

# **FY 2017-2019 Triennial Performance Audit of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)**



Submitted to:

**TAHOE REGIONAL  
PLANNING AGENCY**

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INTERNATIONAL

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## Executive Summary

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) retained Michael Baker International to conduct the agency's Transportation Development Act (TDA) performance audit for fiscal years (FY) 2016–17 through 2018–19. TRPA is required by Public Utilities Code (PUC) Section 99246 to prepare and submit an audit of its performance on a triennial basis to the California Department of Transportation as a condition of receiving TDA funding. TDA funds are expended for TRPA administration and planning of public transportation and is distributed for operations of public transit systems.

This performance audit is intended to describe how well TRPA is meeting its administrative and planning obligations under the TDA, as well as to present a description of its organizational management and efficiency. To gather information for the TDA performance audit, Michael Baker reviewed various documents, conducted interviews with agency staff, and evaluated TRPA's responsibilities, functions, and performance of the TDA guidelines and regulations.

The audit comprises several sections, including compliance with TDA requirements, status of prior audit recommendations, and review of functional areas. Findings from each section are summarized below, followed by recommendations based on the audit procedures.

### Compliance with TDA Requirements

TRPA has satisfactorily complied with applicable California legislative mandates for regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs). Of the 14 compliance areas, the agency fully complied with 12 measures. Two additional compliance areas did not apply to TRPA.

### Status of Prior Audit Recommendations

Of the five prior audit recommendations, TRPA implemented four recommendations. The recommendations pertained to holding annual public hearings in compliance with citizen participation rules of the TDA, updating urbanized farebox recovery ratios, combining the TRPA Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and the Tahoe Transportation District's Regional Coordinating Council, and strengthening the TDA claims process and monitoring of transit service. The recommendation not implemented pertained to the development of TDA rules for Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding and is being carried forward in this audit for further consideration and implementation.

### Functional Review

1. The TDA administration work element of the Overall Work Program remained consistent during the audit period and helps comply with federal transportation planning factors, including increasing the accessibility and mobility of people and promoting efficient system

management and operation. The allocation of TDA administrative and planning revenue has been expanded to fund a portion of all work elements.

2. The Regional Transportation Plan process provides TRPA with the knowledge and tools to better manage congestion in the region. The plan in effect during the audit period is the *Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy* adopted by the TRPA and Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization Governing Boards in April 2017. *Linking Tahoe* has a dedicated webpage accessed through the TRPA website (<http://www.trpa.org/regionaltransportationplan/>) as well as an interactive transportation web-based map. An updated public participation plan provided guidance for outreach.
3. TRPA implemented an online dashboard as part of its Productivity Improvement Program initiative. The online dashboard is accessed at <https://monitoring.laketahoeinfo.org/Transit>. The dashboard reflects the coordination of TRPA and the two transit operators in corridor and transit planning.
4. In February 2018, TRPA developed a TDA Handbook. The TDA Handbook outlines the processes for allocating and distributing funds, determining which jurisdictions are eligible for transit and bike and pedestrian claims, responding to fiscal and performance audits, conducting public outreach, and coordinating the unmet transit needs process. As part of the overhaul, the TDA application was revised.
5. With designation of the Tahoe region as an urbanized area by the federal transportation act, additional rules and coordination between TRPA and the two transit systems are required for successful urbanized formula grant procurement. To this end, the three parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the coordination of transit planning and programming of federal funds.

## Recommendations

Three recommendations are provided to improve TRPA’s administration and management of the TDA and its organization.

Performance Audit Recommendation	Background
<p><b>#1. Consider development of TDA rules for Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding.</b></p>	<p>In February 2018, TRPA developed a TDA Handbook. The TDA Handbook outlines the processes for allocating and distributing funds, determining which jurisdictions are eligible for transit and bike and pedestrian claims, responding to fiscal and performance audits, conducting public outreach, and coordinating the unmet transit needs process. While the handbook incorporates the recent changes to the TDA statute, it does not contain rules or procedures for Article 3</p>

Performance Audit Recommendation	Background
	<p>bicycle and pedestrian funding; rather, the handbook states TRPA does not authorize funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.</p> <p><i>Linking Tahoe</i>, the 2017 Regional Transportation Plan adopted in April 2017, is the transportation element of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan and prioritizes bicycling, walking, and transit, modes that are interlinked and essential for the Tahoe region. The TDA has eligible funding programs not only for transit, but for bicycle and pedestrian projects. An eligible use of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) within the TDA revenue program at TRPA’s discretion is for bicycle and pedestrian projects under TDA Article 3. This off-the-top apportionment is limited to 2 percent of LTF and could be available to the local jurisdictions (City of South Lake Tahoe and Placer and El Dorado Counties) for such projects. However, TRPA has indicated that other funding sources are available and used for non-motorized projects, and that the LTF is used primarily to support public transit operations.</p> <p>In light of this, TRPA should consider establishing rules and regulations for LTF for bicycle/pedestrian projects to provide general parameters and direction for this funding source. This could include determining method of apportionment among eligible recipients and ensuring the projects are linked to transit usage to enhance accessibility and contribute towards improved transit performance. An example is a bus stop improvement program.</p> <p>TRPA has flexibility and oversight in working with the transit operators and the local jurisdictions in funding both local and regional projects and providing matching funds. A sampling of guidance to how the LTF pedestrian/bicycle funds could be allocated include by population, call for projects, rotating use of the fund, and/or building a reserve balance for use for regionally significant projects. A potential method to allocate nonmotorized funding from the TDA should be designed to further the goals and objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan and provide accessibility and connectivity to public transit.</p>
<p><b>#2. Encourage frequent stakeholder engagement in the transit productivity</b></p>	<p>One of the compliance requirements for regional transportation planning agencies is the establishment or identification of a productivity improvement committee that monitors the performance of local transit systems. TRPA implemented an online dashboard as part of its Productivity Improvement Program initiative. The dashboard</p>

Performance Audit Recommendation	Background
<p><b>improvement process.</b></p>	<p>reflects the coordination of TRPA and the two transit operators in corridor and transit planning. The dashboard is in its early growth phase and TRPA plans to continue its investment in the system to regularly monitor transit operator performance. An example of continued growth of the dashboard is assembling the transit performance data into an annual report of trends that can be shared with involved groups such as the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council.</p> <p>Consistent transit rider surveys and operations data also help to determine the need for additional services and operating hours. Given the Tahoe region’s new urbanized status, TRPA set the required farebox recovery ratio of the fixed-route services for the Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit and Tahoe Transportation District at 15 percent for purposes of the TDA and granted both transit operators a period of five years to meet attainment. Transit data and trends, when shared with other stakeholders beyond transit agency staff, could enlighten methods of service delivery. With the revamped Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and a more regular meeting schedule, TRPA should have a set time established during the meeting and tap the advisory groups on the North and South Shores to review transit performance trends from the dashboard and productivity improvements, whether from an annual report or other data presentation. Broader discussion of transit performance and services on a more frequent basis at these meetings, and not limited to the unmet transit needs process, can provide additional input from different perspectives on transit’s role and delivery within the Tahoe transportation network. With the higher farebox standard to maintain, increased cost for operations, and movement toward free fares, additional challenges to transit service will remain. On-going review and discussion of transit within these user groups will help in coordinated efforts.</p>

## Section I

### Introduction – Initial Review of TRPA Functions

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) retained Michael Baker International to conduct the agency's Transportation Development Act (TDA) performance audit covering the most recent triennial period, fiscal years (FY) 2016–17 through 2018–19. TRPA is required by Public Utilities Code (PUC) Section 99246 to prepare and submit an audit of its performance on a triennial basis to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a condition of receiving TDA funding.

This performance audit is intended to describe how well TRPA is meeting its administrative and planning obligations under the TDA.

#### Overview of the Lake Tahoe Region and TRPA

The Lake Tahoe region is located on the border of the states of California and Nevada, between the Sierra Crest and the Carson Range. Approximately two-thirds of the region is in California, with one-third in the state of Nevada. The Tahoe region contains an area of about 501 square miles; approximately 191 square miles comprise the surface waters of Lake Tahoe, and another 37-square-mile urban boundary contains commercial and residential activity. Over 80 percent of the land area in the Lake Tahoe Basin is publicly owned and represents a major recreation attraction.

Based on the 2010 Census, the resident population of the Tahoe region was 54,862. This is a significant decline from the population of 62,894 estimated by the 2000 Census. Of the 54,862 figure, 41,176 people reside within the California portion, while the Nevada side makes up the remaining 13,686. The region's full-time resident population is dwarfed by the large number of recreation visitors that come to enjoy Lake Tahoe. Due to high levels of visitation, the average daily population of the area can be four times the permanent resident population, fluctuating by season and day of the week.

The TRPA jurisdiction includes the Lake Tahoe watershed, which encompasses California and Nevada, and four counties (Placer County and El Dorado County in California, and Washoe County and Douglas County in Nevada), the City of South Lake Tahoe (which is in El Dorado County), and a small portion of the Carson City rural area. While generally rural in nature, the South Lake Tahoe portion of the basin includes some high-rise casinos and more compact development.

