



Mail

PO Box 5310
Stateline, NV 89449-5310

Location

128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449

Contact

Phone: 775-588-4547
Fax: 775-588-4527
www.trpa.gov

MEMORANDUM

From: Julie Regan, TRPA Executive Director

To: TRPA Governing Board

Date: November 16, 2023

Re: Accomplishments & Performance Self-Assessment: December – October 2023

The Board holds the Executive Director accountable to implement the Agency's annual Work Programs and three current Board-directed strategic priorities established to carry out TRPA's adopted strategic direction: ***Tahoe Living*** (housing and complete communities), ***Keeping Tahoe Moving*** (transportation and destination stewardship), and ***Restoration and Resilience*** (Environmental Improvement and climate programs). Set out below is a self-assessment looking at performance and accomplishments on these goals over the last 11 months.

Overall Assessment

TRPA had an extraordinary year. I am exceptionally proud of the team-building success that we've achieved together. From board-to-board member relations, staff development, partner engagement, and community conversations, the year was filled with progress across the spectrum. Executive leadership transitions are difficult for any organization, but I believe by working together as board and staff, we've not only maintained our organizational effectiveness, but also we've broken new ground in accelerating achievement in multiple program areas. Tough challenges lie ahead, so we will redouble our commitment to collaboration and team building in 2024 in order to fulfill our mission and mandates set forth in the Bi-State Compact.

Tahoe Living: Making Housing More Affordable and Growing Complete Communities

The Regional Planning Committee (formerly RPIC) advanced a suite of innovative policy changes to the full board for consideration in December following nearly two years of work with the community, housing experts, the board, and stakeholders. Given the nature of TRPA's work with constantly emerging issues and necessary daily problem solving, staying on track with major initiatives is a challenge. Our team exceeded expectations this year and delivered Tahoe Living Phase 2 amendments under the leadership of John Hester and Regional Planning Committee Chair Vince Hoenigman. We are nearing the finish line of this phase of critical work to improve environmental quality at the lake while supporting the dream of local residents to live in safe communities and affordable homes at Tahoe.

The latest assessor's parcel data from local governments show that basin-wide assessed property values (not market values – that number is considerably larger) have hit an all-time high of more than **\$35 billion**. TRPA's work to protect the lake also supports property values

throughout the region and the tax revenues that support local services. Given the affordable housing crisis in the Tahoe Basin, this strategic priority is of the utmost importance to reduce vehicle miles traveled from workers commuting into the basin and to meet the policy directives from the states of California and Nevada to make housing more affordable.

Other highlights in this strategic priority area include the following:

- Our Research and Analysis team dug deep into **Census data** this year to support our long-range planning work in the housing and destination stewardship initiatives. Business and community leaders have requested our presentation on emerging trends for their groups (originally presented to the Governing Board in October) furthering TRPA's reputation as a regional leader in data analysis.
- Teams achieved herculean results on **permit process improvements** to enhance public service, realign resources to focus on the highest environmental priorities, and improve cost recovery on filing fees. This major accomplishment occurred simultaneously while planners met targets of **processing between 1,100 and 1,200 permits hitting performance standards** of the 30/120-day reviews. Compliance teams also exceeded goals despite record-breaking snowfall amounts and difficult weather conditions.
- We formed a new team devoted to public service and hired a new position of Public Service Specialist to transform our front lobby into a service-oriented, efficient, and welcoming space. A **new online permitting appointments system** is also live.
- We upgraded permit tracking software and executed the digital first initiative (with special funding from the state of Nevada). So far, our team and consultants have **transformed 10,000 paper files into a digital format**. For the first time in my 20 years at TRPA, the file room shelves aren't busting at the seams. Only 190,000 files to go!
- The Regional Planning team made significant progress on updates to the Regional Plan and Code of Ordinances to include **climate smart amendments**. We engaged UC Davis students and community stakeholders in the work.
- TRPA staff and local government partners secured more than **\$2 million in California grant funding** thanks to board member support from Ashley Conrad-Saydah and others to begin Phase 3 of the Tahoe Living strategic priority. We hired two new planners (Michelle Brown and Kaley Arboleda) to advance this work and support our seasoned planners Karen Fink, Alyssa Bettinger, and Jacob Stock.
- The team supported **area plan amendments** in multiple jurisdictions (Placer, Washoe, City of South Lake Tahoe) and engaged hundreds of community members constructively in various venues on land use matters (community meetings, webinars, phone calls, emails, individual meetings, farmers markets, etc).
- Long-tenured Special Projects Manager Paul Nielsen collaborated with multiple staff members in different departments on major projects this year representing **hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in Lake Tahoe's restoration** while supporting local community revitalization. The team worked with applicants to ensure large projects like the Waldorf Astoria Lake Tahoe (approved by the Governing Board), the Hyatt Incline renovation (approved at staff level), and those in the permitting stage including the Cal-Neva revitalization, Boatworks Mall in Tahoe City, Homewood master plan, and the Lakeside Inn property which will be transformed into a community hospital.

