

## APPENDIX F (NEW): ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) developing the Regional Transportation Plan Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) TRPA must prepare an Environmental Justice analysis. The analysis ensures the Plan's programs, policies, and activities do not disproportionately and adversely affect minority and/or low-income residents and that transportation benefits and burdens are equitably distributed. The vision for Tahoe laid out in the RTP/SCS includes providing multimodal transportation options for everyone, ensuring our most vulnerable populations have transit and bike paths within a reasonable distance. The goals and objectives for Environmental Justice (EJ) built into the RTP/SCS focus on providing alternatives to the car so that everyone can access essential services and critical medical appointments every day.

### Goals and Objectives

The RTP/SCS emphasizes transportation projects and programs provide equitable opportunities

for all users and supporting policies that ensure EJ is integrated into the planning framework.

2.7: Provide specialized and subsidized public transportation services and programs for individuals with disabilities that is consistent with Coordinated Human Services Transportation plans.

Policy 2.8: Ensure all transportation projects, programs, and policies meet the transportation needs and minimize negative impacts for disadvantaged communities and people with special needs

Policy 5.2: Ensure access to public transit in identified Priority Community Zones

Objectives of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) are outlined in the RTP/SCS Communities section and complement the EJ analysis. The RHNA works to ensure that affordable and achievable housing will be built in the Region, offering opportunities for employees to live and work in Tahoe which can reduce commute times and improve quality of life.

Capitalize on existing and planned transportation system improvements to streamline approval of affordable-achievable housing projects, lowering construction costs and facilitating compliance with Regional Housing Needs Assessment requirements.

### Framework

Environmental justice analysis uses a strong framework:

- **Step 1:** Use demographic data to understand the community's needs.
- **Step 2:** Develop a Public Engagement Plan that responds to the community.
- **Step 3:** Consider proposed projects and any likely adverse effects and benefits.
- **Step 4:** Select appropriate and equitable programs and projects as needed mitigation.

- **Step 5:** Take action to identify how this framework can be integrated into all project development, not only federally funded projects<sup>99</sup>.

## The Community

### Demographics

Lake Tahoe is situated in a beautiful and environmentally sensitive enclosed watershed, and its communities are supported by a robust seasonal recreation tourist economy that supports just over 51,000 residents and attracts millions of visitors each year.

TRPA conducted demographic analysis of the Region to better understand who the plan will serve

Tahoe’s main roadway network is comprised of state route highways that circle the lake. The highways connect communities and connect neighborhoods to commercial areas and recreation sites. Employment opportunities are concentrated along the main roadways and in clusters on the North and South shores. Grocery stores and public schools are also a short distance from the main roadway network.

Residential areas are dispersed around the lake, although most of the Region’s 51,000 permanent residents are concentrated along the North and South shores, as shown in the population density maps.

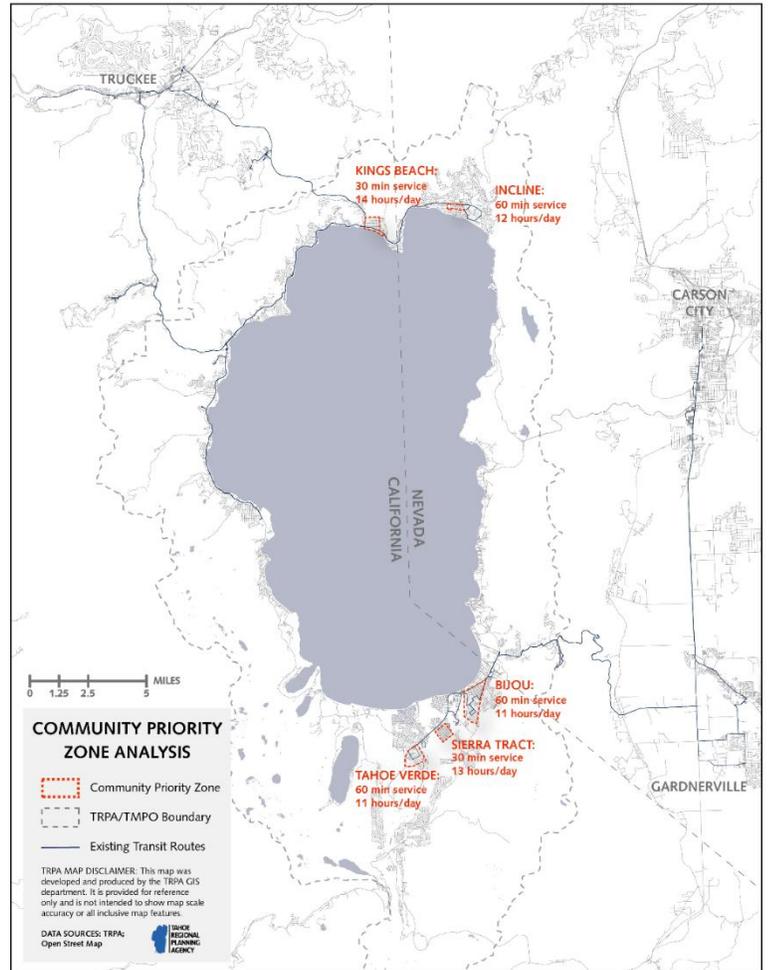


Figure 87: Community Priority Zone Analysis Map

<sup>99</sup> “California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) considers environmental justice to be activities taken by a recipient of federal funding to ensure the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin”