TRPA was created through a Bi-State Compact in 1969 as an effort to preserve Lake Tahoe's environmental quality. TRPA was the first bi-state regional environmental planning agency in the country. The compact, as revised in 1980, gave TRPA the authority to adopt environmental quality standards and to enforce ordinances designed to achieve the thresholds. In 2013, California and Nevada passed legislation to update the Bi-State Compact.

The region holds three integrated regional transportation planning authorities (RTPA): 1) Tahoe Regional Planning Compact, 2) the RTPA for the California portion of the Lake Tahoe basin, and 3) the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Tahoe region. TRPA responsibilities incorporate a wide variety of planning activities, including transportation planning. In 2019, TRPA marked its 50th anniversary. The occasion came during a period of great change as well as opportunity at Lake Tahoe—change in the region’s environment, economy, demographics, and communities.

The TRPA Governing Board is composed of 15 members: 7 from California, 7 from Nevada, and 1 nonvoting presidential appointee. Six members, who are locally elected officials or their designees, represent the units of local government. The Bi-State Compact provides for a majority of the seats to be held by citizens from outside the Tahoe region who represent at-large voters from the two states. This ensures that the board reviews issues not only from a local perspective, but also from statewide and nationwide viewpoints.

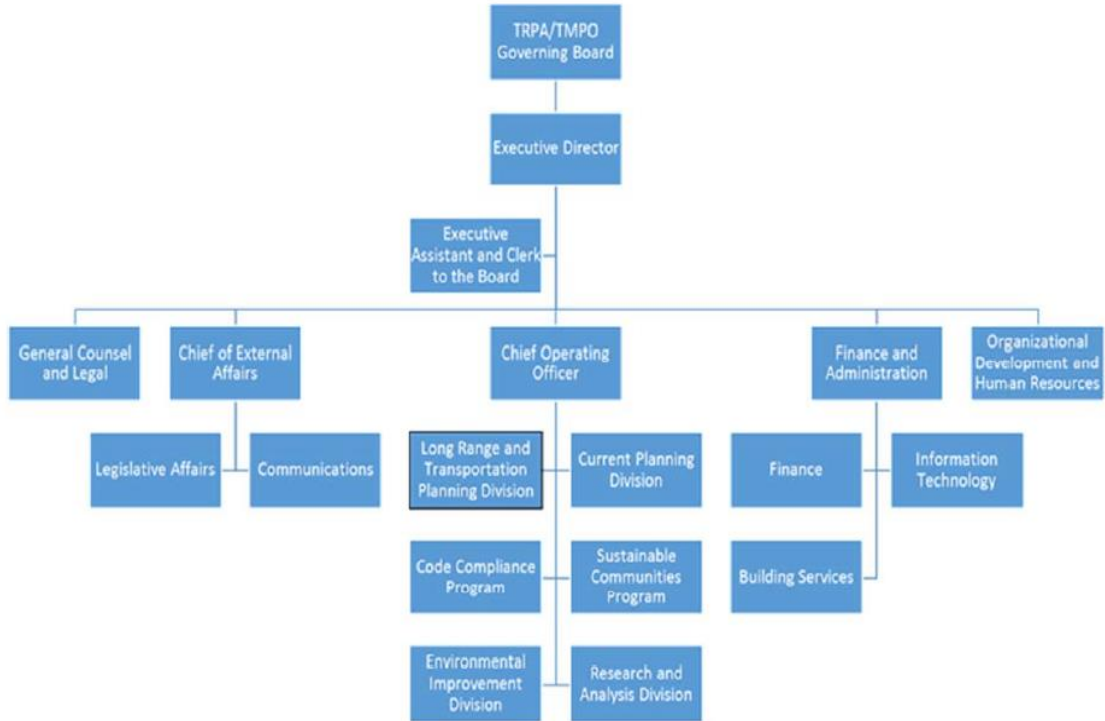
In its capacity serving as the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) under federal law, TRPA’s role is primarily for planning and financial programming. The three primary products required of an MPO by federal rule are a Regional Transportation Plan, Federal Transportation Improvement Program, and an Overall Work Program. The TMPO Governing Board is composed of the voting members of the TRPA Governing Board, with the addition of a voting representative of the US Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

Under California law, TRPA is the designated RTPA for the Tahoe region. When sitting as such, the TRPA Governing Board indicates so when taking a policy action, but no changes to the membership of the Governing Board occur. As the RTPA, TRPA is charged with coordinating with Caltrans (and federal government) in developing a Regional Transportation Plan, a Regional Transportation Improvement Program to account for California state funding, and the allocation of California state transit funding. One of TRPA’s roles as a RTPA is to allocate TDA funds from both the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and the State Transit Assistance (STA) fund. The TDA funds are primarily allocated to two public transit operators in the Tahoe Basin: transit service on the south shore operated by the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD), and north shore transit service provided by the Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART), which is operated by Placer County Department of Public Works. It is the responsibility of TRPA to establish rules and regulations to provide for administration and allocation of the LTF and STA in accordance with applicable sections of the PUC, Government Code, and Administrative Code included in the TDA.

With its various responsibilities, TRPA is composed of multiple divisions. TDA related duties are shared among staff in the transportation planning and finance divisions, with administration of the TDA undertaken by a transportation planner and grant specialist. An organizational flow chart of the agency is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1**  
**TRPA Organizational Flow Chart**



Source: FY 2019-20 Overall Work Program

TRPA’s offices are located at 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada. Governing Board meetings are usually held the fourth Wednesday of every month and rotate equally between the north and south shores.

## **Audit Methodology**

To gather information for this performance audit, Michael Baker accomplished the following activities:

- Document review: Reviewed documents, including various files and internal reports, committee agendas, and public documents.
- Interviews: Interviewed TRPA staff and staff from the transit systems to gain their perspectives about the agency's efficiency and economy in relation to TDA administration and transportation planning responsibilities.
- Analysis: Evaluated the documents and the interview responses as they related to TRPA's responsibilities, functions, and performance to TDA guidelines and regulations.

The activities described above were intended to provide Michael Baker with the information necessary to assess TRPA's efficiency and effectiveness in two key areas:

- Compliance with state TDA requirements
- Organizational management and efficiency

The remainder of this report is divided into four chapters. In Section II, Michael Baker reviews the compliance requirements of the TDA administrative process. Section III describes TRPA's responses to the recommendations in the previous performance audit. In Section IV, Michael Baker provides a detailed review of TRPA's functions, while Section V summarizes the audit findings and recommendations.

## Section II

### TRPA Compliance Requirements

Fourteen key compliance requirements are suggested in the *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities* to assess an agency’s conformance with the TDA. Findings concerning TRPA’s compliance with state legislative requirements are summarized in Table II-1.

TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix		
TRPA Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
All transportation operators and city or county governments which have responsibility for serving a given area, in total, claim no more than those Local Transportation Fund (LTF) monies apportioned to that area.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99231	<p>TRPA accounts for its claimants’ areas of apportionment and has not allowed those claimants to claim more than what is apportioned for their areas.</p> <p>TRPA receives LTF proportional to its population in both and Placer and El Dorado Counties. Population is based on annual California Department of Finance population estimates to determine each local jurisdiction’s apportionments. Each year, TRPA adopts a resolution of the apportionments and the subsequent claims by the transit operators.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied</b></p>
The RTPA has adopted rules and regulations delineating procedures for the submission of claims for facilities provided for the	Public Utilities Code, Sections 99233.3 and 99234	TRPA has not adopted rules and regulations pertaining to claims submitted for pedestrian and bicycle projects. Historically, TRPA has received claims for transit operations only. The final TDA

<p align="center"><b>TABLE II-1</b> <b>Compliance Requirements Matrix</b></p>		
<p align="center"><b>TRPA Compliance Requirements</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Reference</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Compliance Efforts</b></p>
<p>exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles.</p>		<p>estimates and apportionments each year show the jurisdictional share of funds allotted to TART and TTD.</p> <p>Considering the growth and emphasis on active transportation planning for pedestrian and bicycle projects that complement alternative travel modes in the Tahoe region, TRPA should consider the potential for apportioning LTF for these uses.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Not applicable</b></p>
<p>The RTPA has established a social services transportation advisory council. The RTPAs must ensure that there is a citizen participation process which includes at least an annual public hearing.</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Sections 99238 and 99238.5</p>	<p>TRPA has established a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) responsible for annual participation in the identification of transit needs in the jurisdiction, including unmet transit needs. The unmet needs process entails a public outreach program consisting of annual workshops in El Dorado and Placer Counties to solicit input regarding unmet transit needs.</p> <p>Bylaws adopted by TRPA outline the SSTAC’s purpose and duties, membership requirements, responsibilities, citizen participation and unmet transit needs findings process. The SSTAC conforms to the stakeholder categories pursuant to PUC Section 99238.</p>

TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix		
TRPA Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		<p>To accurately capture the needs of both North and South Shore communities, the TRPA SSTAC is split into two separate councils. The South Shore biannual SSTAC meetings are held concurrently with the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled. North Shore quarterly SSTAC meetings are held before Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee meetings with a subset transportation focus group.</p> <p>Although a formal unmet needs process is not required given that no TDA is used for streets and roads in the region, TRPA has continued the process of identifying unmet transit needs. The transit operators can use this information to possibly reallocate existing resources to meet those needs.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied</b></p>
<p>The RTPA has annually identified, analyzed, and recommended potential productivity improvements which could lower the operating costs of those operators which operate at least 50 percent of their vehicle service miles within the RTPA's jurisdiction. Recommendations include,</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Section 99244</p>	<p>TRPA participates in a number of activities in order to review productivity improvements of the transit systems. The TDA performance audit commissioned by TRPA provides a means for analyzing transit productivity. Also, TRPA, through the two transit systems, participates in the update of transit service plans that guide transit activity.</p>

TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix		
TRPA Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
<p>but are not limited to, those made in the performance audit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A committee for the purpose of providing advice on productivity improvements may be formed.</li> <li>• The operator has made a reasonable effort to implement improvements recommended by the RTPA, as determined by the RTPA, or else the operator has not received an allocation which exceeds its prior year allocation.</li> </ul>		<p>TRPA created an online platform whereby transit performance data is uploaded showing annual statistics and costs. Updated service plans were developed for both TART and TTD in 2016, as well as a current Lake Tahoe and Area Transit Master Plan creating a vision for transit. The TTD Short-Range Transit Plan was adopted in October 2017 and the SSTAC was involved in the update of the Lake Tahoe Region Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, adopted in May 2019.</p> <p><i>Linking Tahoe</i>, the 2017 Regional Transportation Plan approved in April 2017, is the transportation element of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan that prioritizes bicycling, walking, and transit.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied</b></p>
<p>The RTPA has ensured that all claimants to whom it allocates Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds submits to it and to the State Controller an annual certified fiscal and compliance audit within 180 days after the end of the fiscal year (December 27). The RTPA may grant an extension of up to 90 days as it deems necessary (March 26).</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Section 99245</p>	<p>TRPA maintains records of all TDA claimants that submit an annual certified fiscal and compliance audit. This process includes copies of final audits being forwarded to TRPA. The firms Davis Farr LLP, Eide Bailly LLP, and Vavrinek, Trine, Day &amp; Co., LLP were retained to conduct the fiscal audits of the transit systems.</p> <p>Davis Farr (FYs 2017 thru 2019) prepared the fiscal audits of TTD, and Vavrinek, Trine, Day &amp; Co.</p>

<b>TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>TRPA Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
		(FYs 2017 & 2018) and Eide Bailly LLP (FY 2019) prepared the fiscal audits of TART for the three-year period. All audits were submitted within 180 days after the end of the fiscal year.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
The RTPA has designated an independent entity to conduct a performance audit of operators and itself (for the current and previous triennium). For operators, the audit was made and calculated the required performance indicators, and the audit report was transmitted to the entity that allocates the operator's TDA monies and to the RTPA within 12 months after the end of the triennium. If an operator's audit was not transmitted by the start of the second fiscal year following the last fiscal year of the triennium, TDA funds were not allocated to that operator for that or subsequent fiscal years until the audit was transmitted.	Public Utilities Code, Sections 99246 and 99248	For the current three-year period, TRPA has retained an independent entity, Michael Baker International, to conduct the audits of TRPA and the two transit systems. The transit audits calculate the required performance indicators.  Michael Baker International was retained to conduct the previous audit for the three fiscal years that ended June 30, 2016.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
The RTPA has submitted a copy of its performance audit to the Director of the California Department of Transportation. In addition,	Public Utilities Code, Section 99246(c)	TRPA submitted its performance audit to Caltrans via email dated June 27, 2017, for the triennial period FYs 2013–14 through 2015–16. The attached cover

<b>TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>TRPA Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
the RTPA has certified in writing to the Director that the performance audits of operators located in the area under its jurisdiction have been completed.		letter accompanied the audits with a statement that each performance audit, including the transit operator audits, was performed in accordance with California PUC.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
The performance audit of the operator providing public transportation services shall include, but not be limited to, a verification of the operator's operating cost per passenger, operating cost per vehicle service hour, passengers per vehicle service mile, and vehicle service hours per employee, as defined in Section 99247. The performance audit shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of the needs and types of passengers being served and the employment of part-time drivers and the contracting with common carriers of persons operating under a franchise or license to provide services during peak hours, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 99260.2.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99246(d)	The performance audits of the transit systems include all required TDA performance measures plus additional indicators to further assess each system's efficiency, effectiveness, and economy with the use of TDA funds.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
The RTPA has established rules and regulations regarding revenue ratios for	Public Utilities Code, Sections 99260	The six-year federal transportation bill known as the Fixing America's Surface



<b>TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>TRPA Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
<p>transportation operators providing services in urbanized and new urbanized areas.</p>		<p>Transportation Act (FAST Act) established the Tahoe Basin as an urbanized area. TART and TTD are recipients of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5307 urbanized funds while TRPA, serving as the metropolitan planning organization, is responsible for the planning and programming of these funds.</p> <p>Given the Tahoe region’s new urbanized status, TRPA adopted an urbanized area farebox ratio on September 27, 2017, pursuant to Resolution 2017-14.</p> <p>TART and TTD are currently required by law to maintain a farebox recovery ratio of 20 percent for fixed-route services and 10 percent for demand-response services to remain eligible for TDA funds.</p> <p>PUC Section 99270.2 allows for the TRPA to grant up to a five-year exemption to operators serving a newly designated urbanized area, in order to meet the updated ratio of fare revenues to operating costs.</p> <p>The TRPA Board set the required farebox recovery ratio of TART and TTD fixed-route services at 15 percent for purposes of the TDA and granted both transit operators a period of five years</p>

TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix		
TRPA Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		<p>(through September 27, 2022) to meet the required farebox recovery ratio. The required farebox recovery ratio for demand-response services will remain at 10 percent. During the audit period, the rural fare revenue ratio continued to apply.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied</b></p>
<p>The RTPA has adopted criteria, rules, and regulations for the evaluation of claims under Article 4.5 of the TDA and the determination of the cost-effectiveness of the proposed community transit services.</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Section 99275.5</p>	<p>Article 4.5 claims may be filed for community transit services, including services for those who cannot use conventional transit services, such as disabled persons. TRPA has not adopted rules and regulations pertaining to these claims, as historically TRPA has received claims for public transit operations only. The final TDA estimates and apportionments each year show the jurisdiction share of funds allotted to TART and TTD for public transit. However, it is noted that TTD acts as the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency for the Tahoe Basin, which is one such eligible claimant under Article 4.5.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Not applicable</b></p>
<p>State transit assistance funds received by the RTPA are allocated only for transportation planning and</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Sections 99310.5 and 99313.3, and Proposition 116</p>	<p>TRPA allocates STA funds for transit usage only pursuant to state statutes. The STA revenue under PUC Section 99313 is allocated for transit purposes on</p>

TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix		
TRPA Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
mass transportation purposes.		the basis of population within the TRPA jurisdiction in Placer and El Dorado Counties.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
The amount received pursuant to Public Utilities Code, Section 99314.3 by each RTPA for state transit assistance is allocated to the operators in the area of its jurisdiction as allocated by the State Controller’s Office.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99314.3	STA funds under this section are allocated to the operators based on the estimates provided in the State Controller's Office Quarter State Transit Assistance Allocation. The allocation is based on the revenue of each operator to the total revenue statewide.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
If TDA funds are allocated to purposes not directly related to public or specialized transportation services, or facilities for exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles, the transit planning agency has annually: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulted with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) established pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 99238;</li> <li>• Identified transit needs, including:</li> </ul>	Public Utilities Code, Section 99401.5	While TRPA is not subject to the formal unmet transit needs process, the agency maintains definitions of "unmet transit need" and "reasonable to meet" adopted by the Governing Board. The definitions are documented in the <i>Unmet Transit Needs Report</i> prepared by TRPA. TRPA staff consults with the SSTAC as required by law.  TRPA, TTD, and TART collaboratively conduct at least two unmet transit needs workshops each year to solicit community input on transit needs. The annual workshops are held in El Dorado and Placer County between September and

TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix		
TRPA Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Groups that are transit-dependent or transit-disadvantaged;</li> <li>✓ Adequacy of existing transit services to meet the needs of groups identified; and</li> <li>✓ Analysis of potential alternatives to provide transportation alternatives.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted or reaffirmed definitions of "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet";</li> <li>• Identified the unmet transit needs and those needs that are reasonable to meet;</li> <li>• Adopted a finding that there are no unmet transit needs, that there are no unmet needs that are reasonable to meet, or that there are unmet transit needs including needs that are reasonable to meet.</li> </ul> <p>If a finding is adopted that there are unmet transit needs, these needs must have been funded before an</p>		<p>November. If needs are found, a determination is made as to whether or not those needs are reasonable to meet.</p> <p>The data for the report is compiled from comments received by the SSTAC meetings. To accurately capture the needs of both North and South Shore communities, the TRPA SSTAC is split into two separate councils. The South Shore biannual SSTAC meetings are held concurrently with the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled. North Shore quarterly SSTAC meetings are held before Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee meetings with a subset transportation focus group.</p> <p>In addition, TRPA has been holding annual public hearings through the Tahoe Transportation Commission, TRPA’s transportation advisory body, during the annual unmet transit needs process. Staff presents findings from the unmet transit needs process and public outreach and solicits input from the community.</p> <p>TRPA will continue to allocate all TDA-LTF apportionments available for public transportation to transit services only until all reasonable to meet transit needs are met.</p>

