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STAFF REPORT

Date: September 14, 2022

To: Advisory Planning Commission

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Presentation and discussion of the Lake Tahoe Shoreline Public Safety Facilities Planning Process

Summary and Recommendation:

Staff will provide an overview of the Lake Tahoe Shoreline Public Safety Facilities planning process and forthcoming action strategy. This is an informational item for discussion, no motion is required.

Background:

In the coming decades, the Lake Tahoe Region is expected to experience more extreme weather events, including drought and wildfire all while increased visitation heightens demands on the region's emergency infrastructure and first responders. During emergency situations, a myriad of agencies (e.g. fire protection districts, US Coast Guard, county sheriffs' offices, and TRPA) collaborate to respond to lake-based emergencies. Resilient public safety facilities and regional collaboration are critical to maintaining responsive public safety services for residents and visitors into the future.

TRPA Code of Ordinances Section 84.8.2 and the 2018 Shoreline Plan allow design exceptions for piers or other shoreline facilities designated as essential public safety facilities and provide additional pier allocations to construct five lake-based public safety facilities. One facility is reserved for the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and four facilities are to be distributed one in each of the four quadrants of the lake, with quadrants defined by county boundaries. These are intended to result in centralized and cooperatively built facilities, for mooring, launching, and emergency response that are resilient in a changing climate and fluctuating lake levels.

To date, only the Coast Guard has a dedicated safety facility on Lake Tahoe. County- and local-level emergency responders currently moor and launch from a variety of public and private locations around the Lake, none of which have been specifically designed to harbor such safety facilities. Boats moored on buoys or other private facilities are vulnerable to damage and loss and response mobilization may take longer in an emergency.

The Lake Tahoe Shoreline Public Safety Facilities Action Strategy identifies permanent locations for lake-based emergency response vessels. The strategy furthers the Regional Plan and 2018 Shoreline plan by supporting a coordinated network of regional public safety facilities serving Lake Tahoe. The project was precipitated by requests over the last several years from fire districts, law enforcement, and the U.S.

Coast Guard to find permanent mooring locations for response vessels that can be accessed during low lake conditions and respond to a range of emergency situations.

Project Description:

In March 2022, TRPA staff initiated a process to convene a working group of public safety and land management partners. The collaborative planning process sought to:

- Identify preferred locations for essential lake-based public safety facilities in each of the Tahoe Basin's four counties considering essential criteria;
- Understand facility needs and feasibility; and
- Develop an action plan to guide implementation of safety facilities at preferred locations.

The planning process resulted in an action strategy to memorialize the working group's findings and aid working group members in establishing partnerships and developing dedicated public safety facilities.

Planning Process:

A working group representing regional public safety agencies (fire districts and sheriffs), relevant land managers (US Forest Service, Cal State Parks, NDSL, etc.), and TRPA staff completed a six-month planning process to identify preferred locations for lake-based public safety facilities. The planning process included the following steps:

March 3: Kick-off meeting with working group members composed of public safety agency representatives and land managers.

March 25: First Workshop: the working group identified evaluation criteria and potential safety facility locations for further analysis.

April: TRPA staff analyzed the feasibility of potential facility locations based on location criteria.

April-May: Meetings with small groups representing each of the participating quadrant areas to review analysis and rank preferred locations.

- April 22: Placer County Meeting
- April 26: Washoe County Meeting
- May 2: City of South Lake Tahoe Meeting
- May 23: El Dorado County Meeting

Working group members also met with Elie Alyeshmerni, owner of Ski Run Marina, and Bob Hassett, owner of Camp Richardson pier, to discuss possible safety facilities at their properties. Both property owners expressed their support for the planning process and further consideration of safety facility improvements at Camp Richardson and Ski Run Marina.

May 16: Second Workshop: the working group discussed facility needs and key considerations at each of the preferred locations.

June-August: TRPA staff and the working group developed the draft action strategy.