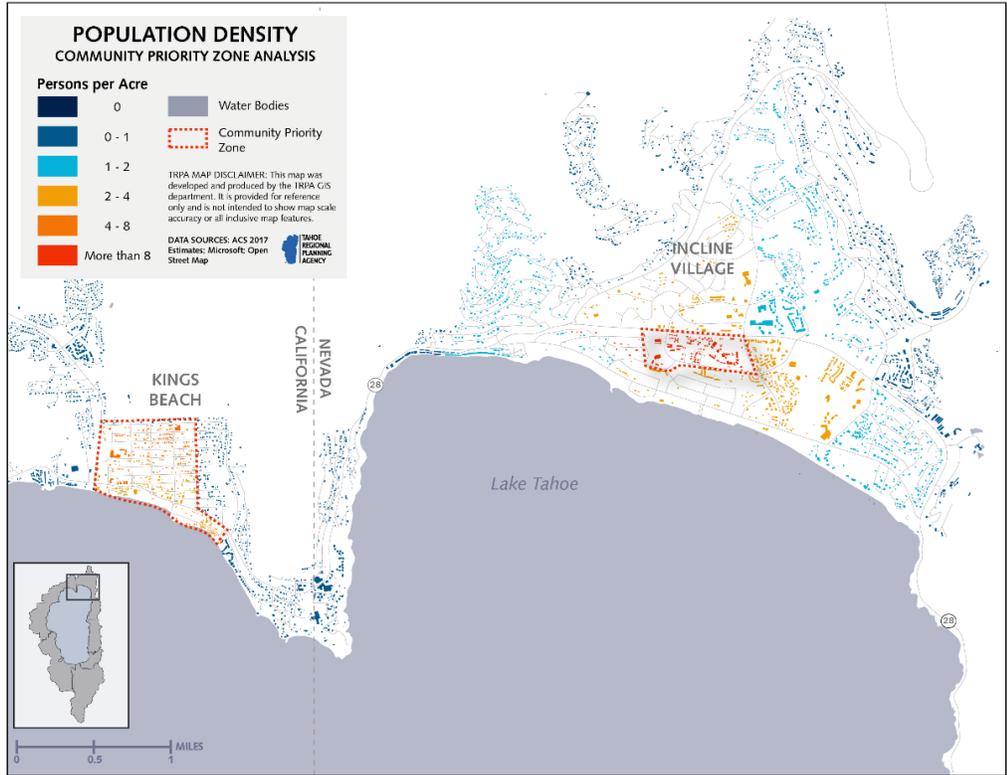


Figure 88: Population Density North Shore

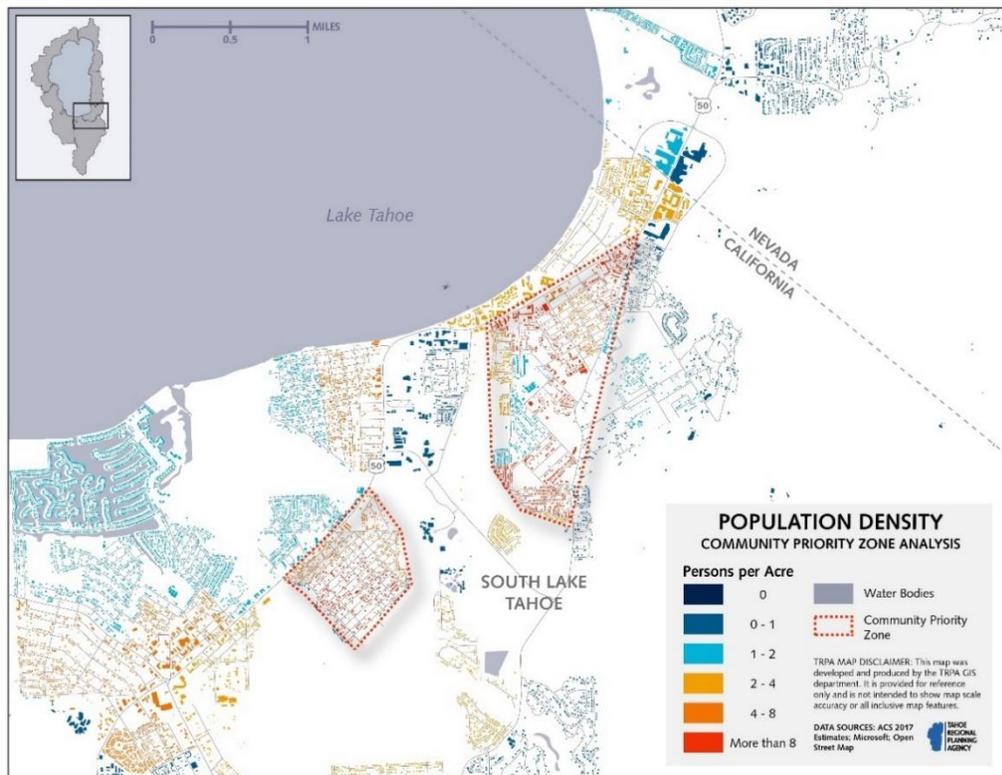


Figure 89: Population Density South Shore

Of Tahoe’s 51,000 year-round residents, over 83% are white. The North Shore communities of Incline Village and Kings Beach have higher densities of minority populations than on the

South Shore, where minority residents are dispersed throughout the city and in several identified Priority Communities.