<b>TABLE II-1 Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>TRPA Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
allocation was made for streets and roads.		<b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
The RTPA has caused an audit of its accounts and records to be performed for each fiscal year by the county auditor, or a certified public accountant. The RTPA must transmit the resulting audit report to the State Controller within 12 months of the end of each fiscal year and must be performed in accordance with the Basic Audit Program and Report Guidelines for California Special Districts prescribed by the State Controller. The audit shall include a determination of compliance with the TDA and accompanying rules and regulations. Financial statements may not commingle with other revenues or funds. The RTPA must maintain fiscal and accounting records and supporting papers for at least four years following fiscal year close.	California Administrative Code, Section 6662	TRPA has had an audit of its accounts and records performed for each fiscal year by a certified public accountant (CPA). The CPA firm Davis Farr LLP was retained to conduct the fiscal audits.  The completion dates were:  FY 2017: December 5, 2017 FY 2018: December 11, 2018 FY 2019: December 10, 2019  TRPA also maintains fiscal and accounting records and supporting papers for at least four years following fiscal year close.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>

## Findings from RTPA Compliance Requirements Matrix

TRPA has satisfactorily complied with applicable state legislative mandates for RTPAs. Of the 14 compliance areas, the agency fully complied with 12 measures. Two additional compliance areas did not apply to TRPA.

During the audit period, TRPA enhanced its citizen participation process as it pertains to unmet transit needs. While TRPA is not subject to the formal unmet transit needs process, the agency maintains definitions of "unmet transit need" and "reasonable to meet" adopted by the Governing Board. The definitions are documented in the *Unmet Transit Needs Report* prepared by TRPA. To accurately capture the needs of both North and South Shore communities, the TRPA SSTAC is split into two separate councils. The South Shore biannual SSTAC meetings are held concurrently with the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled. North Shore quarterly SSTAC meetings are held before Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee meetings with a subset transportation focus group.

TRPA established rules and regulations regarding fare revenue ratios for the transit operators with consideration for the Tahoe Basin being recognized as an urbanized area by recent federal transportation law. The basin was recognized as an urbanized area on December 4, 2015. Given this new status, TRPA adopted an urbanized area farebox ratio on September 27, 2017, pursuant to Resolution 2017-14. The TRPA Board set the required farebox recovery ratio of TART and TTD fixed-route services at 15 percent for purposes of the TDA and granted both transit operators a period of five years (through September 27, 2022) to meet the required farebox recovery ratio. The required farebox recovery ratio for demand-response services will remain at 10 percent. During the audit period, the rural fare revenue ratio continued to apply.

The compliance areas that did not apply to TRPA during the audit period pertained to establishing rules and regulations for other potential claims to TDA funds, including for pedestrian and bicycle projects under Article 3 and community transit services under Article 4.5. According to the TRPA TDA Handbook, the agency will continue to allocate all TDA-LTF apportionments available for public transportation to transit services only. However, with emphasis on active transportation planning for pedestrian and bicycle projects that complement alternative travel modes in the Tahoe region, TRPA should consider the potential for apportioning LTF for these active transportation uses.

## Section III

### Responses to Prior Triennial Performance Audit Recommendations

This chapter describes TRPA’s response to the recommendations included in the prior triennial performance audit. Each prior recommendation is described and followed by a discussion of TRPA’s efforts to implement the recommendation. Conclusions concerning the extent to which the recommendations have been adopted by the agency are then presented.

#### Prior Recommendation 1

Hold annual public hearings in compliance with citizen participation rules of the TDA.

Background: In the past, TRPA, in coordination and cooperation with the TTD Regional Coordinating Council and the Truckee North Tahoe Transportation Management Association, participated in existing workshops to solicit input regarding transit needs each year. In carrying forward a partially implemented recommendation from the last audit, the TDA rules (PUC Section 99238.5) require an annual public hearing with proper notice given at least 30 days in advance through publication in a newspaper of general circulation, and including the date, place, and specific purpose of the hearing. TRPA also must send written notification to those persons and organizations which have an interest in the subject. From these requirements, a public hearing is traditionally held during a regular meeting of the RTPA board—in this case, the TRPA Governing Board, as the notification process has been undertaken and board meetings comply with all open meeting rules. This public hearing, in addition to the existing workshops in the North and South Shore areas, would meet compliance with the TDA-mandated citizen participation process.

Actions taken by TRPA: TRPA has been holding annual public hearings through the Tahoe Transportation Commission, TRPA’s transportation advisory body, during the annual unmet transit needs process and reflecting changes to the SSTAC process. Staff presents unmet needs and conducts public outreach to solicit input from the community. Advance notice is given to local SSTAC groups and general notice is advertised when the board packet is released ahead of the meeting. To accurately capture the needs of both North and South Shore communities, the TRPA SSTAC is split into two separate councils. The South Shore biannual SSTAC meetings are held concurrently with the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled. North Shore quarterly SSTAC meetings are held before Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee meetings with a subset transportation focus group.

Conclusion: This recommendation has been implemented.

#### Prior Recommendation 2

Determine updated farebox recovery ratios for the transit operators due to urbanized status.

**Background:** The Tahoe region received urbanized designation from the federal transportation act. One impact from this designation is that the TDA farebox recovery standard increases from a 10 percent rural standard to a 20 percent urban standard. The farebox ratio is characterized as the ratio of passenger fares plus local funds to eligible operating costs. Both TART and TTD were subject to the rural farebox recovery ratio until the change in urban status. TRPA has a responsibility to update the farebox recovery standard. Several options are available for implementation of the updated standard, including resetting the ratio straight to 20 percent, allowing a certain number of years for the operators to meet the new ratio (up to five years), setting the urban ratio at a minimum of 15 percent, and/or a combination of options. The lower standard of 15 percent is allowed by the TDA as the population of the region is less than 500,000. Under law, TRPA must provide specific reasons prior to setting this lower farebox ratio. TRPA and the transit operators should discuss the options and provide an updated farebox ratio to meet compliance as an urbanized operator.

**Actions taken by TRPA:** TRPA established rules and regulations regarding fare revenue ratios for the transit operators with consideration for the Tahoe Basin being recognized as an urbanized area by recent federal transportation law. The basin was recognized as an urbanized area on December 4, 2015. Given this new status, TRPA adopted an urbanized area farebox ratio on September 27, 2017, pursuant to Resolution 2017-14. The TRPA Board set the required farebox recovery ratio of TART and TTD fixed-route services at 15 percent for purposes of the TDA and granted both transit operators a period of five years (through September 27, 2022) to meet the required farebox recovery ratio.

**Conclusion:** This recommendation has been implemented.

### **Prior Recommendation 3**

Evaluate the merit of combining the TRPA Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) and the TTD Regional Coordinating Council (RCC).

**Background:** The SSTAC, while statutorily required by the TDA to be created by regional transportation planning agencies such as TRPA, had not met regularly in the past to discuss transit needs. Rather, unmet transit needs were largely undertaken through the involvement of the TTD RCC. The RCC assisted the SSTAC while including members of the SSTAC as well as a larger audience of stakeholders involved in human service transportation. Given that SSTAC members also participated on the RCC, there were examples statewide where these two related committees have been combined to create efficiencies and still meet TDA regulations. For this integration to occur in the Tahoe region, the SSTAC bylaws with respect to setting forth specific requirements for committee membership and term limits would need to be integrated into bylaws of the RCC. The expanded membership of the RCC would be beyond the required positions of the SSTAC. A merged transit advisory body to serve both TTD and TRPA would provide efficiencies in meeting both statutory and public input requirements.



Actions taken by TRPA: Beginning in 2018, TTD disbanded the RCC and TRPA reestablished the SSTAC. Given that the Lake Tahoe region is a relatively small region with only 55,000 full-time residents and two different transit systems split between the South Shore and North Shore, TRPA decided to effectively create two different SSTAC groups: one to serve North Lake Tahoe and TART, and one to serve South Lake Tahoe and TTD.

TRPA coordinated with existing social services groups to join their meetings biannually or quarterly with a focus on transportation to improve efficiency and effectiveness. TRPA does not have officially appointed members on its SSTAC groups, but contends the right social services communities are represented at every meeting and that useful feedback is being received to include in its transportation plans. Minutes from its SSTAC meetings can be found online: <https://www.trpa.org/transportation/funding/sstac/>.

Conclusion: This recommendation has been implemented.

#### Prior Recommendation 4

Continue strengthening the TDA claims process and monitoring of transit service.

Background: In the prior triennial period, TRPA has made improvements to its TDA claims process through such steps as developing a checklist of key dates for carrying out various reporting functions and working with the transit operators to submit all required documentation with their funding claims. In striving toward standardizing the claim form and ensuring the transit operators meet compliance, it was suggested that TRPA add a checklist of required documentation to provide backup to the claim, as well as a separate standard assurances checklist in the TDA claims packet. These additional complementary items to the claim form would assist TRPA in its ability to further standardize the TDA process and receive all requested documentation.