Preferred Safety Facility Locations:

Through the planning process, the working group identified and ranked preferred locations for lake-based safety facilities. Preferred locations were identified by consensus after a review of location criteria including:

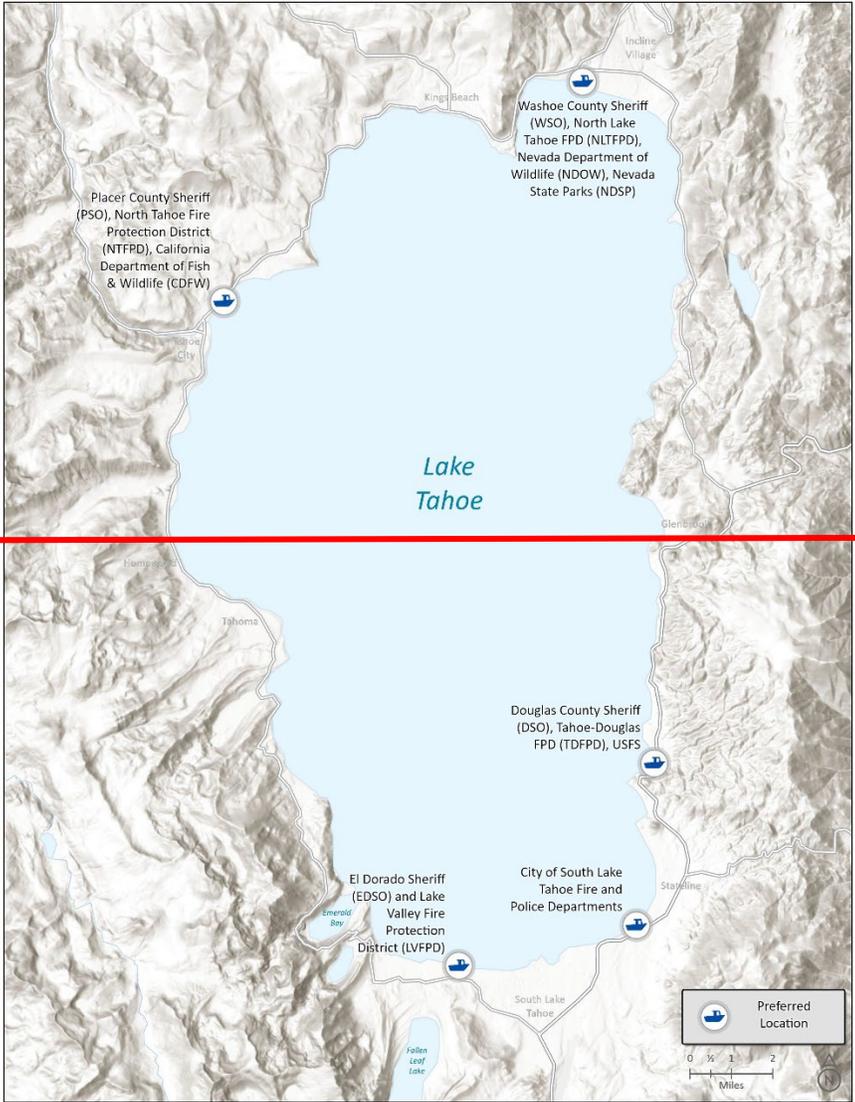
- site availability;
- ownership;
- environmental and scenic sensitivity;
- response time to key locations on the lake;
- protection during storm conditions;
- existing infrastructure;
- land access; and
- access to navigable water

