

1 INTRODUCTION

The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) is proposing the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project (project) located along U.S. Highway 50 (US 50) from approximately 0.25 miles west of Pioneer Trail in South Lake Tahoe, California, to Nevada State Route (SR) 207 in Douglas County, Nevada. Exhibit 1-1 provides a regional view of the project location.

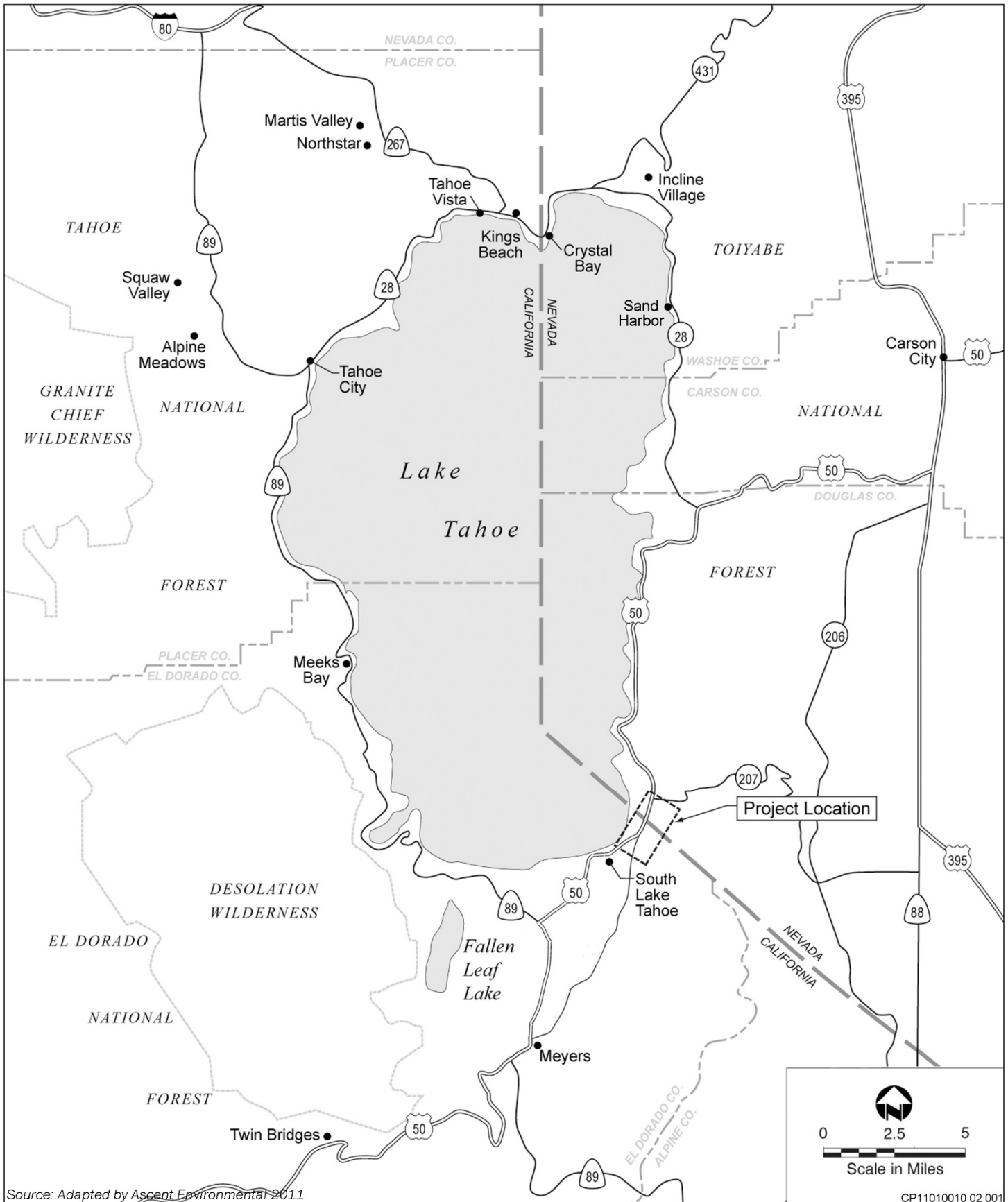
The project site consists of the outline of the transportation and related improvements and attendant landscape disturbance proposed for the alternatives under consideration. The study area for this environmental document, within which the project site is located (refer to Exhibit 2-1 in Chapter 2), is generally defined to include the length of existing US 50 from just west of the Pioneer Trail/US 50 intersection to the SR 207/US 50 intersection, Montreal Road, the full length of Lake Parkway on the mountain side, portions of the adjacent Van Sickle Bi-State Park and other privately-owned land on the mountain side of existing Lake Parkway, the portion of Lake Parkway that extends between existing US 50 and Stateline Avenue on the lake side, and the neighborhood just west of the Heavenly Village Center (Raley's shopping center).