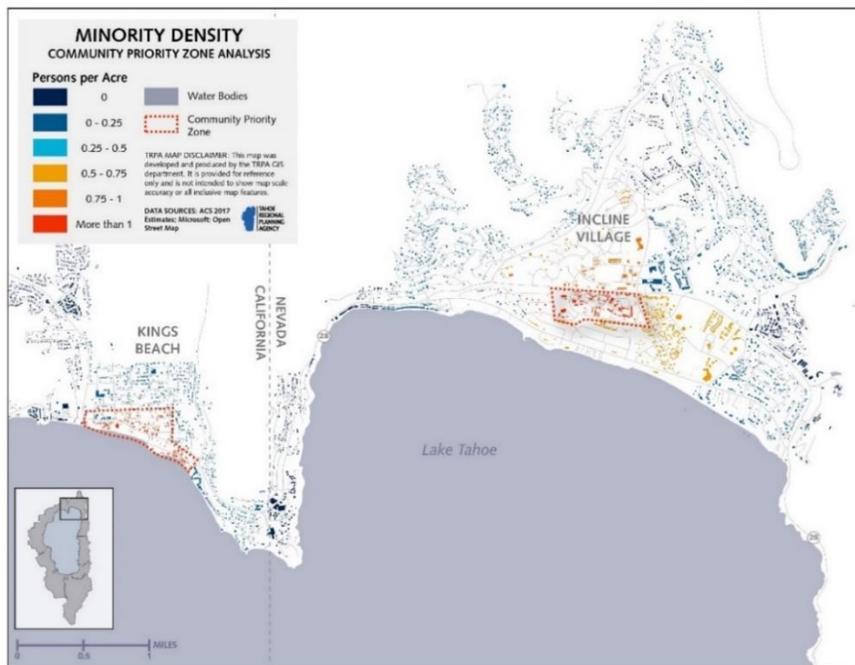


Figure 90: Minority Population Density North Shore

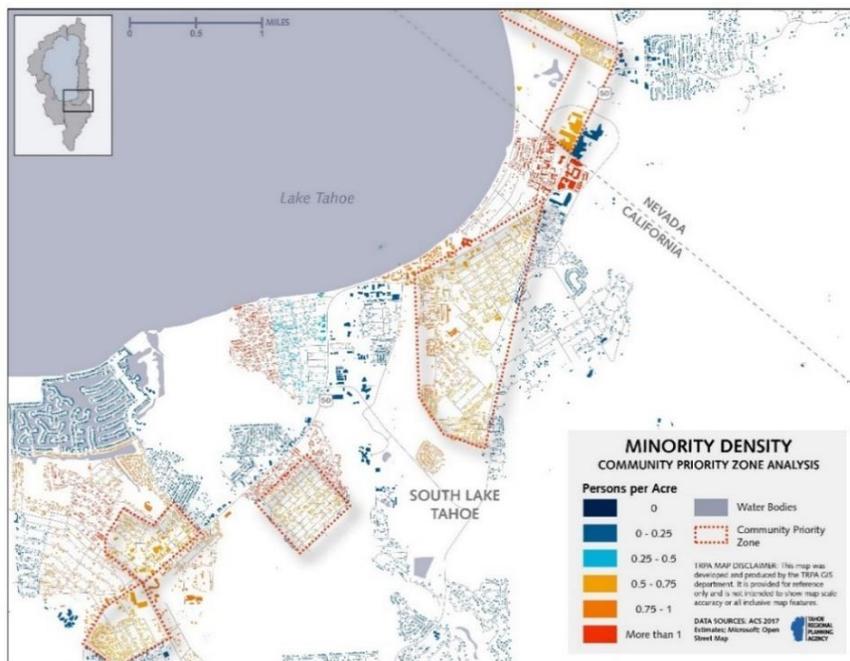


Figure 91: Minority Population Density South Shore

Low income is defined according to the U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines and reflected through U.S. Census block groups in Tahoe.

