continue to drive more and more people to the greater Lake Tahoe region. Tahoe is the backyard to an estimated 15 million people who live within a day's driving distance. To put this into perspective, the region is roughly one-third the size of Yosemite National Park yet receives three times the number of visitors.

Visitation is the main driver of the Lake Tahoe Region's \$5-6 billion annual economy, based largely on seasonal tourism and outdoor recreation. But this puts metropolitan-level travel demands on the region's limited and largely rural transportation system.

There is broad consensus that to meet the growing travel demand and to provide protection to Tahoe as a world-class destination the region needs a transformation. The *Keeping Tahoe Moving* strategic initiative provides a holistic approach, combining infrastructure improvements and innovative strategies to encourage behavioral change, to help people travel to, from, and around the region more efficiently. Additionally, through broad collaboration, it establishes an expectation of how to be a good steward for Tahoe for all those who come and recreate here. The concept of using behavioral change to manage demand is not new, but the emerging applications to tourism and recreation use are. For example, there are numerous areas where behavior change has been used to reduce peak demands like reducing electricity usage at times of peak system loads and changing water use during drought periods.

This same concept, combined with innovative approaches to meeting transportation needs, is what makes this initiative and its components uniquely suited for the Lake Tahoe Region.

This strategic initiative includes the following activities:

- **Sustainable Transportation Funding:** securing new transportation funding across multiple sectors
- **Corridor Plans:** planning along major transportation corridors to bridge between the plan's goals and policies, the implementation and long-term operation of multi-benefit projects to comprehensively address its largest challenges like visitation and parking (e.g., US50 East Shore, Washoe County Tahoe Transportation Plan, and SR89 Trail Feasibility Study)
- **Transportation Equity:** evaluating underserved community transportation needs and transportation planning activities such as project selection and public engagement
- **Tahoe Regional Trails Plan:** providing a blueprint for connections between dirt trails and the active transportation network
- **Accelerating RTP Implementation:** coordinating project implementation across multiple jurisdictions including financial programming and programmatic strategies like Commute Tahoe to encourage employees to bike, walk and carpool
- **Destination Stewardship Partnership and Planning:** providing a roadmap for near and long-term visitor and destination management solutions to encourage responsible travel decisions and stewardship practices

The August Governing Board agenda included US50 East Shore Corridor Management Plan and Transportation Equity Study briefings. Staff will provide a presentation on the status of Sustainable Transportation Funding, the Active Transportation Plan Update, and Accelerating RTP Implementation, including programmatic elements like Travel Demand Management. The Tahoe Transportation District representative will provide an update on initiative planning including Washoe County Tahoe Transportation Study and the Tahoe Short Range Transit Plan.

Staff will also provide an update on the Destination Stewardship Partnership. Initiated by the Environmental Improvement Program Sustainable Recreation Working Group, this partnership identifies and implements near-term visitor and destination management solutions (e.g. Take Care campaign) and has launched a planning process to establish a roadmap of innovative and effective long term strategies. Destination stewardship, a term being widely adopted in other resort and natural environment destinations around the globe, aims to establish a holistic approach to visitor and user management so that the needs of the environment, businesses, visitors, and local community can all be met in a harmonious way. Staff will provide an update on success stories from Coordinating Committees and process and expected outcomes of the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan: Taking Care of Tahoe.

Look Ahead:

Later this calendar year, the board will receive presentations and the opportunity to provide input on the following: the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan: Taking Care of Tahoe; an update to the Tahoe Safety Strategy to ensure we are meeting our regional safety goals and our partners are eligible for new federal funds; recommendations from the SR89 Trail Feasibility Study closing gaps in the Tahoe Trail; and future code changes to accelerate implementation of the RTP through the Travel Demand Management ordinance and Transportation Equity recommendations. On the horizon for *Keeping Tahoe Moving* is an Active Transportation Plan update that will consider micromobility (i.e. electric scooters) and the connections between dirt trails and the active transportation network.

Contact Information:

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