1.1 LEAD AGENCIES

TTD, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are preparing a joint environmental document for the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project. The environmental document is an environmental impact report (EIR) for TTD pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.); an environmental impact statement (EIS) for TRPA pursuant to the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact (Public Law 96-551), 1980 revision (the Compact), Code of Ordinances, and Rules of Procedure; and an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the FHWA pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S. Code [USC] Section 4321-4347), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulation [CFR] Section 1500-1508), and FHWA Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR Section 771). All three agencies have determined that an EIR/EIS/EIS is needed to effectively analyze the project, evaluate the environmental impacts of the project and discuss alternatives to the project. TTD is also the project proponent.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project, in various forms, has been a proposed transportation improvement for decades. It was first contemplated in the 1970s when construction of a "Loop Road" was required as mitigation for the approval of the expansion of three major casinos in Stateline, Nevada. The Nevada portion of a loop road was built, but the portion in California was never completed. The Lake Tahoe Compact also required the consideration of "completion of the Loop Road in the States of California and Nevada." Table 1-1 summarizes the chronology of these and other historical planning efforts related to the project.



Source: Adapted by Ascent Environmental 2011

CP11010010 02 001

Exhibit 1-1

Regional Location of the Project

Table 1-1 Chronology of Events and Planning History

Timeframe	Document/Action Summary	Prepared by/ Prepared for	Description
1966	Highway Bypass Map	California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	A full freeway cross-section is shown at this time for the proposed US 50, consisting of 4+ lanes with interchanges. Map shows alignment of highway through what is now Van Sickle Bi-State Park (south of Lake Parkway). The bypass was set back farther into the property than currently planned for the locally preferred action. Caltrans held right-of-way (ROW) at the time. ROW was relinquished, but this is now the alignment for the California Tahoe Conservancy's Greenway Shared-Use Path.
Late 1970s	Loop Road required as mitigation for casino expansion	NA	As part of the approval of the expansion of three major casinos in the Stateline casino corridor, mitigation required the construction of a Loop Road to address traffic congestion in the US 50 corridor.
1975	Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan – Short Range Element (1975-1980)	Tahoe Regional Transportation Study Group (TRPA, CTRPA [California TRPA], Nevada Department of Transportation [NDOT], Caltrans)	Construction of an initial 2-lane Loop Road coupled with construction of a 2-lane bypass along the existing Caltrans “freeway” alignment and ROW (1966 Map). At the time, Lake Parkway did not exist and Montreal Road in California ended with a cul-de-sac in front of the current location of the Forest Suites Resort.
1979	Highway 50 Corridor Study in the South Lake Tahoe Area, Summary Report	Prepared for: City of South Lake Tahoe Douglas County El Dorado County States of CA and NV Prepared by: JHK & Associates	Planned the completion of the East Loop Road. The Lake Parkway improvements in place today on the Nevada side had been completed. Maps called for completion of the Loop Road and demonstrated that the Montreal Road extension in California had not yet been completed.
1980	Revised Tahoe Regional Planning Compact	TRPA	When the Compact was revised in 1980, Article V(2) required consideration of “completion of the Loop Road in the States of California and Nevada.”
1980 -1987	Basic Loop Road constructed	NA	Google Earth historical imagery demonstrates that the portion of the basic 2-lane Loop Road called for in earlier planning documents in the area of what is now Van Sickle Bi-State Park (i.e., the extension of Montreal Road) had been constructed. Lake Parkway footprint in this area is the same as today. The entire Loop Road had not yet been completed.
1987	South Lake Tahoe Redevelopment Design Plan (referred to as ROMA Redevelopment Plan in subsequent documents, after the design consultant)	Prepared for: City of South Lake Tahoe Prepared by: ROMA Design Group, San Francisco	Plan included principal access to the casinos via the Loop Road and expansion of Montreal Road to 4 lanes, between Park Avenue and Glen Road. Called for the South Loop Road (Lake Parkway in front of what is now Van Sickle Bi-State Park) to be striped as a 4-lane facility with no central two-way left-turn lane.
1988	Regional Transportation Plan – Lake Tahoe Basin	TRPA	Operational improvements and highway alignment consistent with the 1987 ROMA Redevelopment Plan, including reducing the number of lanes on existing US 50 and expanding the number of lanes on the Loop Road to 4 lanes.
1989	South Tahoe Redevelopment Demonstration Plan for Ski Run/Stateline Areas	South Tahoe Redevelopment Agency	Planned for extension and reconfiguration of the South Loop Road to 5 lanes, 2 lanes in each direction with a center turn lane from Montreal Road east.
1990	South Lake Tahoe Loop Road Preliminary Roadway Design Report	City of South Lake Tahoe, Douglas County	Planned for extension and widening of existing South Loop Road to 5 lanes, 2 lanes in each direction with a center turn lane, and narrowing of existing US 50 to 3 lanes. Detailed preliminary design plans illustrated that encroachment into what is now Van Sickle Bi-State Park is similar to what is proposed with the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project.
1991	South Lake Tahoe Loop Road Project EIR/EIS	City of South Lake Tahoe, Douglas County	EIR/EIS considered effects of Loop Road project alternatives, but was never certified. Called for South Loop Road to be 5 lanes, 2 lanes in each direction with center turn lane, requiring expansion of the existing footprint.