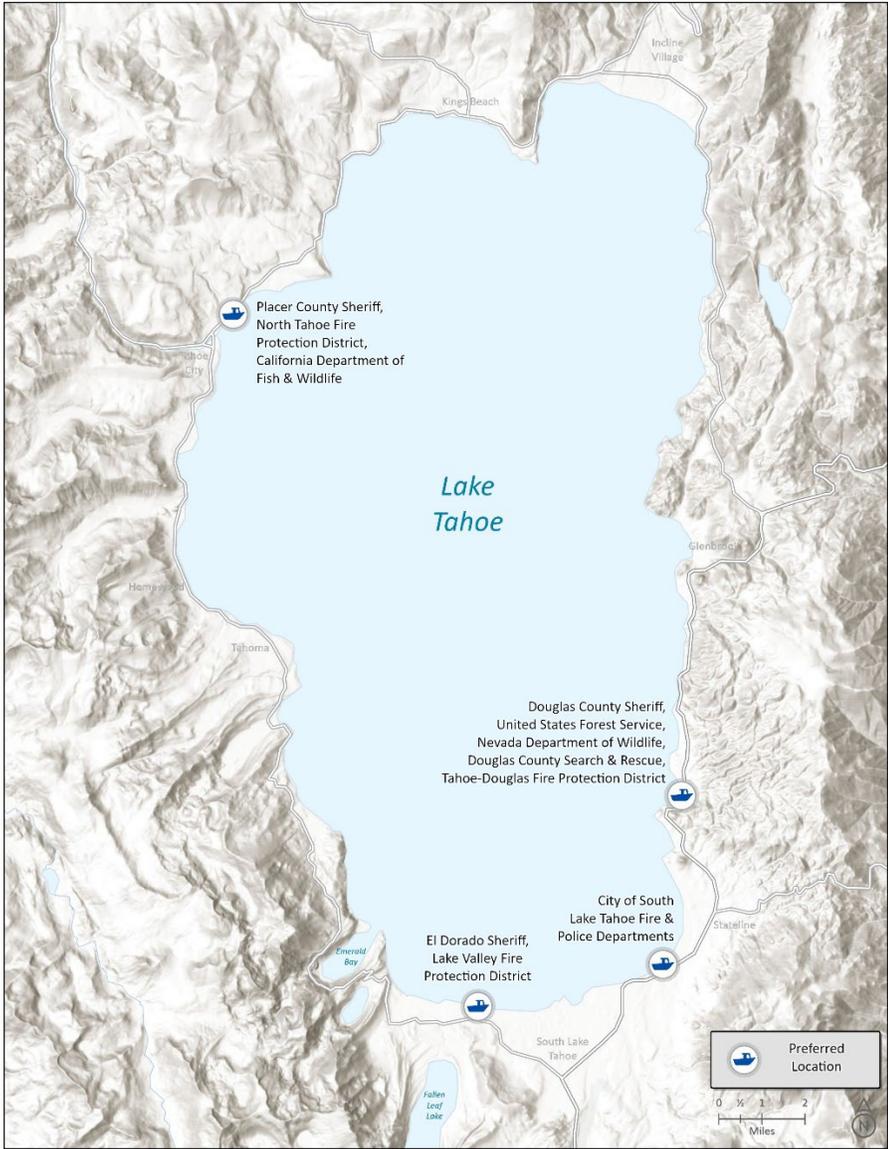
More detail on the process for evaluating and choosing preferred facility locations is included in Attachment B.

While these safety facilities are intended to primarily serve the first responder agencies of each lake quadrant, emergency response on Lake Tahoe is highly collaborative and other agencies are likely to use the facilities as needed. This planning process identified safety facility sites on Lake Tahoe. First responder agencies will lead the next steps for facility development including forming MOUs with participating landowners and agencies, site specific environmental analysis, funding, and permitting. TRPA staff will remain available for assistance as needed.

The working group identified the four preferred locations:

- Ski Run Marina (City of South Lake Tahoe)
- Camp Richardson Pier (El Dorado County)
- ~~Burnt Cedar Beach~~ TBD (Washoe County)
- Zephyr Cove Pier (Douglas County)



