

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

It is hard to imagine that the Lake Tahoe community of today could have been as large as San Francisco. Plans in the 1950s and 1960s called for a year-round population of 750,000 people at Tahoe with freeways ringing the mountaintops. A superhighway was planned for what is now the Tahoe Rim Trail.

Early growth and development restrictions at Lake Tahoe sparked controversy, but conflict gradually gave way to compromise, and collaboration as competing interests learned to work together. Creation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) in December of 1969 and this growing spirit of collaboration have helped ensure the Tahoe Basin remains a world-class natural resource to protect.

Mission

TRPA's mission is to lead the cooperative effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the Lake Tahoe Region, while improving local communities and people's interactions with our irreplaceable environment.

There is broad consensus that the Tahoe Region needs a transportation system transformation to help people travel to, from, and around the region more efficiently. Improvements are also needed to strengthen initiatives underway to conserve and restore Tahoe's environment; revitalize communities; improve quality of life for residents and quality of experience for visitors; improve mobility and safety for people walking and biking; improve recreation access and sustainability; reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and build a resilient system in response to climate change.

In the region, there is a strong link between land use and transportation. Land uses, such as public beaches or a popular micro-brewery, attract people — and people need transportation of some kind to get to those places. This push-and-pull between land use and transportation can also happen in the reverse. The development of the nation's transportation system, from the transcontinental railroad to the National Highway System, provides a classic example of transportation leading to land use changes — with many towns and cities developing along these critical transportation corridors.

Vision

Tahoe's transportation system is interconnected, inter-regional, and sustainable, connecting people and places in ways that reduce reliance on the private automobile.

At Lake Tahoe, recognizing and leveraging this interplay between land use and transportation is accomplished through the Regional Plan, the land use plan for the Lake Tahoe Region, as well as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which serves as the transportation element of the Regional Plan.

The RTP guides project and program design and implementation through goals, policies, and projects linked to foreseeable revenues. It is the guide for improving Tahoe's transportation system and complements the Regional Plan's goals for environmental conservation and restoration and community revitalization through better, wiser, and more sustainable transportation choices.

Building on Past Successes

The Tahoe Region is poised to bring its transportation system into the 21st Century. And the groundwork for these changes has been developing for at least a decade. The 2012 Regional Plan Update and 2012 Regional Transportation Plan strengthened development policies and implementation incentives to spur compact walkable, bikeable small community centers.

To prepare for accelerated implementation as envisioned, the 2020 RTP is built to flex and adapt as new funding sources and partnerships become available. For example, the plan envisions inter-regional transit service between nearby cities and Tahoe to be fully in place by 2045.

THE TAHOE REGION

Lake Tahoe is situated in a beautiful and environmentally sensitive enclosed watershed, and its communities are supported by a robust seasonal recreation tourist economy that supports just over 50,000 residents and attracts millions of visitors each year. Town centers and popular recreation destinations are dispersed around the lake, connected by state and federal highways, local roads, bike lanes, and shared use paths.

Split by the California-Nevada border, the Tahoe Region is a uniquely complex transportation planning landscape.

The region includes two states, five counties, one city, one transportation district, and multiple public land management agencies and public utility districts. The lake is the center of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, both geographically and spiritually, and is known as Dá O Ga. Preserving traditional access to the lake is a high priority.

MEGA-REGION

Lake Tahoe serves as the outdoor playground for the neighboring metropolitan areas in Northern California and Nevada, from San Francisco, San Jose, and Sacramento, to Carson City and Reno, that together make up the Trans-Sierra Mega-Region. In addition to being a popular destination for overnight visitors, Tahoe also attracts a high

number of day visitors who drive up to enjoy Tahoe but do not stay overnight. As neighboring cities in California and Nevada continue to grow, so will visitation to Tahoe.

Travel to Tahoe from the mega-region is possible by regional air, rail, roadway, and transit systems.