Table 1-1 Chronology of Events and Planning History

Timeframe	Document/Action Summary	Prepared by/ Prepared for	Description
1991	Tahoe Transportation Summit Final Report	Prepared for: Tahoe Transportation Coalition Prepared by: LSC et al.	Planned for completion of the Loop Road System, including 5-lane cross-section for South Loop.
1993	Stateline Community Plan (Element of Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin)	Douglas County, TRPA	Applied to Nevada side of casino corridor. Plan anticipated completion of the Loop Road and reduction in the number of lanes on US 50. Specifically, the Plan noted that the agencies, in conjunction with the City of South Lake Tahoe, would increase the mountain side Loop Road from 2 to 4 travel lanes.
1994	Stateline/Ski Run Community Plan (Element of Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin)	City of South Lake Tahoe, TRPA	Applied to California side of casino corridor. Anticipated reconfiguration of the Loop Road. Identified specific transportation improvements, including increasing the mountainside loop to five travel lanes.
1987	South Tahoe Redevelopment Design Plan	Prepared by: ROMA Prepared for: City of South Lake Tahoe	The Redevelopment Plan considered different alternatives for the number of lanes on the north and south Loop Roads and existing US 50.
2004	US 50/Stateline Transportation Study – Final Report	Prepared for: TRPA Prepared by: Entrix et al.	This study identified the range of transportation-related problems in the study area, such as insufficient infrastructure to safely support pedestrians and bicyclists, traffic congestion, and visual and water quality concerns associated with the existing roadway. It also identified alternatives for addressing the problems. It anticipated reconfiguration of the Loop Road along the mountainside loop consistent with the current proposal.
2010	Project Study Report (PSR) to Request Conceptual Approval on US 50 between Pioneer Trail and Nevada SR 207	Prepared for: Caltrans Prepared by: Wood Rodgers	Focused primarily on California side of casino corridor. Anticipated reconfiguration of the Loop Road. Identified specific transportation improvements, including increasing the mountainside loop to five travel lanes. The improvements are expected to address the need for the integrated development of a regional system of transportation in the Tahoe Region through the completion of the Loop Road between California and Nevada, as well as address operational issues on US 50.
2010	Value Analysis (VA) Study, US 50 Stateline Core/Loop Road Project.	Prepared by: RH & Associates VA Team included: Caltrans NDOT Wood Rodgers TTD	The VA study included a workshop conducted between June 21 and June 25, 2010. The goals of the US 50 project included completing the Loop Road System to accommodate traffic demand and improve safety, advance multi-modal transportation opportunities, improve the environmental quality of the area, enhance visitor and community experience, and promote the economic vitality of the area. Study objectives included reviewing the validity of the design alternatives, identifying opportunities to enhance environmental features, evaluating right-of-way concerns, and addressing maintenance issues including snow removal and storage.
2011	Caltrans Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report (PEAR)	Prepared for: Caltrans Prepared by: LSA Associates	The Caltrans PEAR provided an initial environmental of the project and alternatives, including alternatives that would realign US 50 to the mountainside Loop Road; it anticipates the environmental constraints that may affect project design alternatives, cost, schedule, and delivery. The PEAR is an attachment to the PID.
2011	Scoping for US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project EIR/EIS/EIS	NA	Scoping for environmental review of the currently proposed revitalization project was initiated. A Notice of Preparation/Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on November 1, 2011.
2012	2012 Regional Plan Update (RPU)	TRPA	The RPU included Goals and Policies, Code of Ordinances, Land Use Maps, and plans for specific geographic areas, such as the tourist areas, to encourage environmentally beneficial redevelopment.

Table 1-1 Chronology of Events and Planning History

Timeframe	Document/Action Summary	Prepared by/ Prepared for	Description
2012	Lake Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy Mobility 2035 (RTP/SCS)	Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization and TRPA	The vision of the RTP/SCS is to develop a transportation system that provides alternatives to the private automobile, appeals to users, and serves mobility needs, while improving the environmental and socioeconomic health of the Region.
2013	Tourist Core Area Plan (TCAP)	City of South Lake Tahoe and TRPA	The TCAP provides a framework to change existing conditions into opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization with a focus on achieving on the ground environmental improvements consistent with the City's General Plan and environmental thresholds goals of the 2012 Regional Plan.
2013	South Shore Area Plan (SSAP)	Douglas County, NV and TRPA	The SSAP includes objectives for the tourist core to transform the area into a world class recreational tourist destination, revitalize the economy, contribute to the attainment of TRPA environmental threshold standards, and create a sustainable tourist destination that provides access to recreational opportunities within walking and biking distance of the bed base, which is intended to contribute to a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and improved air quality.
2016	Draft 2017 Regional Transportation Plan	Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization and TRPA	The 2017 plan is an update to the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Mobility 2035, and as such identifies the projects, policies, and programs planned for implementation in the Tahoe Region through 2040. The projects listed in the update are substantially similar to those identified in Mobility 2035, including the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project.