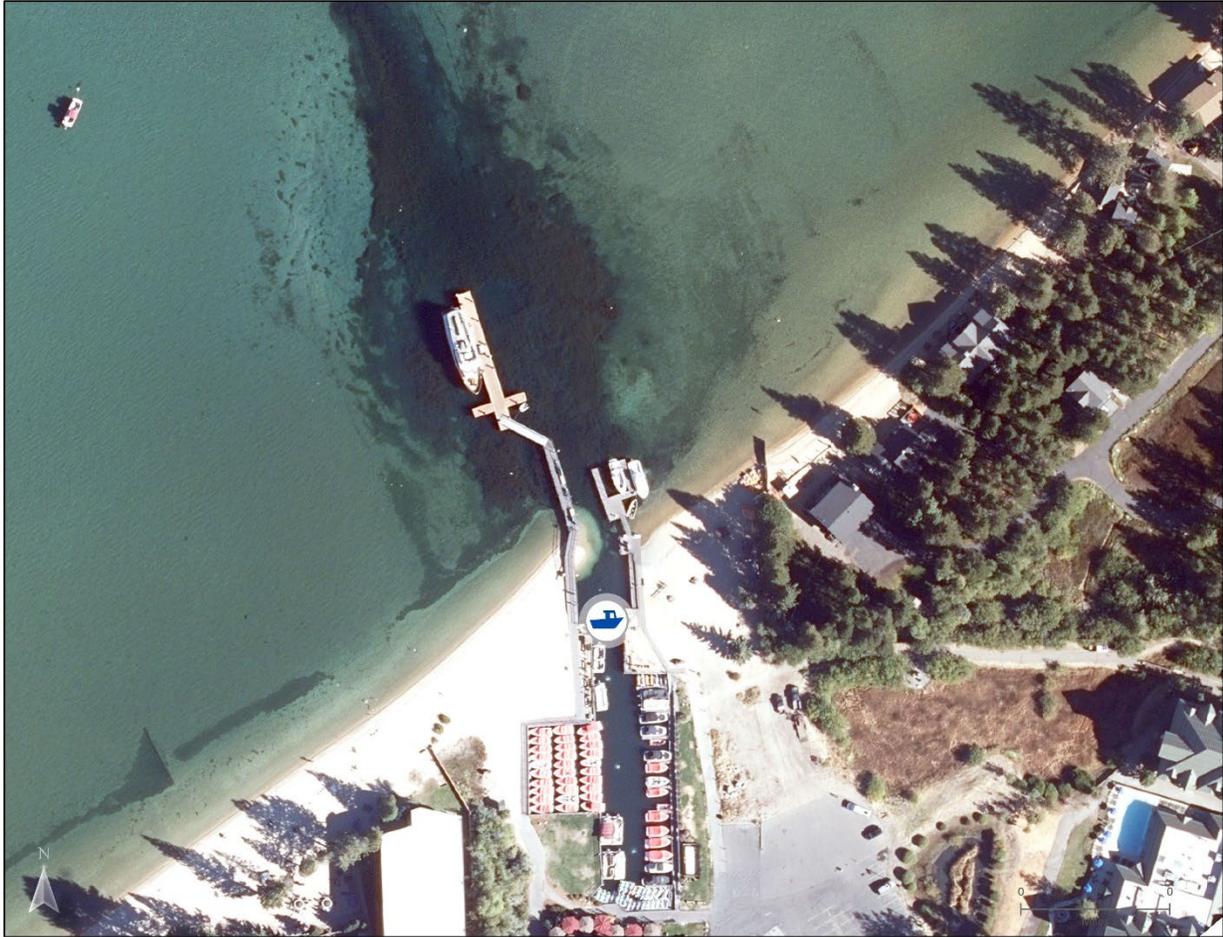


Ski Run Marina (City of South Lake Tahoe):

Ski Run Marina is a privately owned and operated marina in the City of South Lake Tahoe. The marina would provide a central location in the City’s tourist core, accommodating quick response times. The Marina receives regular maintenance dredging to sustain boat access in low water conditions. Existing maintenance dredging is an important benefit for first responders given that the south shore can become un navigable during droughts. The marina owner expressed enthusiastic support for a public safety facility during initial meetings. A safety facility at Ski Run Marina would primarily serve the City of South Lake Tahoe’s Fire and Police departments.

When developing a safety facility at Ski Run Marina, partner agencies should consider the need for scenic mitigation at the site, limit disturbance to sensitive environmental areas on site, and accommodate plans for a ferry station at the marina.

