



UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS REPORT

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Lake Tahoe Region

El Dorado and Placer Counties

February 2023

Unmet Transit Needs Process

Each year, pursuant to the California Transportation Development Act (TDA), the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), acting as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), performs the annual unmet transit needs process. The goal of the process is to identify any unmet transit needs and ensure those that are reasonable to meet, are met before TDA funds are expended for non-transit uses, such as streets and roads. Currently, all TDA Local Transportation Fund (LTF) apportionments available for public transportation in the Lake Tahoe Region are utilized for transit services only.

During the unmet transit needs process, TRPA consults with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), hosts public workshops, and conducts a public hearing to assess the size and location of potentially transit dependent groups and analyze the adequacy of the existing transportation systems in providing services to transit dependent groups. TRPA is also required to adopt a definition for unmet transit needs and reasonable to meet. The TRPA Governing Board adopted the following definitions:

- **Unmet Transit Needs** – Those public transportation improvements which have not been funded or implemented but have been identified through public input, the annual unmet transit needs hearing, and transit studies in the claimant’s jurisdiction to be identified for implementation in the Regional Transportation Plan.
- **Reasonable to Meet** – New, expanded, or revised transportation service to the public that offers equitable access, can be implemented within the first five-year phase of the Regional Transportation Plan, is technically feasible, would be accepted by the community, can be funded within the five-year time period, and is cost-effective.

Beginning in October 2022, TRPA, Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART), and Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) staff held pop-up booths, attended community meetings, and distributed surveys to solicit feedback from the public. TRPA released an online survey in October which remained open through December 7, 2022. The survey, in English and Spanish, asked respondents to identify existing gaps in service and provide any additional feedback on transit.

On the North Shore, TRPA in partnership with TART, Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA), and the Truckee North Tahoe Transportation Management Association (TNT/TMA), held a public workshop following the regular TNT/TMA board meeting on October 6, 2022. The meeting was advertised in advance and accessible online. Attendants were encouraged to provide feedback and fill out a paper or digital survey. Following the meeting, staff hosted an informational pop-up at the Tahoe City Transit Center. Staff also met with the Community Collaborative, the SSTAC for the North Shore, on October 4, 2022, to solicit feedback on transit needs. The survey was also sent out digitally through PCTPA and TNT/TMA channels to North Shore riders.

On the South Shore, TRPA hosted three pop-up booths in October: at the Stateline Transit Center, Y Transit Center, and Lake Tahoe Community College. Staff met with the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled, the SSTAC for the South Shore, on November 28th to solicit feedback. TRPA held a formal Public Hearing on December 7 at the Tahoe Transportation District/Commission (TTD/C) board meeting, which was advertised in accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 99238.5. Residents and visitors were encouraged to fill out a paper or online survey, discuss issues and leave comments at all events. Between October and December, TRPA collected 67 comments on unmet transit needs in the Lake Tahoe Region. The comments and operator analysis are summarized in Appendix A.

TTD and TART analyzed all individual and group comments to determine if they meet the definition of an unmet transit need and whether any of those needs are reasonable to meet. The comments are categorized into one of the following findings as defined by the California TDA program:

1. There are no unmet transit needs.
2. There are unmet transit needs that are not reasonable to meet.
3. There are unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.

Should any unmet transit needs be identified as reasonable to meet, state law requires the jurisdiction to satisfy those needs before any TDA funds may be expended for non-transit purposes. Making a formal finding regarding unmet transit needs is only required if there is a request to program the TDA funds for non-transit purposes. Because all TDA apportionments are utilized for public transit services only, TRPA is not required to complete the full unmet transit needs analysis or adopt unmet transit needs findings as outlined in the TDA Statutes and California Codes of Regulations (CCR) section 99401.5 and 99401.6. However, TRPA continues the process of identifying unmet transit needs and collecting public comments for discussions with the transit operators. Transit operators may use this information to determine potential gaps in the system and re-allocate resources as needed to fill those gaps.

Unmet Transit Needs Findings

Transit operators reviewed and responded to all comments received during public outreach. Responses and the ability of the operators to address transit needs are based on widespread community need, short-term feasibility, and funding restraints. Because all TDA funding is already used towards transit operations, most needs are unreasonable to meet without additional funding. If more funding becomes available in the future, operators can refer to the record of unmet transit needs to help determine service priorities. The following is the list of top needs identified by individuals and community groups:

Service Expansion and Operational Improvements

- **EXPAND COMMUNICATION WHEN SERVICE CHANGES (TTD)**
ANALYSIS: TTD has budgeted for a Public Information Officer (PIO) that will help enhance communications. TTD anticipates onboarding the PIO position in 2023. *This unmet transit need is reasonable to meet.*
- **PROVIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS BETWEEN NORTH SHORE AND SOUTH SHORE**
ANALYSIS: **TTD:** Operational comment. TTD agrees that connections between North Lake Tahoe and South Lake Tahoe are desirable. This would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas. **TART:** Service between North Lake Tahoe and South Lake Tahoe is not in the TART Systems Plan and is not a service priority for Placer County. **Both:** *This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.*
- **EXTEND SERVICE SPAN EARLIER IN THE MORNING AND LATER AT NIGHT**
ANALYSIS: **TTD:** Operational comment. Longer service day would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas. **TART:** TART fixed route Peak season service is scheduled to run until 2am and non-peak season service until 10pm. TART Connect lakeside zones are offered in the evenings until 12am (midnight) during peak season and 10pm during non-peak season. TART fixed

route provides a 6am service along the North Shore between Crystal Bay and Tahoe City with a 6:30am departure from Tahoe City to the West Shore. Longer service days would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas. **Both:** *This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.*