NA: Not applicable and/or copies not available at time of completion of this compilation.

Source: Data compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2016

Between 1985 and 2008, the project moved through many iterations, including two separate environmental review cycles (neither of which led to a finalized and certified document) and planning efforts. In 2008, the project was re-initiated by TRPA and a Project Development Team (PDT), consisting of the project proponent and affected agencies, was formed. In 2009, TTD assumed responsibility for the project, and the environmental review and public scoping process for the current project under consideration was initiated in 2011. The PDT acts as a technical steering committee with members representing the following federal, state, and local agencies, as well as other stakeholders and interested parties:

- ▲ FHWA-California and Nevada,
- ▲ California Department of Transportation (Caltrans),
- ▲ California Tahoe Conservancy,
- ▲ Nevada Department of Transportation,
- ▲ Nevada Division of State Parks,
- ▲ Nevada Division of Environmental Protection,
- ▲ City of South Lake Tahoe,
- ▲ Douglas County,
- ▲ El Dorado County, and
- ▲ South Tahoe Public Utility District.

In addition to the PDT, a Community Review Committee (CRC) and a Business Review Committee (BRC) were formed in 2013 to provide a venue for community members and business owners to provide input into the alternative development and evaluation process. The current version of the project builds on the information developed in earlier planning processes, and the alternatives in this environmental document reflect input received from the public during outreach efforts, as well as from the PDT, CRC, BRC, and the City of South Lake Tahoe.

The project is needed to address existing transportation deficiencies and projected transportation requirements along the US 50 corridor between Pioneer Trail and SR 207, to alleviate cut-through traffic in local neighborhoods in the City of South Lake Tahoe, and to support community revitalization goals in the California/Nevada state line area. The City of South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County, the communities within the US 50 corridor, have identified demand for transportation improvements to create well-designed, safer facilities that balance the needs of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and private vehicle access while respecting the unique environmental setting of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Revitalization goals included creating more walkable, transit-served public space in the casino core through public and private investment, which would promote economic vitality.

To achieve these goals and the project's basic objectives and purpose and need (see Section 1.3), TTD, TRPA, and FHWA are proposing to realign US 50 to circle around the south side of the casino core following the existing Lake Parkway alignment. The realignment of US 50, implements a concept contemplated in adopted planning documents dating back to the 1980s, as described in Table 1-1. Realignment of US 50 is identified as part of the Compact, Lake Tahoe Regional Plan, Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) Regional Transportation Plan, and TRPA Environmental Improvement Program.

The project is included in the TMPO 2015 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) list and in the Draft 2017 FTIP. It is also considered to be a project implementable under fiscally constrained budget projections in the Lake Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), adopted in December 2012. "Fiscally constrained" means that the costs of the projects, over the 23-year plan horizon of the RTP, are within the reasonably foreseeable revenues of that period and, therefore, the project is prioritized for implementation. The RTP includes a baseline forecast of federal, state, and local funding, which is intended to reflect the level of funding that has historically been available from each of these sources, with inflation factors from zero to 2.5 percent depending on the revenue source (TMPO and TRPA 2012:6-5). The 2017 Regional Transportation Plan (2017 RTP), which is an update to the 2012 RTP, and its joint CEQA/TRPA environmental document have been circulated for public review. The vision and goals of the 2017 RTP were based on the 2012 RTP. The projects listed in the 2017 RTP are substantially similar to those in the 2012 RTP, and the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project is included in both documents. TTD has funding to complete the environmental review process and full design (preliminary through final) of the approved alternative. TTD also has some Right-of-Way – property acquisition and relocation – funds secured through State Transportation Block Grant (CA and NV) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grants. Funding for the remaining property acquisition, relocation, and project construction would come from a variety of federal, state, and local sources, including Federal Transportation Act funds incorporated into recently passed legislation, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund from revenues of the Cap-and-Trade program administered by the California Air Resources Board, and newly adopted taxes from Douglas County, among others. A detailed cost estimate for the project is included in Attachment C and right of way costs are included in Attachment D of the Draft Project Report prepared for the project (Caltrans 2016).

The RTP/SCS was approved based on the environmental analysis in a CEQA EIR and TRPA EIS that was prepared as a program environmental document for the entire plan of transportation projects, including the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project. The RTP/SCS EIR/EIS is incorporated by reference into this document for the purpose of relying on cumulative and region-wide impact analysis that has already been prepared and presented in the certified RTP/SCS program EIR, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, and in the certified TRPA EIS. TRPA and TMPO have prepared a joint CEQA Initial Study/TRPA Initial Environmental Checklist for the 2017 RTP as a supplement to the 2012 RTP/SCS EIS/EIR, and relies largely on that document's analysis of potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15163, a supplement to an EIR need contain only the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project as revised. Refer to Section 3.19, "Cumulative Impacts," for further explanation about the relationship between the analyses in this EIR/EIS/EIS and the RTP/SCS EIR/EIS.