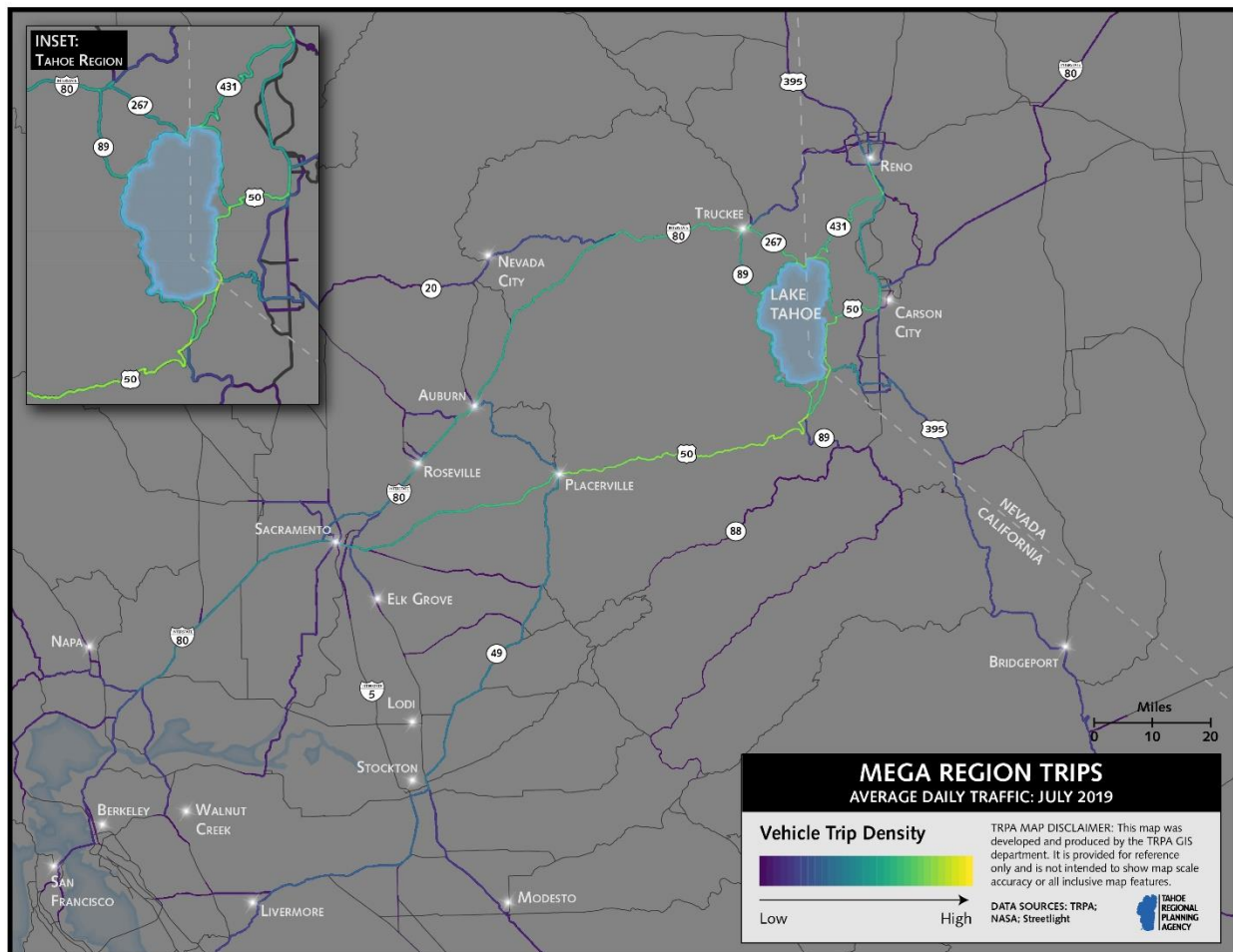


Figure 1: Lake Tahoe Mega-Region

Air

These airports provide air connections to cities within the mega-region that link to Tahoe by shuttle or a one- to five-hour drive: Reno/Tahoe International Airport, Sacramento International Airport, Oakland International Airport, and San Francisco International Airport.

