

## **ISSUE SUMMARY**

**Context/Background:** The Draft Regional Plan includes a series of transportation-related amendments that are intended to reduce automobile dependency, encourage compact walkable redevelopment, and improve bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities. Key amendments include:

- Modifying/adding Land Use Policies to limit new growth, promote compact redevelopment in walkable community centers, and encourage the relocation of development from automobile dependent areas;
- Exempting bike/pedestrian trails from coverage requirements to make bike trails more feasible;
- Expanding requirements for installation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities with new or redevelopment;
- Allowing vehicle levels of service (LOS) to be exceeded when alternative transportation facilities are provided or available; and
- Prioritizing bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects over projects to expand roadway capacity.

This Issue Sheet focuses on specific transportation policies. The related land use and coverage policies are addressed separately in Issue Sheets #2 through #5. Airport policies are also addressed separately in Issue Sheet #10 – Noise. Specific transportation projects and funding provisions are being reviewed separately by the Tahoe Transportation Commission (TTC) as the advisory body to the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO).

**RPU Committee:** All transportation related amendments were unanimously endorsed, except certain details of Land Use Policies and provisions for vehicle LOS to be exceeded, which were advanced by a non-unanimous vote. The Bi-State Recommendation addresses non-unanimous issues.

**EIS Analysis:** The EIS did not identify any significant impacts. Mitigation is not required.

**Public Comments:** Agency and public comments were generally supportive of policies that promote multi-modal forms of transportation. Comments raised concerns related to LOS standards and tying the release of allocations to LOS standards. Another concern was that requiring easements for bicycle and pedestrian facilities could increase costs and delay construction. Some commenters supported individual projects, such as waterborne transit or bike trails, while others opposed them, primarily due to environmental impacts and cost.

### **Summary of Recommendation:**

1. Transportation-related aspects of the Bi-State Recommendation are addressed in other issue sheets.
2. Consider public comments on transportation-related amendments.

## **ISSUE ANALYSIS**

### **Context/Background:**

During Pathway and Place-Based visioning processes, stakeholders identified that existing Code has an unintended effect of prioritizing the free flow of automobiles ahead of vehicle trip reduction, multimodal access, and associated environmental and air quality benefits. Stakeholders also identified that certain Code provisions create significant obstacles to the construction of connected bicycle and pedestrian travel ways. The Draft Regional Plan establishes new policies and modified Code provisions to encourage bicycling, walking, and transit use, and to allow the transportation system to evolve in a way that supports compact redevelopment, environmental thresholds, and reduces reliance on the private automobile.

Key policy and Code changes include:

1. Land Use Policies: Many land use policy amendments in the Draft Plan are intended to reduce automobile dependency and promote walking, biking and transit use. Important transportation-related policy modifications include provisions to accelerate development transfers, provisions to increase allowable intensity in community centers and provisions requiring transit and pedestrian oriented designs for development projects. These items are addressed in Issue Sheets #2 through #5.
2. Bicycle Path Coverage Waiver: Under the Draft Plan, non-motorized public trails would be exempt from the calculation of land coverage, subject to certain siting and design requirements that minimize disturbance of sensitive lands and vegetation. This provision is addressed in Issue Sheet #5, Coverage.
3. Accommodation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities in Projects: All applicants for commercial, tourist, mixed-use, multi-family, public service, and recreation projects, including the construction, alteration, or improvement of roadways, on lands designated with bicycle and pedestrian network trail segments in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan would be required to grant an easement for the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in accordance with criteria that take into consideration the size and cost of the project.

Additional provisions in this Code section minimize the impact to private property owners by stipulating that:

- TRPA, in reviewing project applications, shall have the discretion to adjust or waive site development standards (Chapters 30-39) to the minimum extent necessary to facilitate the efficient connection of new trails to existing and planned trail networks,

while minimizing impacts of the easement on development and redevelopment projects;

- Neither the land coverage nor the site area required for the bicycle or pedestrian improvement shall reduce the total land coverage or development potential otherwise allowed for the project area;
  - All easement dedications imposed on approved applications shall be reasonably related to the anticipated impacts of the proposed development or land use and to the purposes of this section. Any condition imposed shall be roughly proportional both in nature and extent to the anticipated impacts of the proposed development; and
  - Any dedication may qualify toward required offsets of the air quality mitigation program.
4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Maintenance Plan: Entities responsible for the construction and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities proposed as part of a project shall provide a maintenance plan, including a funding strategy for the life of the bike and pedestrian facility.
  5. Vehicle Level of Service (LOS): Existing vehicle LOS requirements for new projects could be exceeded when provisions for multi-modal amenities and/or services (such as transit, bicycling, and walking facilities) are adequate to provide mobility for users. The draft plan also calls for a more comprehensive assessment of LOS standards as a post-update work program. This topic is addressed in Issue Sheet #3, Community Character.
  6. Transportation Projects: The Draft Regional Transportation Plan prioritizes funding for pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements over projects that focus on expanded roadway capacity. Transportation project funding is intended to complement land use policies and regulations that promote pedestrian, bicycle and transit use. Specific Transportation Projects are being reviewed separately by the Tahoe Transportation Commission.