The scope of the proposed transportation project elements (i.e., grading and retaining walls; roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements; drainage and water quality infrastructure; and noise attenuation features) and the build alternatives considered in this environmental document are consistent with the project description in the 2012 RTP and the 2017 RTP.

In 2015, TTD introduced a project element for the potential redevelopment of three existing sites within the project site as mitigation for land use displacement. The potential redevelopment would likely be implemented through a future public-private partnership between TTD and a private developer. It would provide an opportunity for new mixed-use, transit-oriented development to include replacement housing and commercial space that could be used by residents and businesses displaced by the transportation improvements with certain action alternatives. The preferred location for constructing replacement housing for displaced residents is at one of these mixed-use development sites. Note: this redevelopment aspect, which extends beyond the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Act (see Section 3.4, “Community Impacts”), is not FHWA’s action as part of the proposed project.

1.3 PURPOSE, NEED, AND OBJECTIVES

NEPA requires disclosure of a project’s purpose and need. CEQA requires a description of the basic objectives of a project. TRPA does not have specific requirements for a project to identify the purpose, need, or objectives of the project. This section provides the information necessary to present the purpose and need and basic project objectives of the proposed US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project.

One of TTD’s operating principles is to develop value-added projects for the communities in which they work. In May 2016, consistent with TTD principles and in response to public feedback on the project, the TTD Board adopted guiding principles that formalize their commitment to providing replacement housing as part of the project, including deed-restricted affordable and moderate-income housing, for displaced residents. This commitment is reflected in the project objectives below.

1.3.1 Purpose

The overall purposes of the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project are described as follows:

- ▲ Improve the corridor in a manner consistent with the Loop Road System concept;
- ▲ Advance multi-modal transportation opportunities;
- ▲ Improve vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle safety;
- ▲ Improve the environmental quality of the area;
- ▲ Reduce congestion;
- ▲ Improve safety for residents, pedestrians, and bicyclists in local neighborhoods;
- ▲ Implement regional and local plans, including the Lake Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan;
- ▲ Enhance visitor and community experience;
- ▲ Promote the economic vitality of the area; and
- ▲ Improve safety for residents, pedestrians, and bicyclists in local neighborhoods.

1.3.2 Need

The purposes of the project would fulfill the following specific needs:

- A. *Loop Road System concept.* Article V(2) of the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact (Public Law 96-551), 1980 (Compact), requires a transportation plan for the integrated development of a regional system of transportation within the Tahoe Region. The Compact requires the transportation plan to include

consideration of the completion of the Loop Road System in the States of California and Nevada. Improvements are required to the corridor to meet the intent of the Loop Road System concept.

- B. *Multimodal mobility and safety.* Ongoing and proposed resort redevelopment in the project area has increased pedestrian traffic, creating a need for improved pedestrian safety, mobility, and multi-modal transportation options. Improvements to pedestrian facilities, bicycle lanes, and transit are needed to connect the outlying residential and retail-commercial uses with employment and entertainment facilities, including hotels and gaming interests. Currently, there are no bicycle lanes on US 50 through the project area, and sidewalks are either not large enough to meet the increased demand, or do not exist. These issues adversely affect pedestrian and bicyclist safety and the visitor and community experience of the area. These needs could be addressed through development of a complete street—a street designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities—in the main tourist corridor of the Stateline area. Injury and fatality accident rates for pedestrians and vehicles through the project area are 14 percent above the statewide average rates for the latest three-year period of available data (Caltrans 2016, NDOT 2016).

The roadways within the project site also have inadequate facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. The inadequate facilities detract from community character and quality of life of both residents and visitors. The poor transportation facilities and pedestrian/bicycle environment create constraints to the economic vitality of the study area (TTD 2013:3). There is a need for enhanced connectivity, transit use, walkability, and bicycle use in the study area to reduce dependence on private automobiles.

- C. *Environmental quality in the area.* Environmental improvements are needed in the area to help achieve TRPA's adopted environmental threshold carrying capacities (thresholds), including for water quality and air quality. Paved roadways are the primary source of the fine sediment particles that are impairing the clarity of Lake Tahoe (Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board [RWQCB] and Nevada Department of Environmental Protection [NDEP] 2010). Improvements to stormwater runoff collection and treatment facilities are needed to meet TRPA, NDEP, and Lahontan RWQCB regulations and requirements for protecting the water quality and clarity of Lake Tahoe. As supported by analysis in the *Lake Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement*, reduction of vehicle congestion and numbers of vehicles on the roadway through enhanced pedestrian and multi-modal opportunities and opportunities for compact, mixed-use development in the tourist core is needed to provide for a reduction in mobile-source greenhouse gas emissions (TMPO and TRPA 2012:3-57 – 3-61). Landscape improvements are needed to enhance the scenic quality of the project area, to facilitate compliance with TRPA's scenic thresholds, and to enhance the community and tourism experience. Currently, the three TRPA roadway travel units in the project site (Roadway Travel Unit #32, Casino Core, a portion of Roadway Travel Unit #33, The Strip, and a small portion of Roadway Travel Unit #45, Pioneer Trail [North]) are not in attainment and are targeted for improvement in the Scenic Quality Improvement Plan and other adopted agency plans that apply to the area (TRPA in prep).
- D. *Minimize congestion.* Study area intersections and roadway segments are currently operating at marginally acceptable levels during a typical summer PM peak hour (LOS D) (Wood Rodgers 2016:17); however, higher traffic during holidays, special events, and certain summer and winter peak periods results in long vehicle spillback to upstream intersections, long delays throughout the tourist core area, and undesirable traffic operations. The study area is projected to experience substantial increases in traffic congestion in the casino core in the future that would result in LOS E or worse conditions during normal summer peak hours.
- E. *Neighborhood traffic operations.* Neighborhood “cut-through” traffic occurs as drivers seek ways to avoid the congestion during peak periods in the summer and winter months and provides drivers with a faster travel route around the tourist core outside peak periods. Traffic volumes at the study area “gateways” have increased approximately 20 percent since 2011 while traffic within the casino core area has slightly decreased (Caltrans 2016, NDOT 2016, El Dorado County 2016), indicating that vehicles are using the neighborhood streets to bypass the core. The cut-through vehicles cause congestion in residential neighborhoods and have been observed to travel at high speeds, which