Monitoring performance and productivity of TART and TTD are also under TRPA's purview. One of the key dates listed in the TRPA claims process is when the operators are expected to submit a report on operations to TRPA. Prior to investment in a dashboard program by TRPA, this was not occurring. The transit performance data provides TRPA with sufficient information to monitor transit productivity as a responsibility of an RTPA and develop operating trends on a timelier basis.

Actions taken by TRPA: TRPA updated the TDA claims process in 2018 with a new claims packet and checklist. Operators have been using the updated claims packet to submit TDA claims for the past two years. The new claim packet is available online at [http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-TDA-Claims-Packet\\_FINAL-Fillable.pdf](http://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-TDA-Claims-Packet_FINAL-Fillable.pdf).

In 2018, TRPA invested in a transit monitoring dashboard on its existing Lake Tahoe Info monitoring portal. The dashboard contains data on individual routes and has a built-in platform for TTD and TART to submit operations data online to TRPA. Operators submit ridership data every month and annual operations data once per year on the Lake Tahoe Info transit website.

TRPA has begun using that data to monitor performance and productivity. TRPA staff will begin recommending productivity improvements to the transit operators and using the TDA claim application to track efforts made by the operators to address the recommendations.

Conclusion: This recommendation has been implemented.

Prior Recommendation 5

Consider development of TDA rules for Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding.

Background: The Regional Transportation Plan includes public transit and nonmotorized travel as means to help ease congestion, as both are interlinked and essential for the Tahoe region. The TDA has eligible funding programs not only for transit, but for bicycle and pedestrian projects. An eligible use of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) within the TDA revenue program at TRPA's discretion is for bicycle and pedestrian projects under TDA Article 3. This off-the-top apportionment is limited to 2 percent of LTF and could be available to the local jurisdictions (City of South Lake Tahoe and Placer and El Dorado Counties) for such projects. TRPA should consider developing rules and regulations for possible use of LTF for bicycle/pedestrian projects, including method of apportionment and ensuring the projects are linked to transit usage. TRPA will have a level of flexibility and oversight in working with the transit operators and the local jurisdictions in funding both local and regional projects and providing matching funds. A sampling of how the funds could be allocated include by population, call for projects, rotating use of the fund, and/or building a reserve balance for use for regionally significant projects. A method to allocate nonmotorized funding from the TDA should be considered and implemented to further the goals and objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan and connections to public transit.

Actions taken by TRPA: At this time, TRPA allocates 100 percent of TDA funding to transit capital and operations improvements. There are several unmet transit needs that are not yet reasonable to meet with existing transit funding. Until those needs are met, TRPA will continue to allocate TDA funding to transit.

Conclusion:

This recommendation has not been implemented and is carried forward in this audit for further consideration and implementation.

## Section IV

### Detailed Review of TRPA Functions

In this section, a detailed assessment of TRPA’s functions and performance as an RTPA during this audit period is provided. Adapted from Caltrans’s *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities*, TRPA’s activities can be divided into the following activities:

- Administration and Management
- Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination
- TDA Claimant Relationships and Oversight
- Marketing and Transportation Alternatives
- Grant Applications and Management

#### **Administration and Management**

TRPA follows its vision and mission for the decisions made and actions taken:<sup>1</sup> *Our vision is for a Lake environment that is sustainable, healthy, and safe for the community and future generations. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency leads the cooperative effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Region, while improving local communities, and people’s interactions with our irreplaceable environment.*

The Lake Tahoe region contains various federal, state, and local transportation planning authorities that do not always align due to various institutional and policy limitations. The region’s planning complexity requires an institutional structure that relies significantly on the coordination and collaboration among transportation and land use planning partners. TRPA is unique because of its regional bi-state responsibilities under the Bi-State Compact for land use planning, transportation planning, project review and approval, enforcement of TRPA ordinances, and the achievement of environmental goals. The TMPO is responsible for taking the required actions under federal regulations regarding MPOs. The monthly TMPO meeting is held during the TRPA meetings, so notices and agendas are mailed at the same time. The TRPA Board adjourns so that the TMPO Board may convene after being joined by the US Forest Service representative. Once TMPO actions are taken, the TMPO Board adjourns and the TRPA Board reconvenes without the representative.

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<sup>1</sup> TRPA website <http://www.trpa.org/about-trpa/>

It is important to note that these two policy bodies, although including many of the same individuals, have different missions and responsibilities. TRPA's overriding obligation is adherence to the compact, including attaining and maintaining environmental thresholds. The TMPO's mission, on the other hand, is to provide policy decisions on transportation plans and programs. Integration of the land use and transportation planning process is in place to support the TRPA mission and policies through the TMPO and RTPA authorities and planning requirements.

### Overall Work Program

The Overall Work Program (OWP) serves as TRPA/TMPO's annual budget and program guide and is prepared to present a comprehensive plan of work that is funded through state and federal transportation planning grants administered by Caltrans and Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT). The OWP documents the management, budgetary, and monitoring activities performed and is developed annually for Caltrans/NDOT/federal review and for approval by the TRPA/TMPO Governing Boards. The work elements in the OWP carry out the four strategic goals in the strategic plan with the use of TDA-funded activities:

- Accelerate threshold attainment;
- Propel the development and use of best information, data and science;
- Establish TRPA as a leader in environmental and sustainability programs; and
- Operate as a high-performance organization.

Amendments to the OWP are made and approved as conditions warrant. The work elements focus on state and federal planning area emphasis and encompass four broad categories: Outreach and Administration, Regional Intermodal Planning, Tracking and Financial Management, and Regional Coordination. A fifth broad category was added to the FY 2019 OWP: Sustainable Communities. Within these categories are work elements with specific project descriptions. There were seven work elements in the FY 2017 and FY 2018 OWPs covering the four categories and eight work elements in the FY 2019 OWP covering the five categories from the addition of a sustainable communities planning work element. The work elements are funded by a mixture of federal, state, and local programs, including TDA. The allocation of TDA administrative and planning revenue has been expanded to fund a portion of all work elements.

The TDA administration work element remained consistent during the audit period and helps comply with federal transportation planning factors, including increasing the accessibility and mobility of people and promoting efficient system management and operation. The work element includes all necessary programs and timelines that are administered for the year, including the following:

- To administer requirements of the TDA;
- To process LTF and STA funds for allocation to local entities;

- To prepare the annual transit needs assessment;
- To monitor the completion of necessary operational and financial audits; and
- To work with local jurisdictions and transit operators in ensuring appropriate transit improvement recommendations are implemented.

The OWP includes a summary list of staffing cost by work element that could also estimate person years to each work element. LTF revenue allocated to TRPA is shown to contribute to staffing and other costs related to TDA administration, intermodal planning, and project tracking and financial management.

### Personnel Administration

The purpose of the *TRPA Employee Manual* is to provide fair and systematic procedures for the administration of all matters affecting the status and activities of employees of TRPA. The manual, revised during the audit period and released in July 2019, is comprehensive and addresses numerous personnel topics including performance evaluations, working conditions, communications, benefits, disciplinary actions, grievance procedures, safety prevention, and other related policies. Each employee must acknowledge receipt of the handbook by signing and dating the handbook and understand that it is their responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in the handbook and any revisions.

TRPA's multi-disciplinary role requires staff to be flexible and competent in several practice areas. Most of the staff during the audit period is relatively new. As the agency charged with leading the regional effort for conservation and restoration, TRPA staff has had to balance environmental considerations with meeting the needs and demands of residents and visitors. There has been a renewed effort in travel demand management and technical analyses.

There are 11 departments and disciplines represented that encompass the TRPA: executive director and clerk to the Board, Legal, External Affairs, Operations, Long Range and Transportation Planning, Current Planning, Code Compliance, Environmental Improvement Program, Research and Analysis, Finance and Administration, and Human Resources and Organizational Development. The executive director has been with the agency since 2009 and served as TRPA's general counsel before being appointed to her current position.

The turnover was generally offset by an equivalent number of new hires. During calendar year (CY) 2016, there were 9 new hires and 8 departures; for CY 2017, there were 16 new hires and 15 departures; for CY 2018, there were 19 new hires and 15 departures; and for CY 2019, there were 15 new hires and 15 departures. For CY 2020 to date, there have been 3 new hires and 1 departure. Many of the new hires and departures are seasonal employees and interns. Most of the turnover in permanent full-time employees occurred in the Long Range and Transportation Planning department. However, the manager of that department has been with TRPA for more than 20 years and possesses a depth of TDA knowledge.

## **Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination**

### **Regional Transportation Plan**

The Regional Transportation Plan is TRPA’s long-range planning document and guides the development of transportation in the region over the next 20-plus years. The plan in effect during the audit period is the *Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy*, adopted by the TRPA and TMPO Governing Boards on April 26, 2017. *Linking Tahoe* has a dedicated webpage accessed through the TRPA website (<http://www.trpa.org/regionaltransportationplan/>) as well as an interactive transportation web-based map. The plan serves as Lake Tahoe’s blueprint for a regional transportation system that enhances the quality of life in the Tahoe region, promotes sustainability, and offers improved mobility options for people and goods.