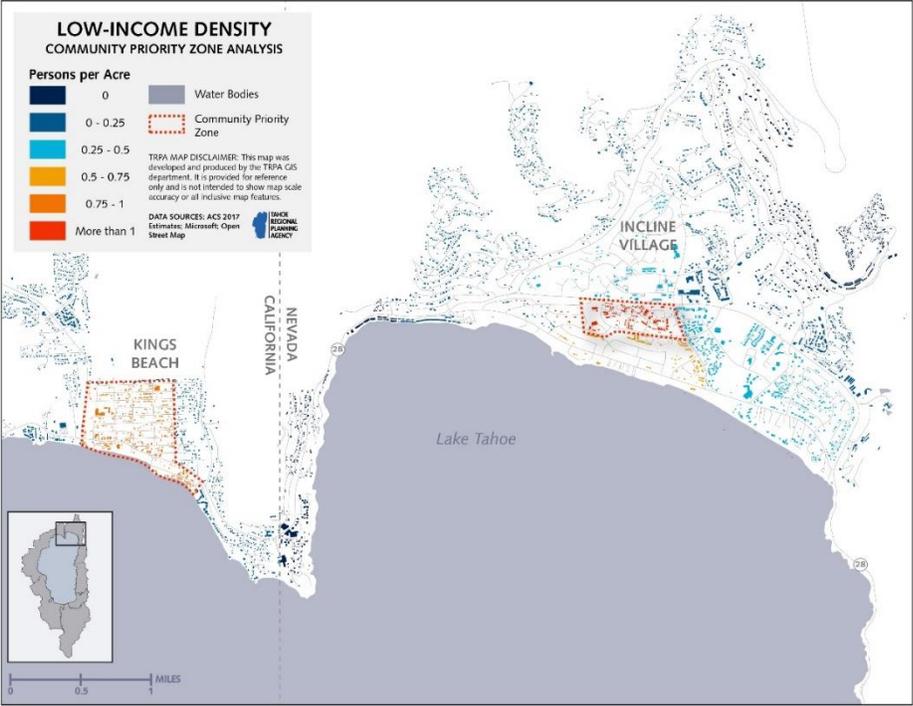


Figure 92: Low-Income Density North Shore

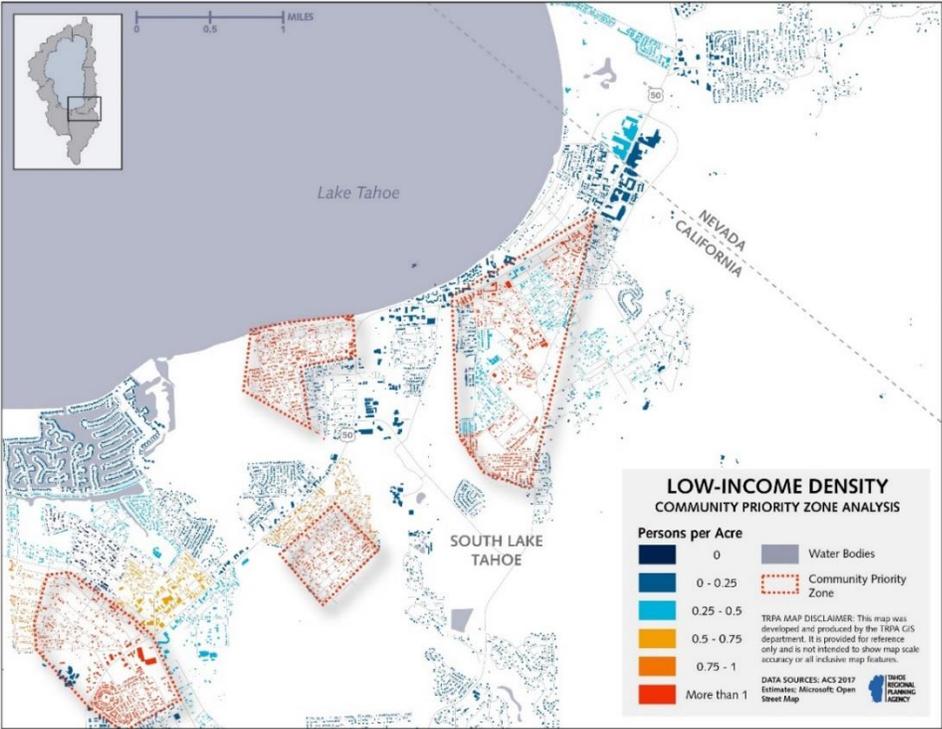


Figure 93: Low-Income Density South Shore

### *Defining Priority Communities*

As the MPO, TRPA is required to adopt a definition for disadvantaged communities prior to receiving formula funds from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for the Active Transportation Program. The TRPA adopted definition for disadvantaged communities is residents earning below 80 percent of the statewide median income and neighborhoods within two miles of school with more than 75 percent of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. Under this definition, only one neighborhood in Tahoe is recognized as a disadvantaged community.

The EJ demographic analysis identified concentrations of need in the Region outside of the one recognized disadvantaged community. To ensure these residents are served by the plan, staff defined Priority Communities as neighborhoods with higher densities of at least three of the following criteria:

1. **Persons without Private Transportation (Zero Vehicle (ZEV)Households):** Lack of a personal vehicle is a significant factor for transit need. In 2018, 72 percent of TART riders and 61 percent of TTD riders did not have access to a personal vehicle.<sup>10</sup>
2. **Elderly (individuals 65 years and older):** Elderly individuals may choose not to drive or can no longer drive due to age
3. **Persons Below Poverty or Median Income Levels:** Purchasing and

maintaining a personal vehicle might be difficult for households with lower income

4. **Individuals with a Disability:** Disability status may impact an individual's ability to live independently, including driving a personal vehicle
5. **Minorities (Latinx/Hispanic, Black, Asian, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Other, Two or More Races):** Minority groups are more likely to live in densely populated areas, are less likely to have access to a car, and are more likely to use public transportation to commute to work.<sup>11</sup>

The plan uses a layered approach to project and program implementation, with the first layer focused on expanding transit services and access to bike paths and pedestrian infrastructure for those living in disadvantaged and Priority Communities.

### *Process/Outreach*

Public involvement is fundamental and essential to achieve equitable programs, services, and activities. The 2019 Public Participation Plan defines an inclusive and equitable outreach and public engagement process that considers expressed the viewpoints of minority, low-income, and low-English proficiency populations. Engagement opportunities were offered early and continuously through the planning process.

<sup>10</sup>

<https://monitoring.laketahoeinfo.org/FileResource/DisplayResource/137d250d-1271-4071-b47c-349b84d92f65>

<sup>11</sup> TCRP Report 49 Using Public Transportation to Reduce the Economic, Social, and Human Costs of Personal Immobility: [http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp\\_rpt\\_49.pdf](http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_49.pdf)

TRPA's Title VI, LEP, and Public Participation Plan provide guidance on for reaching underserved communities, including providing written materials in English and Spanish, distributing surveys in English and Spanish, actively working with social services agencies, attending meetings for Spanish-speaking community members, and conducting door-to-door outreach in low-English proficiency neighborhoods.

In 2017, TRPA formally established two Social Services Transportation Advisory Councils (SSTAC) on the North and South shores to serve as advisory bodies for transit dependent and transit disadvantaged people in Tahoe, including the elderly, disabled, and low-income individuals. Each SSTAC group meets at least twice per year to identify and discuss unmet transit needs, and accessibility issues, such as to town centers and mobility hubs. The annual Unmet Transit Needs report is developed and produced through the SSTAC and helps inform plan priorities.