endangers local residents and changes the character of the neighborhood. The project is needed to improve safety and operations of local roads through neighborhoods by providing roadway changes that reduce congestion and provide a more efficient travel route in the tourist core area for through traffic.

- F. *Regional and local plans.* The project is needed to implement adopted regional and local plans for the area, including the Lake Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan, the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, the Tourist Core Area Plan, and the South Shore Area Plan. The transportation improvements and water quality improvements included in the project are identified in these plans.
- G. *Redevelopment and revitalization.* Another project purpose is to create opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization of the study area. Currently, the study area is more conducive to vehicular travel than other modes, which presents limitations to walkability and bicycle use. Improvements to the existing US 50 through the tourist core to create a safer environment for pedestrian and bicycle travel are needed to make the study area more inviting for residents and visitors to patronize existing businesses. Additionally, a portion of the study area is located within the City of South Lake Tahoe Core Area Plan (TCAP). One of the guiding principles of the TCAP is to establish a diverse and concentrated mix of uses that create a strong, lively market (City of South Lake Tahoe 2013:4-1), which would help achieve the vision for revitalization of this area.

1.3.3 Project Objectives

Recognizing the needs for and fundamental purposes of the project, it would be intended to achieve the following basic project objectives identified by TTD:

- ▲ reduce overall vehicle delays through improved motor vehicle mobility on the state highway system, including for commercial access and a better resident and visitor experience;
- ▲ decrease dependence on the use of private automobiles;
- ▲ reduce the traffic volumes through the tourist corridor and “cut-through” traffic in adjacent neighborhoods, and develop a “complete street” for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit, and vehicles;
- ▲ improve visual and environmental conditions within the corridor;
- ▲ improve connectivity, reliability, travel times, and operations of public transportation modes, including increased mobility and safety for bicycles and pedestrians and enhanced public access to Van Sickle Bi-State Park;
- ▲ make public transportation more effective with better visibility, connectivity, reliability, and travel times;
- ▲ comply with TRPA regional level-of-service criteria;
- ▲ facilitate the creation of a safe and walkable district that enhances pedestrian and bicyclist activities and safety and improves the City of South Lake Tahoe’s and Douglas County’s competitiveness with other regional and national tourist destinations;
- ▲ create gateway and streetscape features that create a sense of place, align with complete streets principles, are reflective of Lake Tahoe’s natural setting, and provide effective way-finding;
- ▲ provide opportunity for redevelopment and revitalization within the project site;
- ▲ provide replacement housing for all residential units acquired for highway right-of-way purposes before groundbreaking for transportation improvements; and
- ▲ result in no net loss of housing in the South Shore area.

1.4 LOGICAL TERMINI AND INDEPENDENT UTILITY

FHWA regulations (23 CFR Part 771.111[f]) require that an action evaluated in a NEPA EIS meet three criteria addressing logical termini and independent utility. Logical termini are defined as rational end points for a transportation improvement and review of the environmental impacts. A project is considered to have independent utility when it can function, or operate, on its own without further construction of an adjoining segment. Projects must not preclude the opportunity to consider alternatives for a future, related transportation improvement. Project termini must be selected to prevent a highway improvement from forcing further improvements that may have adverse consequences not addressed in the applicable environmental studies.

The following discussion describes how the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project alternatives studied in this environmental document would meet the three criteria for defining logical termini and independent utility.

- ▲ **Criterion 1.** Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope.

The project action alternatives (except Alternative E, Skywalk) involve realignment of US 50 along the mountain side of Lake Parkway and address erosion control and water quality through stormwater drainage improvements. The termini, inclusive of Alternatives B, C, and D, would be as follows (see Exhibit 2-1):

- US 50 just west of its intersection with Pioneer Trail in California
- US 50 to its intersection with SR 207 in Nevada
- Stateline Avenue west of Azure Avenue
- Montreal Road and Lake Parkway

The termini for Alternative E would be US 50 just west of its intersection with Stateline Avenue in California and a point on US 50 west of the intersection with Lake Parkway.