**RPU Committee Action:**

The RPU Committee unanimously endorsed code changes related to coverage waivers (#2 above), provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (#3 above) and maintenance plans (#4 above).

The RPU Committee endorsed most land use policies (#1 above) unanimously, although certain details were advanced by a non-unanimous vote. These provisions are addressed in Issue Sheets #2 through #5, which relate to Land Use.

The RPU Committee advanced Roadway LOS exemptions (#5 above) by a non-unanimous vote. This provision is addressed in Issue Sheets #3 (Community Character).

Endorsed Plan and Code sections for the accommodation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and for maintenance plans, are attached as Exhibit A. Other topics are addressed in separate Issue Sheets.

**EIS Analysis:**

The EIS did not identify any significant impacts related to policies or code covered by this Issue Sheet.

**Bi-State Recommendation:**

The Bi-State Recommendation did not address topics in this Issue Sheet.

**Public Comments:**

Exhibit B lists comments from Agencies, Organizations and Businesses/Individuals that address transportation issues.

Most comments related to roadway levels of service, the bicycle path coverage waiver, and requests for the inclusion or exclusion of specific types of projects from the Regional Transportation Plan. Summaries of comments on roadway levels of service and the bicycle path coverage waiver are included in Issue Sheets #3 and #5, respectively.

Comments were largely supportive of the policy focus on promoting alternative forms of transportation.

Some California State Agencies expressed concern with increased costs associated with bicycle trail requirements, as well as reduced revenues at recreation areas if more people arrive by bicycle or by foot, bypassing the fee charged for automobile parking.

Public Agency Comments:

Local Government comments generally supported land use policies, LOS provisions and bicycle path coverage waiver.

- Placer County and the City of South Lake Tahoe were concerned about tying the release of commodities to LOS. This issue is addressed in Issue Sheet #2, Commodities and Development Transfers.

Comments from the California Tahoe Conservancy, on behalf of California State Agencies, “strongly endorse the Plan’s emphasis on creating sustainable transit, bike and pedestrian-friendly communities.” Comments noted the need for significant public investments to complement the policy framework.

California Department of Parks and Recreation expressed a concern about increased impacts to operations of managed destination recreation areas with an increase in accessibility by non-auto modes of transportation. Their specific concerns included:

- Loss of revenue due to an increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic and a decrease in vehicle traffic (vehicle traffic is charged a parking fee, bicycle and pedestrian traffic is not, due to the dispersed nature of bicycle and pedestrian travel);
- Greater congestion on trails and beaches will create increased need for law enforcement and medical response and will negatively affect the park operations along with the visitors' experience.

Caltrans also expressed concern with the bicycle and pedestrian accommodation requirements for projects:

- Concern over the feasibility of bicycle and pedestrian requirements when constructing projects and that language as it is written now will increase cost and lead to project delays. They request clarification on what qualifies as "construction, alteration, or improvement of roadways..." that would require bicycle and pedestrian facilities and that routine maintenance, surface overlays, etc. be considered for exclusion from this trigger.

The State of Nevada did not submit written comments. Staff has met with Nevada State agencies and understands that they generally support the Transportation policies.

#### Comments from Organizations and Advocacy Groups:

Many organizations expressed support for the transportation policy focus. Reducing automobile reliance is a policy objective that appears to be widely supported.

Some organizations felt that the draft plan increases total VMT as a means to reduce per capita emissions. These commenters felt that this was inappropriate.

Comments from some organizations supported waterborne transit, while others were concerned about potential environmental impacts.

One citizen organization questioned the appropriateness of Tahoe being a Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the appropriateness of the Sustainable Community Strategy requirement for Tahoe.

#### Comments from Businesses and Individuals:

Comments from individuals tended to focus on bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements and other transportation projects. The vast majority of comments supported bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements, especially for a connected network around the Lake and for safe routes to

schools. Some commenters noted specific projects that they supported or opposed. Other comments had concern over environmental impacts and costs of bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Comments from one business focused on the feasibility of requiring bicycle pedestrian easements in all new development, and had concerns that requiring bicycle and pedestrian easements could preclude or limit development on a site.

Comments from Harrah's / Harveys recommended that designs for the South Shore Community Revitalization Project should maintain 4 lanes on the road segment between Stateline Avenue and West Lake Parkway, in addition to re-routing U.S. 50 behind the casinos.

Several commenters requested consideration of a Development Rights Acquisition and Land Restoration program, whereby excess Tourist Accommodation Units (TAUs) could be retired, and Commercial Floor Area (CFA) in sensitive areas could be more easily transferred to Town Centers or retired. This suggestion is addressed in greater detail in Issue Sheet #2, Commodities and Development Transfers.

**Recommendation:**

The majority of comments that were received on Transportation Issues addressed the bicycle trail coverage waiver, vehicle level of service, or expressed general support for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements.

Transportation-related aspects of the Bi-State Recommendation are addressed in other Issue Sheets. Staff recommends the Update Committee:

1. Consider public comments on transportation-related amendments.

**Exhibits:**

- A. Draft Plan and Code Text - April 25, 2012
- B. List of Applicable Comment Letters