As required by the Transportation Development Act, the SSTAC is comprised of the following members:

- One representative of potential transit users who is 60 years of age or older.
- One representative of potential transit users who are disabled.
- Two representatives of the local social service providers for seniors, including one representative of a social service transportation provider if one exists.
- Two representatives of local social service providers for persons with disabilities, including one representative of a social service transportation provider if one exists.

- One representative of a local social service provider for persons of limited means.
- Two representatives from the local consolidated transportation service agency, designated pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 15975 of the Government Code, if one exists, including one representative from an operator, if one exists.
- The transportation planning agency may appoint additional members in accordance with the procedure prescribed in subdivision (b).

#### Analysis

Analysis helps to understand Priority Community's transportation needs.

Walking, biking, and using transit are often the only means of transportation for Priority Communities. Providing proximity to pedestrian and bicycle facilities and to transit is critical to ensuring essential daily activities and services, such as school and work, are reachable by the most the vulnerable in our communities.

TRPA defines reasonable access to transportation services as:

1. Transit Access: 1/4 mile to transit stops
2. Bike Access: 1/2 mile to bike paths
3. Pedestrian Access: 1/4 mile to bike paths and sidewalks

#### Environmental Justice in the Regional Transportation Plan

A gap analysis to assess whether the plan's projects and programs create inequitable impacts on Priority Communities.

The analysis found mixed levels of access across the Region. Some Priority Communities have good access to pedestrian and bike paths, such as Incline Village on the North Shore, while other communities, such as the Tahoe Verde neighborhood on the South Shore, has only 50 percent of its residents within ½-mile to pedestrian and bike paths. Many Priority

Communities lack access to transit, particularly Tahoe Verde and Sierra Tract on the South Shore.

The following table illustrates how the RTP/SCS constrained projects improve access within Priority Communities.

Table 23: Priority Communities Transportation Access

**Priority Communities' Transportation Access**

<b>Priority Communities</b>	<b>1/2 Mile Access to Bike Paths EXISTING</b>	<b>1/2 Mile Access to Bike Paths PROPOSED (2045)</b>	<b>1/4 Mile Access to Sidewalks and Bike Paths EXISTING</b>	<b>1/4 Mile Access to Sidewalks and Bike Paths PROPOSED (2045)</b>	<b>1/4 Mile Access to Transit Stops EXISTING</b>	<b>1/4 Mile Access to Transit Stops PROPOSED (2045)</b>
<i>Tahoe Verde</i>	56%	87%	62%	67%	45%	40%
<i>Sierra Tract</i>	100%	100%	92%	97%	9%	100%
<i>Bijou</i>	96%	98%	74%	91%	65%	97%
<i>Kings Beach</i>	0%	97%	99%	99%	57%	99%
<i>Incline Village</i>	100%	100%	99%	99%	56%	99%

These RTP/SCS projects helped improve transportation access:

- *MICRO TRANSIT serving the Sierra Tract and Bijou*
- *Multi Use Trail along US50 west of the wye serving Tahoe Verde*

- *Multi Use trail closing a large gap in the bike network in King’s Beach*
- *Rerouting buses for efficiency in Tahoe Verde on the South shore*

The following maps visualize the outcomes of the plan’s projects that focus on Priority Communities on the North and South shores.