The transportation needs discussed above are all located within these termini. These needs can be addressed without creating additional issues approaching or departing the study area. Thus, the project site encompasses a geographic area of sufficient size and scope for improvements.

- ▲ **Criterion 2.** Have independent utility or independent significance (i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made).

As described in Section 3.6, “Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities,” the project would provide substantial improvement over the no build condition by improving traffic operations, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, transit features, and intermodal connectivity and by substantially reducing cut-through traffic with the new US 50 through the Rocky Point neighborhood. All state highway facilities would be designed to meet Caltrans and NDOT standards. Because the project involves the transportation improvements necessary to improve traffic conditions, it does not require other highway connections or improvements to enable it to perform properly. Also, the project would expand and enhance multi-modal access within the project site limits, so additional trail improvements would not be needed for adequate connectivity.

- ▲ **Criterion 3.** Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

The analysis presented in this document considers the transportation system beyond the project site to ensure that none of the action alternatives would create the need for additional transportation improvements in the vicinity. As a result, the scope of the project includes end points that extend beyond

the existing US 50/Pioneer Trail intersection and US 50/Lake Parkway intersection alone; further, because the proposed improvements are of sufficient length and scope, implementing the project or any of the action alternatives would not substantially increase congestion or reduce safety outside the defined study area. Therefore, the project alternatives would not force immediate transportation improvements on the remaining segments of the roadways outside the project site; and it would not constrain future improvement of any transportation facilities to which it connects.

1.5 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The environmental review process for the project began with issuance of a Notice of Preparation (NOP)/ Notice of Intent (NOI) to inform agencies and the public that a Draft EIR/EIS/EIS would be prepared for the project, and to solicit views of agencies and the public as to the scope and content of the document. The NOP was sent to the California and Nevada State Clearinghouses; federal, state, and local agencies; interested stakeholder groups; and members of the public who had requested notices about the project. The NOI was published in the Federal Register on November 1, 2011. An NOP/NOI informs the reviewer of the lead agencies' intent to prepare an environmental document.

Two public scoping meetings were held to provide the opportunity to learn more about the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project and to receive comments from agencies, other interested parties, and the public regarding the issues that should be addressed in the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS.

The scoping meetings were held as follows:

- ▲ November 10, 2011. TTD Board meeting, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada.
- ▲ December 7, 2011. TRPA Advisory Planning Commission (APC) meeting, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada.

The NOP/NOI was distributed on November 2, 2011, and the designated public scoping period extended for 44 calendar days, concluding on December 16, 2011.

Scoping comments received are summarized in Appendix A, "NOP/NOI and Scoping Summary Report."

In addition to the formal scoping process, TTD has engaged in numerous public outreach activities subsequent to the public scoping process, as identified in Table 1-2 below.

Table 1-2 Summary of Public Outreach Activities That Occurred Subsequent to the Public Scoping Process

Year	PDT Meetings	City of South Lake Tahoe Council Presentations	Douglas County Board of County Commissioners Presentations	Community Meetings	Service Club Presentations	Community Review Committee Meetings	Business Review Committee Meetings	Community Events/Stakeholder Meetings	One-on-One Meetings	Flyer Distribution	Press Releases/Media Alerts
2011	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	2	5	0	4	13	0	0	1	21	2	2
2013	1	1	0	2	1	4	5	1	20	1	5
2014	1	3	0	1	3	0	0	1	20	0	2
2015	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	20	0	3
2016	0	0	0	11	5	0	0	0	4	0	2
Totals	8	10	1	19	22	4	5	6	85	3	14

Source: Wasner, pers. comm., 2016a, 2016b; Robinson, pers. comm., 2016

1.6 NEXT STEPS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

This Draft EIR/EIS/EIS has been released for public review and comment during a 60-day period (TRPA Rules of Procedure Section 6.13.2). After the public review and comment period ends, all comments on the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS will be evaluated and considered. Responses will be provided on substantive environmental points raised in public comments. In addition, any changes and refinements to the project that occur as a result of ongoing planning or comments received during the public review period will be described.

Following the close of the public comment period, a Final EIR/EIS/EIS that includes responses to all comments that raise environmental issues and selection of a preferred alternative will be prepared and circulated in accordance with CEQA, NEPA, and TRPA requirements. Following a 60-day circulation period for the Draft EIS and lead agency consideration of all comments received during public review of the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS and circulation of the Final EIR/EIS/EIS for 30 days, each of the lead agencies (TTD, TRPA, and FHWA) will follow their respective agency processes for decision making.

Following completion of the responses to comments and preparation of the final environmental document, TTD, FHWA, and TRPA will select a preferred alternative and make the final determination of the project's effect on the environment. Public meetings will be held by TTD and TRPA as part of the process of selecting the preferred alternative and considering project approval.