The plan also supports an update of the Transportation Element of the TRPA Regional Plan. Further, the plan meets the language of California Senate Bill 375 by presenting an integrated land use and transportation strategy that will allow the region to achieve targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. As California’s planning requirements meet Nevada’s while also being more stringent, the bi-state Regional Transportation Plan follows California’s regulations.

Among its required elements, the Regional Transportation Plan established performance measures to assess the transportation system, including measures of system, accessibility by non-auto modes of transportation, environmental impacts, and safety. In addition, goals and policies are identified for each objective to guide transportation implementation decisions. The 14 goals and associated policies were developed to be consistent with statewide planning factors, the Bi-State Compact, and the public visioning statement.

Policies supporting the goals include accentuating the promotion of non-auto modes of transportation such as walking, biking, and using mass transit; expanding transit to regions adjacent to Tahoe and implementing waterborne transit; implementing complete streets measures when improving roadways; and finding sustainable financing for transportation projects.

The Regional Transportation Plan planning process provided TRPA with the knowledge and tools to better manage congestion in the region. TRPA engaged in the plan update, which occurs every four years during the latter part of the audit period, maintaining the same goals and policies but changing focus from walkable town centers to connections to community centers and recreation sites through non-automotive travel. Transit is envisioned to play a significant role in achieving the goals and providing the travel connections to recreation sites for visitors.

A Public Participation Plan guided the outreach process, meeting requirements for public participation in state and federal legislation and including Tahoe-specific goals for public participation. Outreach activities included public workshops, public hearings, informational meetings for

elected officials, and one-on-one surveys in low-income and minority communities. In addition, TRPA reached out to second homeowners and others unable to attend meetings through social media and an online “canvas” to solicit feedback. TRPA updated the Public Participation Plan in 2016 and applied participation techniques, such as online workshops and bilingual surveys, greater use of social media (Facebook), use of visual techniques, and workshops coordinated with multiple community associations, for the Regional Transportation Plan update. The outreach efforts with assistance from consultants drew interest from over 800 participants and included members of the public health community, who had social and medical connections to low-income residents. With this success, there were also challenges as indicated by staff such as outreach to certain segments of the population for input to the transportation planning process.

### Federal Transportation Improvement Program

TRPA develops and programs transportation projects that are funded with local, state, and federal funds. For the Tahoe Region, TRPA prepares the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), a comprehensive four-year program consisting of transportation projects for highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects that receive federal funds, require a federal action, or are regionally significant. TRPA/TMPO prepares and adopts the program every two years in conjunction with local agencies, Caltrans, NDOT, the FTA, and the Federal Highway Administration.

The FTIP lists transportation projects, including those from local agencies and transportation operators such as TTD and TART, that will receive federal funds or that is subject to a federally required action, such as a review and approval of environmental documents. To provide easy access and visualization of transportation information, TRPA/TMPO tracks all transportation projects, including FTIP projects, in the Environmental Improvement Program EIP Project Tracker online (<http://www.conservationclearly.org/tracker>). The EIP Tracker is an online user-friendly database that displays information about projects with interactive maps, charts, and photos. A transportation module is included in the tracker and enables agencies to update their projects online. In turn, TRPA/TMPO updates the FTIP and necessary project and funding adjustments. This enhanced process has made programming smoother and more transparent.

Main funding sources identified for transit in the FTIP include:

- Section 5307 Urbanized Area Transit Formula
- Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
- Section 5311 Rural Area Transit Formula (Nevada only)
- Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities
- Other funds from state and local sources

A call for projects process is used to solicit project applications and award state and federal funding. Following selection, the funds are obligated and tracked for spend down. Annually,

TRPA/TMPO develops a list of projects for which federal funds were obligated in the preceding year. Funding obligations for public transportation during the audit period include transit operating assistance for fixed routes and on-call and capital funding for buses. TDA-LTF funds in the FTIP have also been separated between the LTF and STA revenue for more precise financial programming and presentation.

In September 2018, during the audit period, the TMPO 2019 FTIP was developed and adopted. The 2019 FTIP is consistent with the transportation system and financial plan described in the 2017 Regional Transportation Plan and covers federal FYs 2019 through 2022.

#### Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Lake Tahoe Region

TRPA initiated an update to the Coordinated Human Services Plan in March 2019. The coordinated plan is composed of seven chapters and focuses on projects and transportation services that enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities traveling in the Lake Tahoe region. Projects included in the plan were developed by TRPA with input from TART and TTD and are eligible for FTA Section 5310 funding. The projects have been programmed into the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan update where they will also be eligible for funding through other TRPA grant programs. The coordinated plan includes a schedule of FTA apportionments, surveys and findings from the 2018 Unmet Transit Needs Report.

#### Tahoe-Truckee Plug-In Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan

In 2017, TRPA partnered with the Truckee-Donner Public Utility District, a consulting team, and the Tahoe-Truckee Plug-in Electric Vehicle (PEV) Coordinating Council to expedite the electrification of transportation modes and infrastructure in the Tahoe-Truckee region. The PEV Coordinating Council convened quarterly to garner support and advance recommendations and implementation. The PEV Readiness Plan was developed in concert with the Sustainable Communities Strategy effort that was part of the 2017 Regional Transportation Plan process. The focus of the plan is on PEVs because of the critical role they play in the region’s overall efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from motorized vehicles. The plan is composed of a vision for the region and three key goals supported by performance metrics.

#### Transit Planning and Oversight

Transit planning and oversight by TRPA are provided through various approaches. The principal planning guides have been the recent Systems Plan Update prepared for TART sponsored by Placer County, and an expanded ridership survey research effort for TART sponsored by TRPA. In addition, TRPA sponsored ridership surveys for TTD and TART in 2018 (<https://monitoring.laketahoeinfo.org/FileResource/DisplayResource/137d250d-1271-4071-b47c-349b84d92f65>).



TRPA sponsored a regional transit visioning study for TTD. Furthermore, TTD, which was established through an amendment to the Tahoe Bi-State Compact in 1980, facilitates, implements, and delivers transportation projects in the Tahoe Basin, including having operational authority for transit services. *Linking Tahoe Transit Master Plan* takes a multistep approach to developing a longer-term transit system that seeks to match the anticipated travel in the Tahoe area. The completed study included:

- Creating a vision through review of existing plans and developing a vision statement;
- Creating and defining goals and objectives as well as performance measures;
- Undertaking a system assessment to indicate how the services are utilized;
- Drafting a network of services that shows the transit services and associated infrastructure;
- Finalizing the network and making changes in the route structure or infrastructure placement, phasing, and costing; and
- Compiling the final report that describes the process, the consultation, methodology, phasing, transit routes, and infrastructure that make up the master plan.

Central to the master plan process was public engagement, particularly in the visioning and goal setting, drafting of the network, and finalizing the plan. Stakeholder and public engagement were key to examining the reaction to the transit service proposals. The transit master plan is part of the larger Tahoe Basin Corridor and Integrated Transit System Planning Project undertaken by TTD. With the current transit systems, the master plan indicates it is crucial that an integrated and holistic regional transit system be established to offer a realistic transportation alternative to residents and visitors to and within the Tahoe basin.

Further, TRPA implemented an online dashboard as part of its Productivity Improvement Program (PIP) initiative. The online dashboard is accessed at <https://monitoring.laketahoeinfo.org/Transit>. The dashboard reflects the coordination of TRPA and the two transit operators in corridor and transit planning. Consistent transit rider surveys and operations data collected help to determine the need for additional services and operating hours. The PIP is structured to track the following metrics: deadhead hours and miles, ridership, transit mode share, productivity, on-time performance, operating cost, farebox recovery, rolling stock, equipment, facilities and infrastructure. The performance metrics for each transit route can be accessed on the dashboard. In addition, passenger survey reports can be accessed and downloaded from the dashboard.

### **TDA Claimant Relationships and Oversight**

TRPA is responsible for the administration of the TDA program. The uses of TDA revenues apportioned to TART and TTD flow through a priority process prescribed in state law. The LTF

apportionments to the operators are based on the latest population figures from the California Department of Finance. In order of priority, LTF funds are allocated as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- County auditor administrative costs
- TRPA administrative and planning costs, based on final OWP and budget
- Area apportionments to local jurisdictions in the Tahoe portion of Placer and El Dorado Counties for transit operations (local jurisdictions include Placer County, El Dorado County, and City of South Lake Tahoe)

Prior to allocation of funds to the local jurisdictions/TART/TTD, TRPA is able to claim LTF revenues for administration of the fund and for regional transportation planning and programming purposes. During the audit fiscal years of 2017 through 2019, TRPA claimed the amounts shown in Table IV-1 below. The totals are about 5 percent of the annual LTF revenues available for apportionment each year.

**Table IV-1**  
**LTF Revenue Claims by TRPA for**  
**Administration and Planning**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>LTF Claim for Administration</b>	<b>LTF Claim for Planning</b>	<b>Total</b>
2017	\$40,000	\$35,000	\$75,000
2018	\$40,000	\$35,000	\$75,000
2019	\$40,000	\$35,000	\$75,000

*Source: TRPA TDA Funding Apportionments Preliminary Estimates*

TRPA is commended for developing a TDA Handbook in February 2018. The TDA Handbook outlines the processes for allocating and distributing funds, determining which jurisdictions are eligible for transit and bike and pedestrian claims, responding to fiscal and performance audits, conducting public outreach, and coordinating the unmet transit needs process. As part of the overhaul, the TDA application was revised. While the handbook incorporates the recent changes to the TDA statute and establishes written instruction for TRPA’s administration of the TDA program, it does not address provisions of the law guiding possible funding of other eligible projects, specifically rules for Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding. Current policy is to allocation TDA funds only to transit.