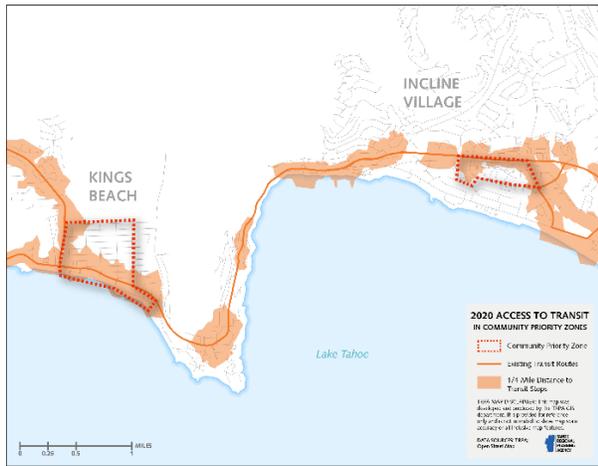


Figure 99: 2020 Access to Transit North Shore

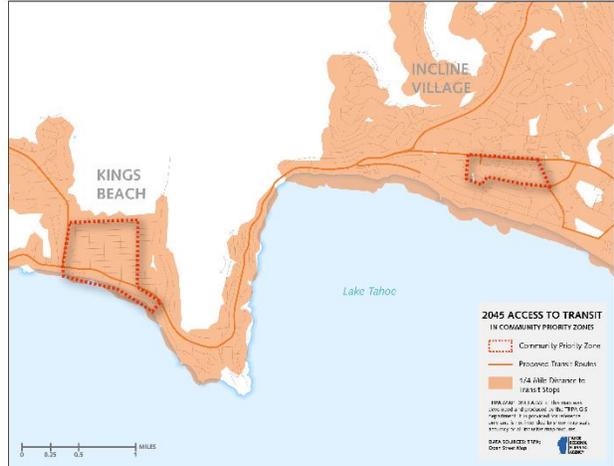


Figure 95: 2045 Access to Transit North Shore

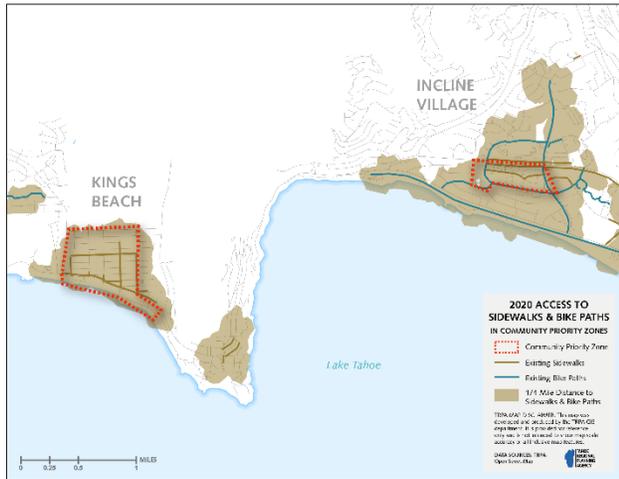


Figure 94: 2020 Access to Sidewalks and Bike Paths North Shore

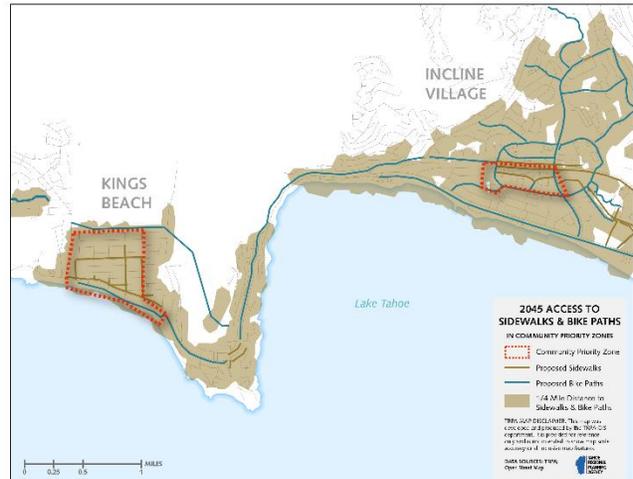


Figure 97: 2045 Access to Sidewalks and Bike Paths North Shore

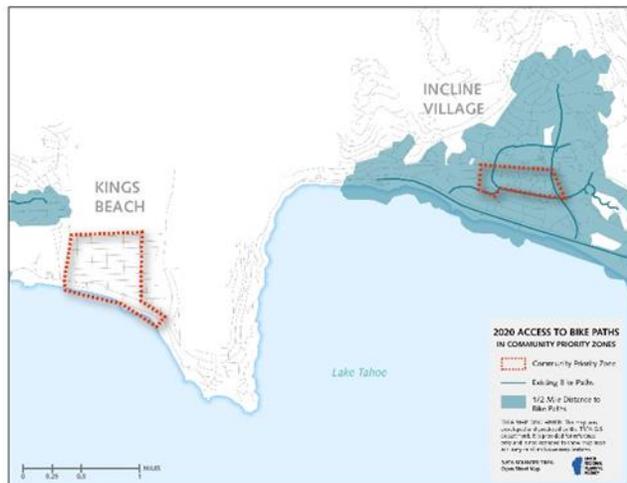


Figure 96: 2020 Access to Bike Paths North Shore

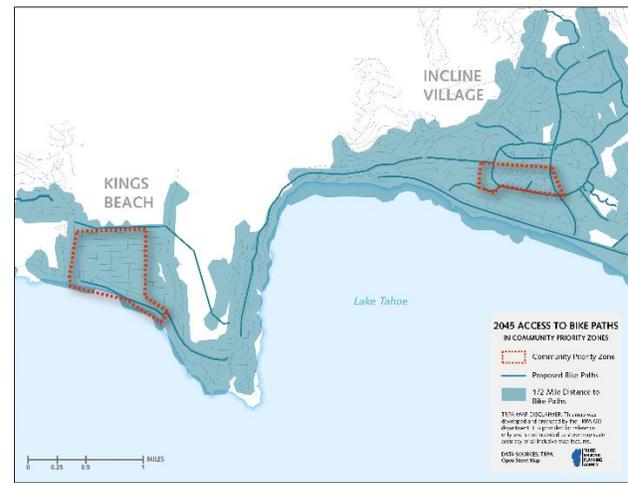


Figure 98: 2045 Access to Bike Paths North Shore

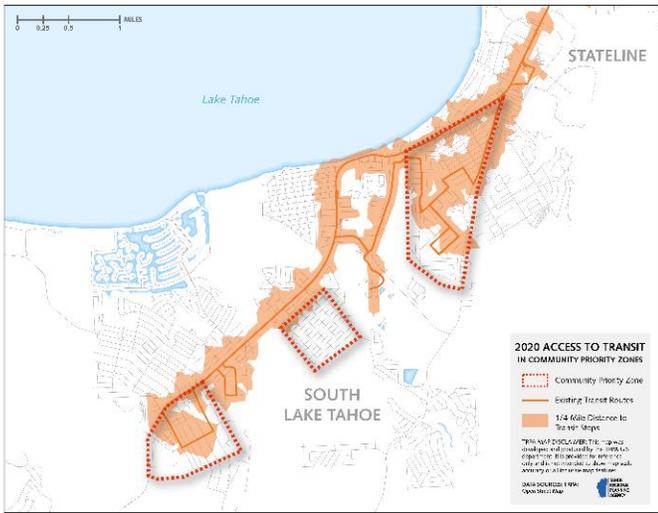