Keeping Tahoe Moving: Improving Transportation Infrastructure and Destination Stewardship

- **MPO Re-certification** - As part of this strategic priority, our one-of-a-kind Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) status was successfully audited and re-certified this year. Feedback from the certification review continues to herald the Tahoe MPO operations as a model of best practices, including our public engagement and outreach and information tracking and management systems (i.e., LT Info).
- **“7-7-7” Funding Framework** - This year we hit a milestone with the Tahoe partnership exceeding the “7-7-7” goal for new transportation investments from the federal, state, local, and private sectors. All partners secured more than \$22 million in new revenues to improve transportation at Tahoe. TRPA’s MPO role is critical to delivery of a \$2.4 billion program of transportation infrastructure over the 25-year life of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).
- **RTP Update** - We initiated the update of the RTP this year with model and data preparation. We also drafted performance measures, executed the Vision Zero Safety Plan, completed the transportation equity study, and laid the groundwork for the next two years of work to fulfill our MPO requirements for the RTP update. The **board also approved more than \$100 million in transportation funding** for our implementation partners, which is higher than most Tahoe annual transportation program investments.
- **Responsible Tourism & Destination Stewardship** - Another big accomplishment included the launch of the **Destination Stewardship Plan** in June, resulting in significant media and the formation of a destination stewardship council to advance **32 key actions**. Tangible progress since the plan’s adoption is making the outdoor recreation experience more enjoyable by reducing the impacts of traffic, trash, and illegal campfires, among others. TRPA played a critical backbone support role in the plan’s creation with staffers Jen Self and Devin Middlebrook facilitating the 18 partners in the multi-year project.

Restoration and Resilience: Accelerating Environmental Improvements

- **Record federal funding, up \$4 million from the previous year** - Tahoe partners collectively **secured more than \$34.3 million** in federal FY23 through the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (LTRA), congressionally directed spending, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the EIP. This high-water mark for Tahoe’s federal funding is double where it was five years ago. TRPA plays a vital leadership role in the partnership advocating for Lake Tahoe in Washington D.C. and our two states. We also **secured an additional \$25 million authorization for the US Army Corps of Engineers** to continue EIP work in Tahoe and gained bi-partisan support for the extension of the LTRA. I also had the honor of testifying on Tahoe’s destination stewardship work at a congressional hearing at the request of US Senator Jacky Rosen.
- The External Partnerships team successfully led and executed the **January 2023 Tahoe Interagency Steering Committee strategic planning retreat** and established new

partnerships and connections among the new EIP leaders in the basin. In addition, TRPA staff played a leadership role in the successful 2023 Lake Tahoe Summit featuring US House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi. The team led the first Summit Staff Field Tour to showcase EIP projects to nearly **30 federal, state, and local key staffers**. Governing Board Chair Cindy Gustafson and other board members supported the Summit Field Tour which received positive feedback from the participants and elected officials.