Prior to the overhaul of the TDA claim process, TRPA had to backfill pertinent documentation and the operators were tardy with claim submittals. The final TDA allocation estimate is published in August, with weekly coordination with TTD on related matters. After some initial delays, the revision of the claims process has resulted in better organization and greater accountability.

<sup>2</sup> TRPA LTF is based on Placer County and El Dorado County shares divided for the Tahoe region. The percentage share for TRPA is 2.9941 percent of total LTF in Placer County, and 19.122 percent of total LTF in El Dorado County. The split is based on an annual special population estimate provided by the California Department of Finance.

Claim applications are submitted electronically and posted online. The grants manager in the Finance and Administration department calculates the allocations, with the same department submitting the LTF claim amount to the counties for distribution to the transit operators. STA and STA-SGR funds are allocated to Placer County and TTD. Annual TDA fiscal audits are completed and submitted to TRPA by the operators.

TDA Claim Processing

On an annual basis during this audit period, TRPA was responsible for managing LTF revenues of about \$1.5 million and up to \$1 million in STA funds. The following amounts of LTF and STA funds were allocated to TART and TTD, as shown in Table IV-2.

**Table IV-2  
Total TDA Funding Allocations to Transit Claimants**

Fiscal Year	Local Transportation Fund (LTF)		State Transit Assistance (STA)		Total
	TART	TTD	TART	TTD	
2017	\$609,513	\$864,591	\$134,118	\$315,322	\$1,923,544
2018	\$621,959	\$911,692	\$124,005	\$280,993	\$1,938,649
2019*	\$680,050	\$984,117	\$366,588	\$681,330	\$2,712,085

Source: TRPA TDA Funding Apportionments Preliminary Estimates; STA Preliminary Estimates

\*FY 2019 STA Allocations include SB 1 State of Good Repair funding

The STA regional funding portion (PUC 99313) received by TRPA is split between the two transit agencies. The split for PUC 99313 funds is based on the formula documented in the transit MOU between TRPA, TTD, and TART. The formula factors in population and ridership and revenue miles from the prior year. The split is currently around 58 percent for TTD and 42 percent for TART.

TART and TTD are reviewing whether the percentages continue to be reasonable and changing the source of data to the National Transit Database for more timely information. This switch to the urbanized National Transit Database methodology shows a breakdown of 63 percent for TTD, and 37 percent for TART. TART and TTD must each prepare a timely NTD report as urban operators.

TRPA provides assistance on TDA matters to the transit claimants. TRPA prepares and distributes several documents during the TDA claims process. The documents include the estimates of apportionment, instructions, and the TDA claim form and budget template. The claim form is a PDF file that can be filled out electronically. TART and TTD submit a claim to TRPA, which then reviews the claims for consistency against fund estimates and maximum eligibility. Backup documentation to the claim is provided to substantiate the request for funds, and can include budgets, CHP inspection certificates, and a certified copy of the resolution from the claimant's governing board approving the claim and its submittal to TRPA. The resumption of the STA operator qualifying criteria pursuant to PUC Section 99314.6 is applicable to TTD as the only recipient of those particular revenues between the two operators.

The revised claims process has also resulted in better coordination and communication internally between TRPA's Finance and Planning departments. Improvements to the process include TRPA documenting a checklist of key dates for transmittal of documents and responsible parties including the county auditors, State Controller, TRPA, and the transit systems. Although the key dates show TDA claims to be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the prior year of the claim (a guidance date from Caltrans), TTD typically submits its claim around that time while TART waits for updates such as to the population estimates and final TDA apportionments. This later submittal can be into the fiscal year of the claim. Once final TDA claim packages are submitted by the operators and approved by TRPA, they are scheduled for approval by the TRPA Governing Board. To aid in the consistency in materials submitted with the claim and ensure compliance with TDA requirements, a checklist of required documentation and a separate standard assurances checklist are often included in the TDA claim packet. These additional complementary items may support TRPA's ability to further standardize the TDA process.

### Unmet Transit Needs

Because no LTF is allocated to streets and roads, TRPA is not subject to the formal unmet transit needs process and findings. However, the agency maintains definitions of "unmet transit need" and "reasonable to meet" adopted by the Governing Board. The definitions are documented in the *Analysis and Determination of Unmet Transit Needs*, and *Unmet Transit Needs Report* prepared by TRPA. They are defined as:

*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.*

The data for the report is compiled from comments received at the unmet transit needs workshops held in the North and South Shore areas. Emails and phone calls are also fielded by TRPA for unmet needs. Flyers in English and Spanish are distributed to advertise the workshops, which are held during the fall season. The unmet transit needs comments, analyses, and recommendations are presented on a table in the report and are forwarded to the transit operators for review and consideration with findings as to whether the needs are reasonable to meet and consistency with their respective transit plans.

TRPA also works closely with the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency and the Nevada County Transportation Commission in holding unmet transit needs workshops on the North Shore. The three planning agencies work collaboratively and share relevant comments.

The unmet transit needs process is ongoing and TRPA continues to coordinate with local agencies, private organizations, and the public to solicit, identify, and address needs. The unmet transit needs are taken into consideration during future transportation planning. TRPA will continue to allocate all LTF apportionments available for public transportation to transit services only until all reasonable to meet transit needs are met.

During the audit period, the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) was disbanded and TRPA pursued a more flexible approach to the unmet transit needs process. The SSTAC was reconfigured to better capture the transit needs of both the North and South Shores of the Tahoe Basin. The SSTAC is composed of a South Shore and a North Shore advisory group. As long as the membership requirements of the SSTAC as stated in the law are established, the merging of these advisory committees in fulfilling statutory responsibilities has been shown to be successful by drawing together various interests to discuss transit issues.

### **Marketing and Transportation Alternatives**

TRPA's focus on promoting conservation efforts such as alternative transportation modes is directed through its vision and mission and by the Bi-State Compact. This is evidenced through projects and programs including the strategies contained in the long-range Regional Transportation Plan and long-range transit master plan. In this manner, the marketing and information distribution about public transportation and active transportation is inherent to the daily activities of the agency.

TRPA's website (<http://www.trpa.org/>) is a portal to a wealth of information. From descriptions of the agency, planning and programs to public engagement, the website contains the information and materials that demonstrate TRPA's commitment to promoting non-automotive transportation. At the mast of the webpage, the menu has links to information about TRPA, the Regional Transportation Plan, programs, permitting, document library, public involvement, Tahoe facts, and staff directory. The website is scheduled for an update. There is an employer portal on the Commute Tahoe website. The Commute Tahoe portal is available on the [www.linkingtahoe.com](http://www.linkingtahoe.com) website, where most of the information about TRPA's transportation demand management program is located.

The agency utilizes social media as part of its community engagement strategy. TRPA posts webinars to Facebook and Vimeo. The agency also has an Instagram page. TRPA is looking at the development of a travel app with a trip planning feature.

Promotion of public transit in North Lake Tahoe is primarily conducted for TART through the Truckee Tahoe Transportation Management Association (TMA). TTD promotes public transit in its service area through its staff of transit information officers and the mobility management program. Public workshops held for unmet transit needs in both the North and South Shore areas also provide visibility for transportation alternatives.

During the audit period, TRPA's Public Participation Plan was updated. The 2016 Public Participation Plan was adopted in March 2016 and later updated for release in September 2019. The 2019 Public Participation Plan ensures that TRPA is in conformance with federal guidelines, particularly Title VI of the Civil Rights of 1964. Engagement with the region's tribal government, Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada, has been positive. TMPO conducts regular government-to-government communication with the Washoe Tribe to consider tribal needs in the planning and programming process. Outreach to the Hispanic community has been challenging.

TRPA currently provides funding to the TMAs for assistance with transportation demand management programs and community outreach. This is in line with other regional transportation planning agencies, which have partnered with TMAs and other community-based organizations as a source of local assistance to further reach out to traditionally underrepresented groups.

Another consideration would be to partner with the California Strategic Growth Council in securing grants and resources for outreach with communities that are difficult to reach. TRPA could also partner with local educational institutions like Lake Tahoe Community College to help promote input to the Regional Transportation Plan update.

*Tahoe In Depth* is a major printed publication contributed by TRPA in partnership with various state and federal agencies. The newspaper-style subscription publication reports on stories of relevance to the protection, enjoyment, and exploration of the Lake Tahoe Basin. *Tahoe in Depth* covers any number of relevant topics including environmental news, work promoted by public agencies for conservation and restoration, visits from prominent U.S. dignitaries including former President Obama in August 2016 for the 20th annual Lake Tahoe Summit, and mobility and planning.