Under CEQA, the EIR certification process will include preparation of Findings of Fact for all significant impacts identified, adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for mitigation incorporated into the project, and preparation of a Statement of Overriding Considerations for impacts that would not be mitigated below a level of significance (if applicable). The Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations will be considered before project approval. If the project is approved and the environmental document is certified, TTD will then file a Notice of Determination with the California and Nevada State Clearinghouses that will document the project's approval.

Following completion of an EIS under NEPA, FHWA will prepare a record of decision (ROD) documenting its decision regarding the project. In preparing a ROD for the project under 40 CFR Section 1505.2, FHWA is required to "[s]tate whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted, and ... [a] monitoring and enforcement program shall be adopted and summarized where applicable for any mitigation." Under 23 USC 139(n)(2), the Final EIS and ROD are to be combined in one document and distributed at the same time to the maximum extent practicable. A combined Final EIS and ROD is not being prepared at this time because the draft EIS must first be circulated for public comment about the project. This is a complicated transportation improvements project that would displace a substantial number of residents and, for the purposes of NEPA, a preferred alternative cannot be identified until public comments on the draft EIS are considered.

This document has been prepared in accordance with Article VII of the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact, Chapter 3 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances, and Article VI of the TRPA Rules of Procedure. Following the public and agency consultation period, substantive comments relating to the environmental analysis will be reviewed and responses will be prepared. The final environmental document will be presented to the TRPA Advisory Planning Commission, which will make a recommendation to the TRPA Governing Board with respect to certification of the proposed final document. The Governing Board will provide an opportunity for comment on the proposed final environmental document at a Governing Board hearing. The Governing Board will then consider taking action to certify the Final EIS and adopt findings (in accordance with TRPA Code Section 4.4) before considering approval of a project alternative.

1.7 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project Draft EIR/EIS/EIS is available for public and agency review online at TTD's website: www.tahoetransportation.org/us50 and TRPA's website: www.trpa.org/get-involved/major-projects/. In addition, hard copies of the document are available at the following locations.

Tahoe Transportation District
128 Market Street, Suite 3F
Stateline, NV 89449

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV

South Lake Tahoe Public Library
1000 Rufus Allen Boulevard
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Zephyr Cove Library
338 Warrior Way
Zephyr Cove, NV 89448

The 75-day public review period extends from April 24, 2017 through July 7, 2017.

Written comments on the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS may be sent directly to: Russ Nygaard, Transportation Capital Program Manager, Tahoe Transportation District, P.O. Box 499, Zephyr Cove, NV 89448 or via fax 775-588-0917 or submitted by email to info@tahoetransportation.org.

Oral comments on the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS may be provided at a series of public hearings as listed below. Additional hearings or informational meetings, if scheduled, will be posted on TTD's website.

- ▲ **June 9, 2017:** TTD Board of Directors Meeting, TRPA Board Rooms, 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada.
- ▲ **June 13, 2017:** TRPA Advisory Planning Committee Meeting, TRPA Board Rooms, 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada.
- ▲ **June 28, 2017:** TRPA Governing Board Meeting, TRPA Board Rooms, 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada.

1.8 PERMITS, REVIEWS, AND APPROVALS

Table 1-3 identifies the permits, reviews, and approvals that would be required for project construction.

Table 1-3 Required Permits, Reviews, and Approvals

Agency	Environmental Review Process Role	Permit/Approval
Tahoe Transportation District	CEQA Lead	CEQA compliance, project approval, funding approval
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency	TRPA Lead	TRPA Regional Plan/Compact compliance, project approval, construction permits
Federal Highway Administration	NEPA Lead	NEPA compliance, National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance, Endangered Species Act Section 7 compliance, project approval, funding approval, Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) determination
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Federal approving agency	Clean Water Act Section 404 dredge and fill permit
California Tahoe Conservancy	CEQA Responsible Agency	Concurrence on Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) determination, encroachment permit
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	CEQA Responsible Agency	California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 streambed alteration agreement
California Department of Transportation	CEQA Responsible Agency	Design review and approval. Relinquishment of ROW for existing US 50 between Pioneer Trail and Stateline Avenue, acceptance of ROW for new US 50 in California, encroachment permits
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board	CEQA Responsible Agency	Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Construction Permit, dewatering permit, stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP)
Nevada Division of State Parks	Nevada approving agency	Concurrence on Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) determination
Nevada Department of Transportation	Nevada approving agency	Design review and approval. Relinquishment of ROW for existing US 50 between Stateline Avenue and Lake Parkway, acceptance of ROW for new US 50 in Nevada, encroachment permits
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection	Nevada approving agency	Stormwater pollution prevention plan approval
City of South Lake Tahoe	CEQA Responsible Agency	Design review and approval, encroachment permits, special use permits, demolition and construction permits, sign permits, relinquishment of ROW for existing Lake Parkway and local roads in California, and acceptance of ROW for existing US 50 between Pioneer Trail and Stateline Avenue
Douglas County	Nevada approving agency	Design review and approval, encroachment permits, construction permits, acceptance of ROW for existing US 50 between Stateline Avenue and Lake Parkway, and relinquishment of ROW for new US 50 in Nevada

Source: Data compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2016