- **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)** - This fall, the AIS program was challenged with the discovery of the New Zealand mudsnail. Our team led an interagency, **science-based rapid response** including an incident team that managed media and public outreach, lake-wide surveys to determine the extent of the infestation, and coordination with science experts. Also in the AIS program, the team provided leadership and independent monitoring to complete Year 2 of the Tahoe Keys Control Methods Test.
- **Community engagement** - The communications team organized a **series of TRPA Talks** around the lake for community members to meet TRPA's new Executive Director and discuss key issues of concern. In addition, the team produced two issues of the agency's award-winning environmental newspaper, Tahoe In Depth, featuring more than 40 quality news stories. The paper is mailed to all 39,000 homeowners in the Basin and is distributed around the lake to reach other residents and visitors. This work supported all of the Agency's programs and environmental goals.

Essential Agency Backbone Achievements

Progress on TRPA's strategic priorities is impossible without the backbone support of operations and the steadfast execution of core business. A few highlights of note:

- **Bringing science to the Executive Team** – As part of our Agency reorganization, I promoted Dan Segan to Chief Science and Policy Advisor. Dan brings a wealth of knowledge in this important position to build bridges between science and policy. Dan and our team's work with key stakeholders on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) issues will be presented to the Regional Planning Committee in December. Dan works with the Tahoe Science Advisory science community on lake clarity and other resource matters.
- **Nevada's 1/3 funding share** – Nevada is now meeting its one-third general fund share of our operating budget after working for years since the Great Recession to restore funding to TRPA. This major accomplishment was made possible by staff working under the leadership of many Nevada board members as well as former Presidential appointee Bud Hicks. Keeping California's budget share intact despite its massive fiscal deficit was also a significant accomplishment with support from CA board members.
- **Staff Equity Committee** – Dozens of staff members have collaborated on an action plan for TRPA operations to ensure our policies are equitable and inclusive. One of the committee's many accomplishments is adding a language translator on TRPA's website and permit application software. Another accomplishment is working with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California to display a land acknowledgement in the newly created

Da?aw Room where a map is framed of the tribe's ancestral lands. Bolstering tribal engagement is one of our top priorities for 2024.

- **Shoreline Program** - Five years after adopting the comprehensive shoreline program, our team is in full implementation mode. Major accomplishments include mooring registrations, no wake zone safety education, illegal mooring enforcement, pier and buoy lotteries, and managing legal appeals. TRPA's stormwater program staff is actively engaging lakefront owners to complete BMPs as a required condition of finalizing their new mooring permits.
- **Financial integrity** – our Finance Team continues to shine and live up to its regional reputation as trusted fiscal agents. TRPA and the USFS executed a \$5 million agreement to award federal EIP funds to partner agencies which would have been impossible were it not for our team's financial expertise and clean audits.
- **Building management** – after a winter with 700 feet of snow where many rooftops collapsed at Lake Tahoe, we were fortunate that our facilities team protected our largest asset: 128 Market Street. Building improvements are progressing into 2024.
- Support teams worked diligently to **improve meeting management and the public comment process** at Governing Board meetings this year. Katherine Huston, Marja Ambler, Tracy Campbell and other team members continue to improve the hybrid meeting experience and respond to myriad community inquiries in a timely fashion.
- **Staff retention and satisfaction** were top priorities during my first year as Executive Director. Thanks to the board's support, we made headway on long-standing goals for TRPA staff retention. I am pleased to report that over the last year, **only one of our 72 staff members left the Agency**. All told, we promoted 17 staff members, brought all staff up to the appropriate percentiles in their salary ranges (several staffers were below their target percentiles), completed a merit salary review process, increased the Agency's retirement contribution to 15% (not as generous as PERS, but improving), and maintained competitive health and dental benefits. Our Human Resources & Organizational Development team also delivered new training programs (**The Learning Lab**), supported organizational changes, and integrated hybrid and in-person work successfully by sponsoring field tours, staff outings, and in-person team activities.

Building Our Team, Together

Whether daylighting debates and different points of view among members at board meetings or workshopping ideas at strategic planning sessions, I am embracing the board's direction for more direct engagement in open session. Our Executive Team is committed to transparency and fairness and we will continue to hew to those principles and our drive to protect Tahoe. I am proud of our work in 2023 to ensure the lake is as breathtaking in the future as it is today and that we have vibrant communities going forward. Thank you for the opportunity to lead this world-class organization in concert with the scores of partners in our tradition of epic collaboration.