- **INCREASE TRANSIT FREQUENCY AND RELIABILITY**

ANALYSIS: **TTD:** Operational comment. Increasing frequency would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas. **TART:** 30-minute service on TART's regional routes is included in the TART systems plan, with seasonal offerings currently being funded, however continued lack of sufficient bus driver staffing has delayed implementation. **Both:** *This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.*

- **SERVICE TO RECREATIONAL SITES INCLUDING EMERALD BAY**

ANALYSIS: TTD agrees that additional connections recreation sites are desirable. However, this would require shifting existing resources and create service reductions in other areas. In addition, infrastructure improvements must be made at Emerald Bay before transit service can serve the area effectively. *This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.*

Findings and Conclusion

Operators reviewed all comments received during the 2022 unmet transit needs process. Staff found that there are unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet. There were 14 unmet transit needs for TTD's operational area and 10 unmet transit needs for TART's operational area. Only one unmet transit need is reasonable to meet at this time: expanding communication to riders in the South Shore. This need was brought to light when staff met with the SSTAC for the South Shore. TTD has budgeted for a Public Information Officer to enhance communications and will utilize this position to utilize additional information outlets, such as newspaper and email blasts to community groups. All TDA funds are currently used to fund transit operations, so a formal finding is not required. However, TRPA will continue to conduct the unmet transit needs process annually to continue coordination with transit agencies, PCPTA, the SSTAC, and the public to solicit, identify, and address transportation needs. Identified unmet transit needs will be taken into consideration during future transportation planning efforts and TRPA will continue to allocate all TDA funds only to public transportation planning and operations until all reasonable to meet transit needs are met.

Appendix A: Summarized Comments with Operator Analysis

Operator	Comment	Number of Comments	Analysis	Recommendation
TTD	Find solutions to provide door-to-door paratransit in the Winter (particularly Sky Forest Acres and Sierra Gardens). People with disabilities have difficulty traveling through snow and ice; and may choose not to travel as a result.	SSTAC on behalf of clients	Operational comment. TTD agrees but with limited resources and staffing this would require shifting existing service and adding other reductions to meet this need.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Use additional informational outlets (i.e. newspaper, email blast to community groups) when service changes to reach more riders.	SSTAC on behalf of clients	TTD has budgeted for a Public Information Officer (PIO) that will help enhance communications.	This unmet transit need is reasonable to meet.
TTD	Service from South Lake Tahoe to Placerville (for ADA compliant Medicare Dentist).	SSTAC on behalf of clients	TTD agrees that additional regional connections are desirable. This would require shifting existing resources - particularly staffing - and necessitate service reductions in other areas.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Increase frequency and reliability.	7	Operational comment. Increasing frequency would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD/TART	Public transportation options between North Shore and South Shore.	8	TTD: Operational comment. TTD agrees that connections between North Lake Tahoe and South Lake Tahoe are desirable. This would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas. TART: Service between North Lake Tahoe and South Lake Tahoe is not in the TART Systems Plan and is not a service priority for Placer County.	TTD & TART: This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Service later at night and earlier in the morning.	5	Operational comment. Longer service day would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Service to Meyers (with stops requested at the airport and Elk's Club Rd).	3	TTD operated this service in late 2018 and early 2019. Due to extremely low ridership, it was discontinued. Service to Meyers will be periodically re-evaluated in various planning efforts.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.

TTD	Service to recreational sites including trailheads and lake access points, Kirkwood, Echo Summit.	3	TTD agrees that additional connections recreation sites are desirable. However, this would require shifting existing resources and create service reductions in other areas.	This is an unmet transit need not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Service to Emerald Bay and Camp Richardson.	5	TTD agrees that additional connections recreation sites are desirable. However, this would require shifting existing resources and create service reductions in other areas. In addition, infrastructure improvements must be made at Emerald Bay before transit service can serve the area effectively.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Reinstated service to Carson City over Spooner Summit.	2	Shifting federal funding programs requirements in 2015 eliminated eligibility of the Route 21x for funding. No non-federal funding sources are available to operate this route at this time.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Service to shopping in Carson City - Walmart, Trader Joes, and Costco.	4	Currently being served by Routes 19x and 22.	This is not an unmet transit need.
TTD	Service to Zephyr Cove (for shopping at Dollar Tree, leisure).	2	TTD agrees that connections to popular Douglas County areas is desirable. However, this would require shifting existing resources and create service reductions in other areas.	This is an unmet transit need not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Service into neighborhoods (Tahoe Keys and Gardner Mountain requested).	3	TTD agrees that service to neighborhoods is important. In the current SRTP, an expansion of microtransit is being explored to better serve SLT neighborhoods. However, the fiscal feasibility is yet to be determined.	This is an unmet transit need not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Additional bike storage capacity on buses.	1	All TTD vehicles are equipped with at least two place bike racks. Three place bike racks are now available for many buses, but to switch would require a duplicative capital investment necessitating a shifting of existing capital funds away from maintenance and will result in deferred critical maintenance of TTD assets. TTD allows skiers and snowboarders to bring equipment inside buses.	This is not an unmet transit need.
TTD	Transportation to Heavenly Cal Base.	1	Heavenly Ski Resort is providing winter shuttle transportation.	This is not an unmet transit need.