### **Grant Applications and Management**

TRPA serves an important role for state and federal transit grant applications, as it coordinates and determines whether there is any duplication of effort among agencies and that there is no conflict with local plans and policies. TRPA consults with project partners throughout the year to review project timelines and funding schedules. Projects are continuously monitored and updated through the *LT Info Transportation Tracker*. TRPA provides concurrence letters as well as letters of support for other grants.

For example, under the State Proposition 1B program, TRPA is the direct grant recipient for Public Transportation, Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA) and Transit System Safety, Security & Disaster Recovery Account Funds. TRPA is responsible for calculating operator allocations for funds, and the management, financial, and planning capability to submit grant applications. TRPA approves resolutions of these actions, including submitting financial management forms, grant assurances, authorized agent signature authority, and board resolution. TRPA also tracks the interest accrual schedule for the Proposition 1B funds and checks for consistency against the accounting ledger. Both transit operators, as recipients of

the funds for capital projects, assist TRPA in preparing required documentation such as the grant application and biennial progress reports.

Transit projects receiving funds include the automated vehicle locator system, bus replacements, radios, facility security, and solar bus shelter lighting. The FY 2018–19 Proposition 1B audit shows an unspent balance of \$1.6 million for PTMISEA, and \$186,000 for transit security.

With regard to federal transit grants, the federal FAST Act designates the Lake Tahoe Basin as an urbanized area with a population of 210,000 (145,000 in CA and 65,000 in NV) for applicable grant programs. The transit systems are eligible for FTA formula funding under the Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307 and 5339). Additional rules and coordination between TRPA, serving as the MPO, and the two transit systems are required for successful urbanized formula grant procurement. The three parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in September 2016 regarding the coordination of transit planning and programming of federal funds.

Both TTD and TART are eligible to apply for and receive FTA and/or Federal Highway Administration transit funding, while TRPA works cooperatively with the public transit operators to develop the Regional Transportation Plan and FTIP through performance-based planning and programming for urbanized areas. For FTA funding, TRPA allocates the apportionment among the operators based on ridership data from the previous year (% split) and US Census. The MOU sets out to foster a cooperative and mutually beneficial working relationship between the three agencies for the provision of coordinated transit planning, identify the regional transit planning responsibilities for programming federal funds, and codify the process and the criteria for selection of transit projects and suballocation of federal funds in the Lake Tahoe region. TRPA and the transit operators are currently working to develop and support implementation of a performance-based approach toward transportation decision-making in order to implement transit priorities identified in the Regional Transportation Plan and apply federal transit funds toward achieving the plan's goals in a coordinated manner.

The MOU places responsibility for each agency to ensure their annual certifications and assurances regarding FTA grant programs, meet certain public participation requirements, and submit annual reports to the National Transit Database. TRPA, TART, and TTD developed a regionally acceptable methodology to suballocate FTA Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307) and Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339). TRPA will use the suballocation process to program the funding into the FTIP.

## Section V

### Findings and Recommendations

The following material summarizes the findings obtained from the triennial audit covering FYs 2017 through 2019. A set of recommendations is then provided.

#### Findings

1. TRPA has satisfactorily complied with applicable state legislative mandates for RTPAs. Of the 14 compliance areas, the agency fully complied with 12 measures. Two additional compliance areas did not apply to TRPA.
2. During the audit period, TRPA enhanced its citizen participation process as it pertains to unmet transit needs. While TRPA is not subject to the formal unmet transit needs process, the agency maintains definitions of "unmet transit need" and "reasonable to meet" adopted by the Governing Board. The definitions are documented in the *Unmet Transit Needs Report* prepared by TRPA. To accurately capture the needs of both North and South Shore communities, the TRPA SSTAC is split into two separate councils. The South Shore biannual SSTAC meetings are held concurrently with the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled. North Shore quarterly SSTAC meetings are held before Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee meetings with a subset transportation focus group.
3. The compliance areas that did not apply to TRPA during the audit period pertained to establishing rules and regulations for other potential claims to the TDA funds (e.g., Articles 3 and 4.5).
4. Of the five prior audit recommendations, TRPA implemented four recommendations. The recommendations pertained to holding annual public hearings in compliance with citizen participation rules of the TDA, updating urbanized farebox recovery ratios, combining the TRPA SSTAC and the TTD RCC, and strengthening the TDA claim process and monitoring of transit service. The recommendation not implemented pertained to the development of TDA rules for Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding is being carried forward in this audit for further consideration and implementation.
5. The TDA administration work element of the Overall Work Program remained consistent during the audit period and helps comply with federal transportation planning factors, including increasing the accessibility and mobility of people and promoting efficient system management and operation. The allocation of TDA administrative and planning revenue has been expanded to fund a portion of all work elements.



6. The Regional Transportation Plan process provides TRPA with the knowledge and tools to better manage congestion in the region. The plan in effect during the audit period is the *Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy* adopted by the TRPA and TMPO Governing Boards in April 2017. *Linking Tahoe* has a dedicated webpage accessed through the TRPA website (<http://www.trpa.org/regionaltransportationplan/>) as well as an interactive transportation web-based map. An updated public participation plan provided guidance for outreach.
7. TRPA implemented an online dashboard as part of its Productivity Improvement Program initiative. The online dashboard is accessed at <https://monitoring.laketahoeinfo.org/Transit>. The dashboard reflects the coordination of TRPA and the two transit operators in corridor and transit planning.
8. In February 2018, TRPA developed a TDA Handbook. The TDA Handbook outlines the processes for allocating and distributing funds, determining which jurisdictions are eligible for transit and bike and pedestrian claims, responding to fiscal and performance audits, conducting public outreach, and coordinating the unmet transit needs process. As part of the overhaul, the TDA application was revised.
9. With designation of the Tahoe region as an urbanized area by the federal transportation act, additional rules and coordination between TRPA and the two transit systems are required for successful urbanized formula grant procurement. To this end, the three parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the coordination of transit planning and programming of federal funds.

## Recommendations

### 1. Consider development of TDA rules for Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding.

In February 2018, TRPA developed a TDA Handbook. The TDA Handbook outlines the processes for allocating and distributing funds, determining which jurisdictions are eligible for transit and bike and pedestrian claims, responding to fiscal and performance audits, conducting public outreach, and coordinating the unmet transit needs process. While the handbook incorporates the recent changes to the TDA statute, it does not contain rules or procedures for Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding; rather, the handbook states TRPA does not authorize funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

*Linking Tahoe*, the 2017 Regional Transportation Plan adopted in April 2017, is the transportation element of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan and prioritizes bicycling, walking, and transit, modes that are interlinked and essential for the Tahoe region. The TDA has eligible funding programs not only for transit, but for bicycle and pedestrian projects. An eligible use of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) within the TDA revenue program at TRPA's discretion is for bicycle and pedestrian projects under TDA Article 3. This off-the-top apportionment is limited to 2 percent of LTF and could be available to the local jurisdictions (City of South Lake Tahoe and Placer and El Dorado Counties) for such projects. However, TRPA has indicated that other funding sources are available and used for non-motorized projects, and that the LTF is used primarily to support public transit operations.

In light of this, TRPA should consider establishing rules and regulations for LTF for bicycle/pedestrian projects to provide general parameters and direction for this funding source. This could include determining method of apportionment among eligible recipients and ensuring the projects are linked to transit usage to enhance accessibility and contribute towards improved transit performance. An example is a bus stop improvement program.

TRPA has flexibility and oversight in working with the transit operators and the local jurisdictions in funding both local and regional projects and providing matching funds. A sampling of guidance to how the LTF pedestrian/bicycle funds could be allocated include by population, call for projects, rotating use of the fund, and/or building a reserve balance for use for regionally significant projects. A potential method to allocate nonmotorized funding from the TDA should be designed to further the goals and objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan and provide accessibility and connectivity to public transit.

### 2. Encourage frequent stakeholder engagement in the transit productivity improvement process.

One of the compliance requirements for regional transportation planning agencies is the establishment or identification of a productivity improvement committee that monitors the performance of local transit systems. TRPA implemented an online dashboard as part of its

Productivity Improvement Program initiative. The dashboard reflects the coordination of TRPA and the two transit operators in corridor and transit planning. The dashboard is in its early growth phase and TRPA plans to continue its investment in the system to regularly monitor transit operator performance. An example of continued growth of the dashboard is assembling the transit performance data into an annual report of trends that can be shared with involved groups such as the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council.

Consistent transit rider surveys and operations data also help to determine the need for additional services and operating hours. Given the Tahoe region's new urbanized status, TRPA set the required farebox recovery ratio of the fixed-route services for the Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit and Tahoe Transportation District at 15 percent for purposes of the TDA and granted both transit operators a period of five years to meet attainment. Transit data and trends, when shared with other stakeholders beyond transit agency staff, could enlighten methods of service delivery. With the revamped Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and a more regular meeting schedule, TRPA should have a set time established during the meeting and tap the advisory groups on the North and South Shores to review transit performance trends from the dashboard and productivity improvements, whether from an annual report or other data presentation. Broader discussion of transit performance and services on a more frequent basis at these meetings, and not limited to the unmet transit needs process, can provide additional input from different perspectives on transit's role and delivery within the Tahoe transportation network. With the higher farebox standard to maintain, increased cost for operations, and movement toward free fares, additional challenges to transit service will remain. On-going review and discussion of transit within these user groups will help in coordinated efforts.