The image below shows an aerial view of Ski Run Marina:

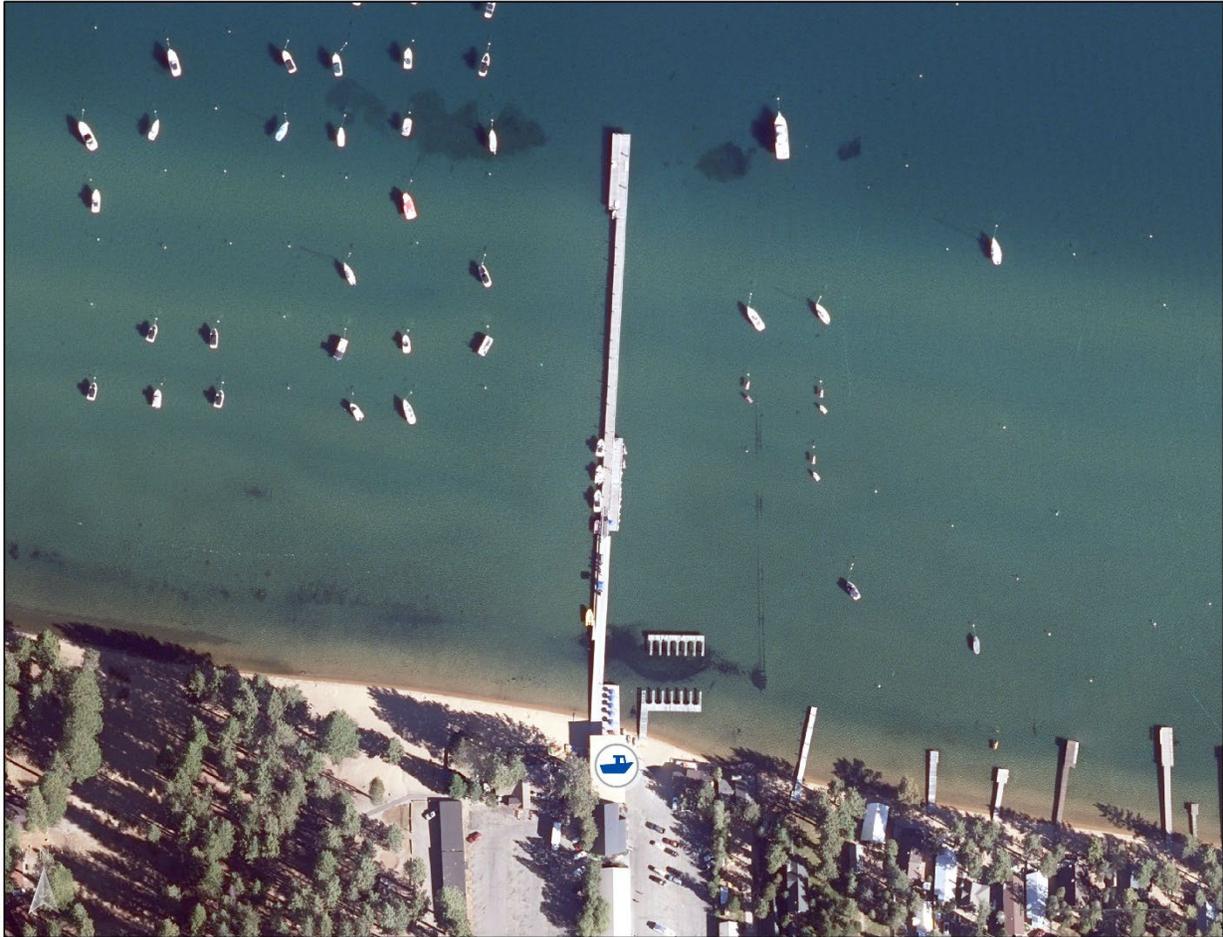


Camp Richardson Pier (El Dorado County):

Camp Richardson pier is a privately owned public pier located on Forest Service-owned land. The Camp Richardson area and nearby Emerald Bay account for the majority of lake-based emergency calls in El Dorado County. The existing pier already extends to a navigable depth during drought conditions, a rarity in Tahoe's shallow south shore. Additionally, the pier owner and operator already works closely with first responders and was open to exploring safety facility improvements to the pier. Partner agencies will need to explore techniques to limit the impact of wave action on safety vessels moored at the site. A facility at Camp Richardson would primarily serve the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office and Lake Valley Fire Protection District.