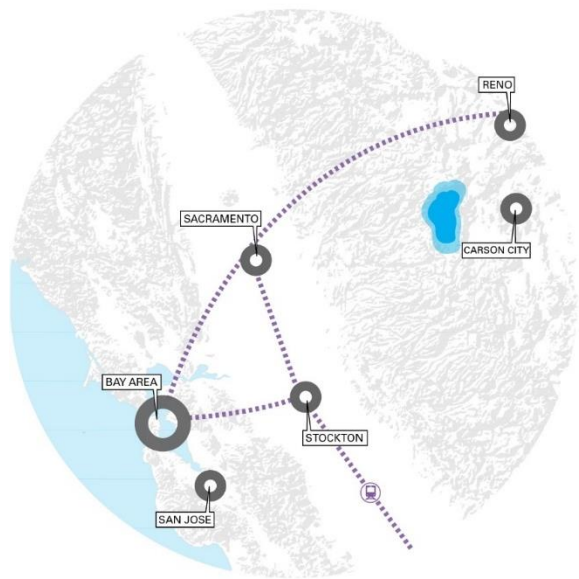


Figure 3: Mega-region Rail Corridors

Auto

Automobile access to Tahoe is possible on interstate and U.S. highways, state routes, and local roads, including Interstate 80, U.S. Highway 50, U.S. Highway 395, Nevada State Route 207, Nevada State Route 431, Nevada and California State Route 28, and California state routes 88, 89, and 267.



Figure 2: Mega-region Airport Map

Rail

Heavy rail corridor, originally part of the transcontinental railroad, connects the major airports from northern California to Reno, Nevada, with a stop in Truckee, California, just north of the Tahoe Region.

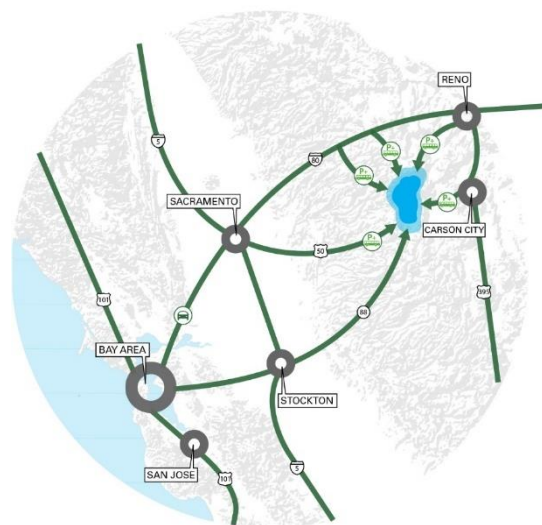


Figure 4: Mega-region Auto Corridor Map

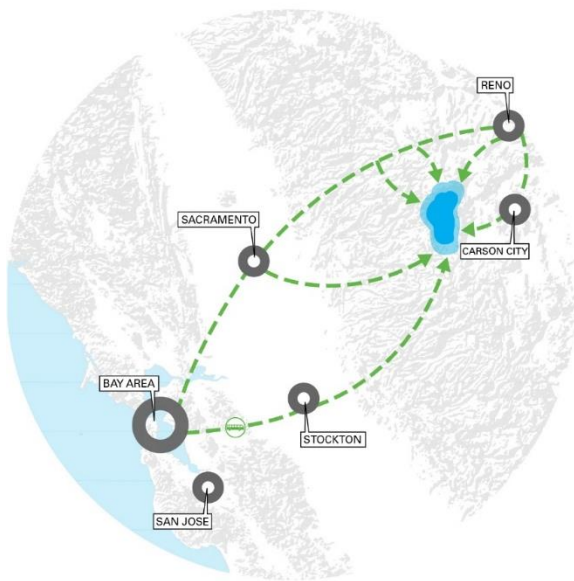


Figure 5: Mega-region Bus Map

Bus

Public and private buses and shuttles provide transit connections to and from Lake Tahoe, major airports, and population centers outside of the region, e.g., Amtrak, South Tahoe Airporter, North Lake Tahoe Express, and seasonal service by smaller private providers like Tahoe Convoy. Greyhound provides connections to Truckee, north of the Tahoe Region.