Figure 102: 2020 Access to Transit South Shore

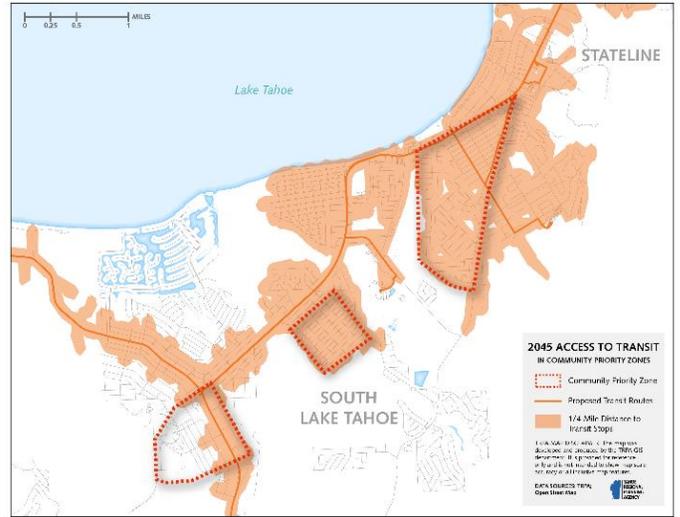


Figure 103: 2045 Access to Transit South Shore

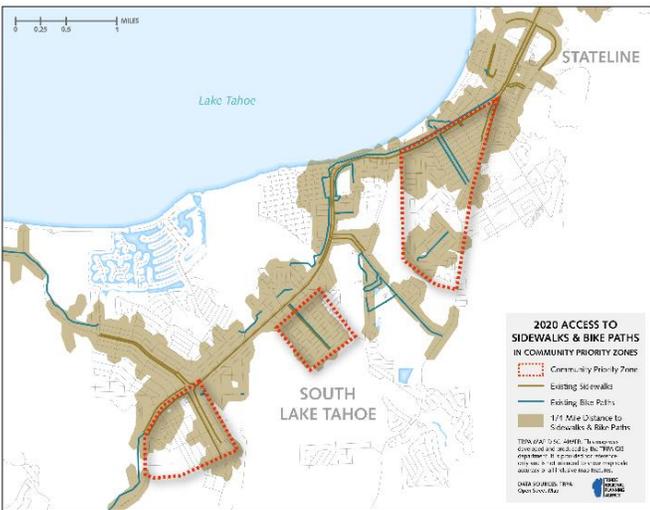


Figure 101: 2020 Access to Sidewalks and Bike Paths South Shore

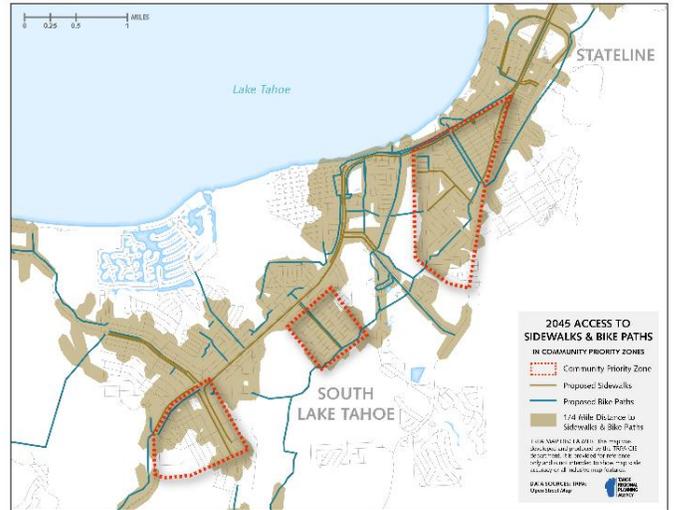


Figure 100: 2045 Access to Sidewalks and Bike Paths South Shore

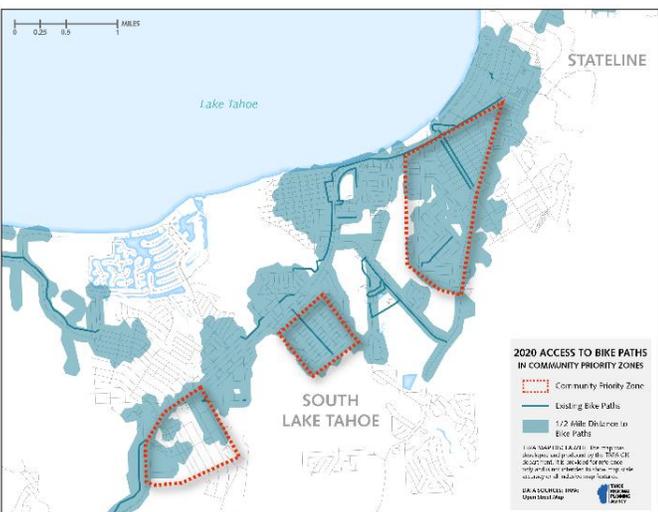


Figure 105: 2020 Access to Bike Paths South Shore

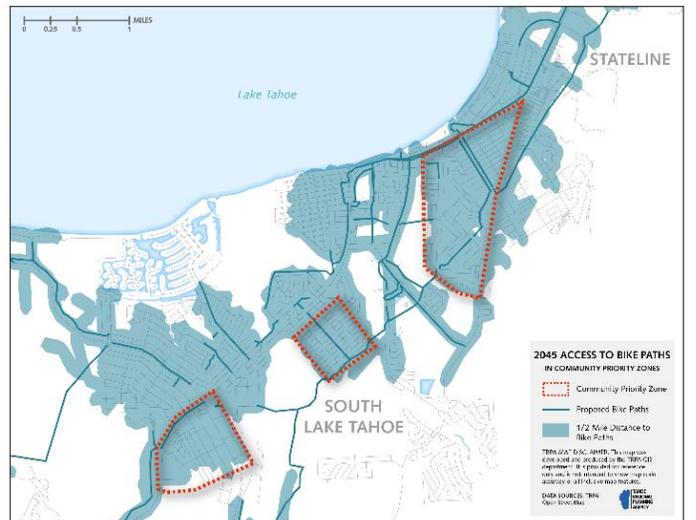


Figure 104: 2045 Access to Bike Paths South Shore

*Taking Action*

Updated policies and prioritized projects in the plan support the EJ framework.