TTD	Request for bathrooms open at Transit Centers.	1	Stateline currently offers bathroom access, no access at the Y.	This is not an unmet transit need.
TTD	Request for the 19x to stop at Indian Hills Community (South of Carson City).	1	TTD will evaluate this area for increased service as part of the SRTP. It is unknown if the addition would negatively impact existing resources and services.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Earlier service (6am) from South Lake to Gardnerville to reach Tilman Center stop for Dialysis.	1	Longer service day could require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas.	This is an unmet transit need not reasonable to meet at this time.
TTD	Request for 55 to stop at Y Transit Center before D Street.	1	Operational comment. The design of the intersection of and Y Transit Center restrict the ability of the 55 to stop at YTC enroute to D Street.	This is not an unmet transit need.
TTD	Request for 50 to stay on 50 and not deviate to the college, as it increases trip time.	1	Operational comment. LTCC is a charging point for our electric buses. Also it is a transfer/pickup hub.	This is not an unmet transit need.
TTD	Service from Modesto Ave to El Dorado Mental Health (near the Y).	1	Modesto Ave is served by Route 50 at Lake Tahoe Blvd and Route 55 serves El Dorado Mental Health.	This is not an unmet transit need.
TTD	Service from Tramway to Stateline/Heavenly.	1	The 22 provides service from Tramway Dr to Stateline Transit Center.	This is not an unmet need.
TART/TTD	Public transportation between North Shore and South Shore.	7	Service between North Lake Tahoe and South Lake Tahoe is not in the TART Systems Plan and is not a service priority for Placer County.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Increase frequency and reliability.	4	30 minute service on TART's regional routes is included in the TART systems plan, with seasonal offerings currently being funded, however continued lack of sufficient bus driver staffing has delayed implementation.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Service later at night and earlier in the morning (Lake Forest to Tahoma requested at 6am, Mainline requested later).	2	TART fixed route Peak season service is scheduled to run until 2am and non-peak season service until 10pm. TART Connect lakeside zones are offered in the evenings until 12am (midnight) during peak season and 10pm during non-peak season. TART fixed route provides a 6am service along the North Shore between Crystal Bay and Tahoe City with a 6:30am departure from Tahoe City to the West Shore. Longer service days would require shifting existing resources and service reductions in other areas.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Transportation from Incline Village to Reno for shopping.	1	Service between North Lake Tahoe and Reno is not in the TART Systems Plan and is not a service priority for Placer County. Comments will be forwarded to Washoe Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) for consideration.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.

TART	More direct route from Incline Village to Olympic Valley.	1	TART fixed route service offers hourly service between Incline Village and Tahoe City where a connection can be made to the Hwy. 89 route servicing Olympic Valley.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Would like option for longer routes on TART Connect without multiple changeovers to cross zones.	1	TART fixed route service offers service for longer trips outside of TART Connect zones.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Real-time announcements or displays of bus times, NextBus doesn't always work.	1	Up to date schedule and route alert information can be found at TahoeTruckeeTransit.com. The real-time information provider is currently being evaluated.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Service from Kings Beach to Kid's Zone Museum in Truckee.	Community Advocate	Service between Kings Beach and Truckee is provided via the Hwy 267 route. Connections to the KidsZone can be made via Truckee Local fixed route service.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Request for regional door to door transportation for mother's with infants who don't ride due to hardships of breastfeeding, large strollers and standing in bus stops during bad weather.	Community Advocate	Regional TART provides paratransit service for ADA certified passengers. TART Connect is a curb to curb alternative with seasonal availability and open to the general public.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.
TART	Request transportation for children in outreach programs. Currently we don't have camps because we don't have the capacity but plan to restart camps in the future. In the past we noticed that lack of transportation for kids in the summer was a barrier for scholarship families to sign up for science/art camps at the KidZone Museum. Affordable or free transportation for social service/nonprofit organizations groups to access resources, programs and events including weekday days, evenings and weekends.	Community Advocate	Regional TART provides paratransit service for ADA certified passengers and Truckee TART provides dial-a-ride service within the Town of Truckee. TART Connect is a curb to curb alternative open to the general public with seasonal and zonal availability. TART fixed route provides regional connections via Hwy. 267 and Hwy. 89 with connections to the Truckee Local route.	This unmet transit need is not reasonable to meet at this time.