Due to the high volume of emergency calls on the south shore, the working group recommended two emergency facilities in the El Dorado County quadrant, with one facility in the City of South Lake Tahoe and a second facility in unincorporated El Dorado County. TRPA staff and the working group believe the need for facilities can be met without an additional safety facility development allocation because the desired improvements to the Camp Richardson pier are within the allowable limits for a public pier. Therefore, the City of South Lake Tahoe could use a safety facility allocation to develop their facility at Ski Run Marina and El Dorado County could make improvements to Camp Richardson pier while maintaining its public pier status.

The image below shows an aerial view of Camp Richardson pier:



Tahoe State Recreation Area (Placer County):

The Tahoe State Recreation Area campground in Tahoe city is a California State Parks owned parcel with an existing pier near the Tahoe City Marina. The existing pier is centrally located on Placer County's shoreline and extends into deep water to accommodate emergency response in low water conditions. California State Parks staff expressed interest in working with partner agencies to improve the pier as a public safety facility. Other site improvements are needed to improve emergency vehicle access to the pier. A safety facility at Tahoe State Recreation Area would primarily serve the Placer County Sheriff's Office, North Tahoe Fire Protection District, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The image below shows an aerial view of Tahoe State Recreation Area:



Burnt Cedar Beach TBD (Washoe County):

Burnt Cedar Beach is a quasi-public park owned and operated by the Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID). There is no existing pier at the site and IVGID has not confirmed interest in working with partners to develop a safety facility at Burnt Cedar Beach. Partner agencies should engage with IVGID to further explore the site's feasibility. A safety facility at Burnt Cedar Beach would primarily serve the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and Nevada State Parks.

The image below shows an aerial view of Burnt Cedar Beach:

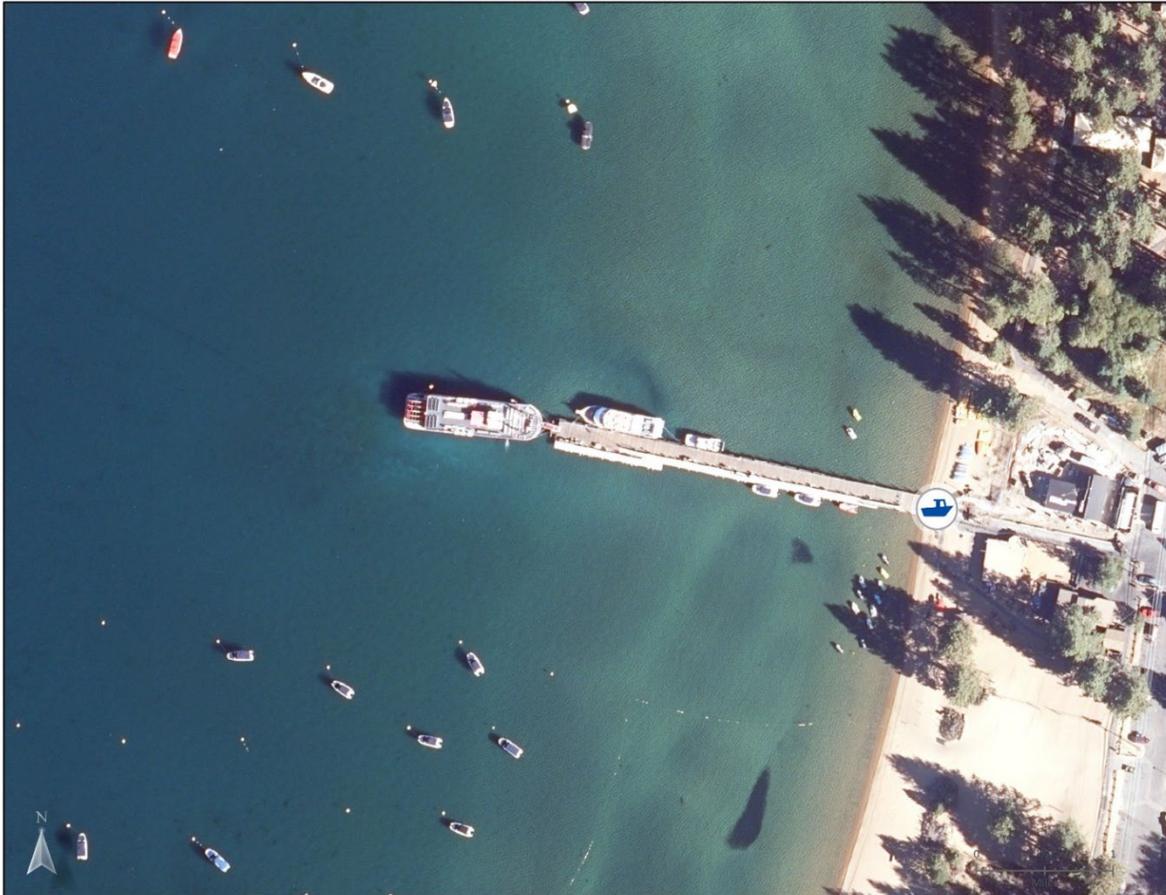
The working group has not yet determined a preferred lake-based safety facility location in Washoe County. TRPA staff analyzed the feasibility of several locations and will continue to work with first responders in Washoe County to identify a preferred facility location.

Zephyr Cove Pier (Douglas County):

While Douglas County pursued an independent process to plan their safety facility at Zephyr Cove pier, they remained engaged with the regional planning process, providing advice and guidance to other working group partners.

The Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District and Douglas County Sheriff's Office are working closely with the Forest Service to plan, design, and permit safety facility improvements to the Forest Service's pier at Zephyr Cove. Partner agencies expect to begin a NEPA study for the pier improvements in October and to complete construction by spring 2024.

The image below shows an aerial view of Zephyr Cove pier:



Next Steps:

The Shoreline Public Safety Facilities Planning Process identified preferred locations for critical public safety facilities on Lake Tahoe's shoreline. At the planning process's conclusion, participating agencies will work to implement safety facility development in their lake quadrant. TRPA staff may assist agency partners as needed. A summary of the TRPA permitting process for lake-based safety facilities is included in Attachment C.

The next steps for safety facilities will include:

- **Formalize Agency Partnerships-** All relevant agencies and land managers collaborating on the development of a shared public safety facility should enter a formal MOU partnership
- **Seek Initial Funding-** Partner agencies should seek initial funding for facility planning and design

- **Engage Consultant in Planning and Design-** Hire a consultant for planning, design, and environmental study, leading to full project budget
- **Seek Full Project Funding-** Seek funding for project completion including permitting and construction
- **Permit Submittal-** Submit permit applications to relevant agencies including TRPA, Army Corps of Engineers, US Coast Guard, and US Fish & Wildlife. In California, permitting agencies include California State Lands, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Fish & Wildlife. In Nevada, permitting agencies include Nevada State Lands, Nevada Department of Environmental Protection, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and Lake Tahoe Water Suppliers Association.
- **Facility Development-** Once all permits are obtained, develop safety facility

Contact Information:

For questions regarding this agenda item, please contact Jacob Stock, Senior Planner at 775-589-5221 or jstock@trpa.gov.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Lake Tahoe Shoreline Public Safety Facilities Story Map
(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ea9f6d07ccc4406baed7b9c34455d592>)

Attachment B: Process for Determining Preferred Facility Locations

Attachment C: TRPA Permitting Process for Shoreline Public Safety Facilities