THE ENVISIONED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The experience and perception of traffic congestion is real at Tahoe. During peak travel times in winter and summer, the roads become congested, making the traffic feel like what is more commonly encountered in a big city. Economic downturns can reduce travel temporarily, as happened during the Great Recession, but roadways rebound to pre-recession levels making the once quiet trip seem more congested than before.

Building out the roadway system for the peak roadway demand does not make sense for the environment or for those who live, work, or visit here. The plan's mobility approach to transportation is to build a system that serves a typical travel day in Tahoe by using the existing

roadway capacity more efficiently and enhancing the entire transportation system.

New trails and transit services, traffic signal improvements, adaptive corridor management that utilizes existing roadway to create transit priority and/or reversible travel lanes, and parking management programs are possible, proposed in the plan, and being added to the system by partners to improve connectivity, mobility and safety. These improvements also support evacuation needs during extreme events, such as wildfires. For example, coordinated traffic signals and adaptive corridor lanes can be modified to support the safe flow of people out of harm's way.

Figure 7: New Round-a-Bout at Tahoe City Credit: Drone Promotions



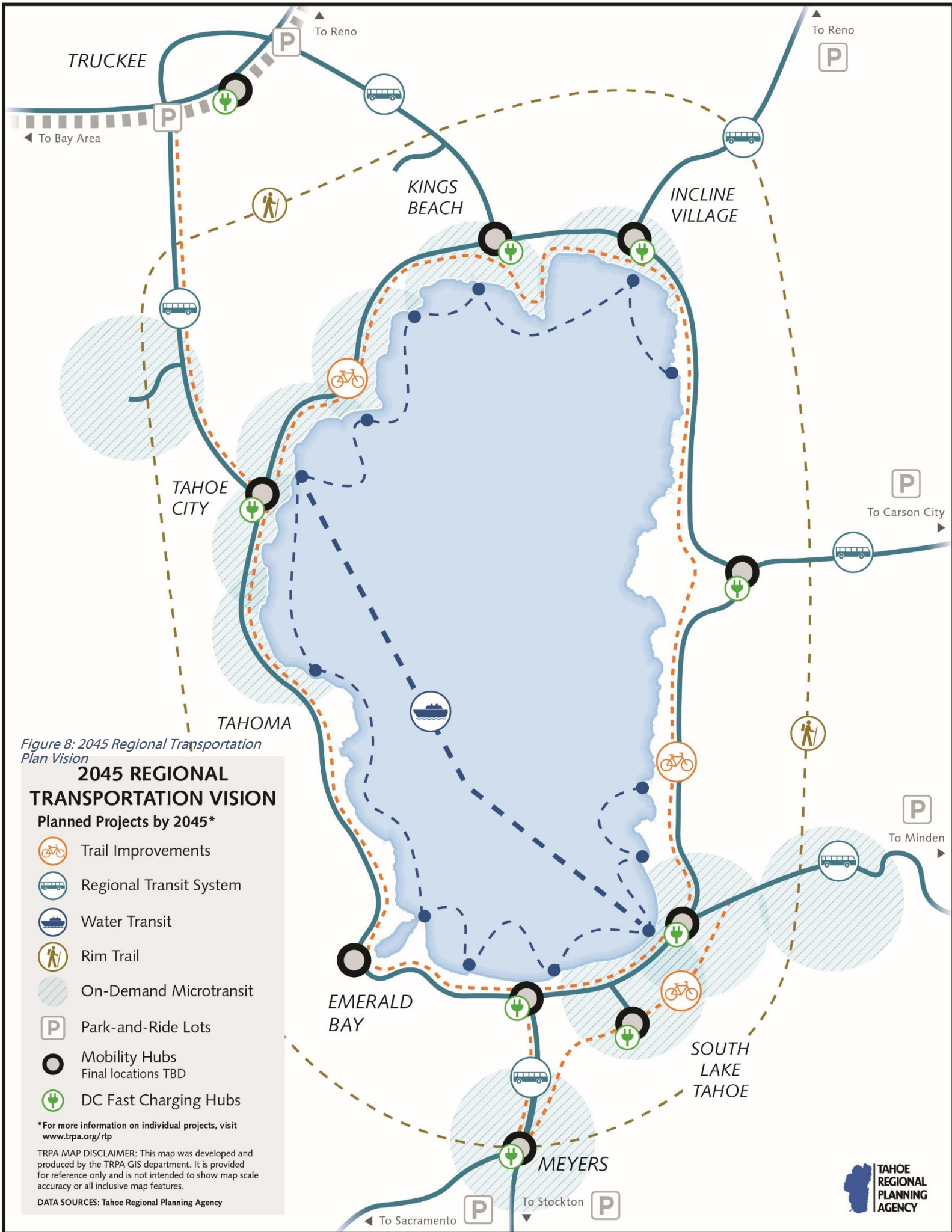










Figure 8: 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Vision

2045 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION VISION

Planned Projects by 2045*

-  Trail Improvements
-  Regional Transit System
-  Water Transit
-  Rim Trail
-  On-Demand Microtransit
-  Park-and-Ride Lots
-  Mobility Hubs
Final locations TBD
-  DC Fast Charging Hubs

*For more information on individual projects, visit www.trpa.org/rtp

TRPA MAP DISCLAIMER: This map was developed and produced by the TRPA GIS department. It is provided for reference only and is not intended to show map scale accuracy or all inclusive map features.

DATA SOURCES: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

REGIONAL GOALS

Regional goals and policies establish the organizing framework for transportation planning at Lake Tahoe. They represent stakeholder feedback and public input, as well as input from previous plans, such as the 2016 Active Transportation Plan, the 2017 Tahoe-Truckee Plug-In Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan, and the 2015 Intelligent Transportation Systems Strategic Plan.

The Regional Plan and the RTP share six major goals for the transportation system.

See Appendix A for more information on the Regional Plan and RTP goals and policies.

Look for each goal's icon throughout this document to find where it is demonstrated in the plan.



Figure 9: Kings Beach Commercial Core Credit: Placer County



Environment

Goal: Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Plan Approach: A transportation system that provides alternatives to driving can help preserve Tahoe's environment by reducing GHG and roadway runoff into the lake. Assessing projects for vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and mitigating those impacts is part of TRPA's and California jurisdictions' development review. This will further reduce GHG emissions from transportation.



Connectivity

Goal: Enhance and sustain the connectivity and accessibility of the Tahoe transportation system, across and between modes, communities, and neighboring regions, for people and goods.

Plan Approach: A seamless, efficient, and accessible transportation system is accomplished through the individual elements of transit, trails, and technology while enhancing their integration through a corridor approach.



Safety

Goal: Increase safety and security for all users of Tahoe's transportation system.

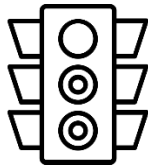
Plan Approach: Residents, commuters, and visitors are more likely to bike, walk, and take transit if they feel safe. Addressing high crash rate locations, eliminating gaps in bike and pedestrian paths, improving pedestrian crossings, and lighting transit stops are all proposed safety improvements.



Economic Vitality and Quality of Life

Goal: Support the economic vitality of the Tahoe Region to enable a diverse workforce, sustainable environment, and quality experience for both residents and visitors.

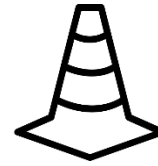
Plan Approach: The Tahoe Region's economy is built on the world-renowned recreational access residents and visitors enjoy. The transportation system supports this by connecting workers to jobs, and visitors and residents to recreation hot spots, attractive town centers, and affordable housing.



Operations and Congestion Management

Goal: Provide an efficient transportation network through coordinated operations, system management, technology, monitoring, and targeted investments.

Plan Approach: A well-executed transportation management system incorporates monitoring data, real-time information, and dynamic operations that tracks, shares, and responds to travel needs, including congestion, snowstorms, emergencies, such as wildfires, and special events.



System Preservation

Goal: Provide for the preservation of the existing transportation system through maintenance activities that support climate resiliency, water quality, and safety.

Plan Approach: Maintaining the existing transportation system to operate at its highest level supports safe and efficient movement of people and goods in the region. Keeping roadway pavement in safe condition, plowing paths for winter use, and planning for climate resiliency makes initial investments last and reduces large and costly rehabilitation projects.