*Funding for EJ*

The RTP/SCS implementation supports Tahoe’s Priority Communities by dedicating \$1.3 billion in constrained funding projects that meet their transportation needs. This equals over 60% of the RTP/SCS project funding.

**Environmental Justice Analysis**

<i>modal strategy</i>	<b>Priority Communities</b>
<b>Transit</b>	\$ 979,195,963
<b>Active Transportation</b>	\$ 84,984,655
<b>Communities</b>	\$ 121,083,290
<b>Technology</b>	\$ 14,147,863
<b>Operations and Maintenance</b>	\$ 171,942,600
	<b>\$ 1,371,354,370</b>

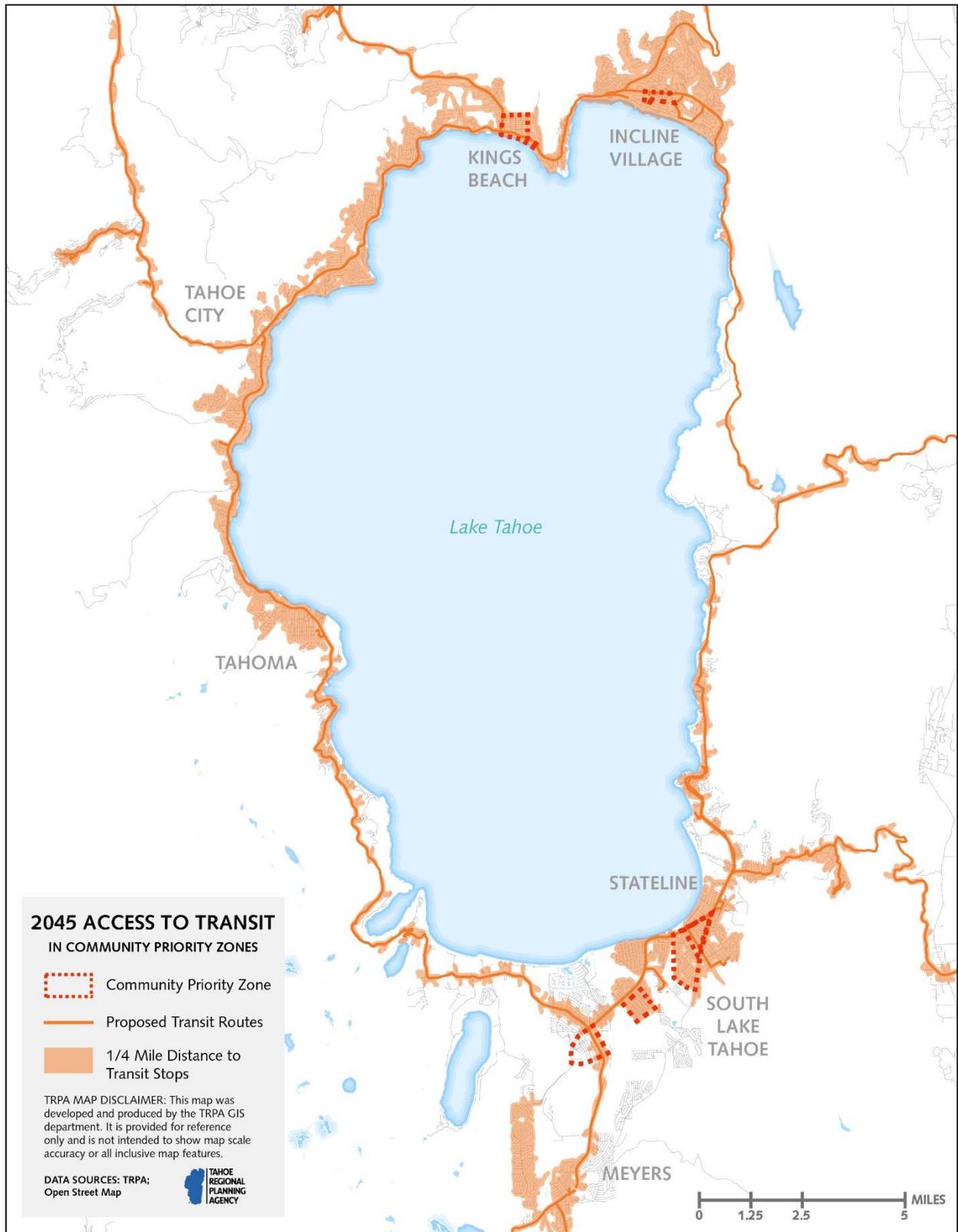


Figure 106: 2045 Access To Transit Map



Figure 107: 2045 Access to Sidewalks and Bike Paths Map



Figure 108: 2045 Access to Bike Paths Map

### *Next Steps*

Environmental justice will continue to be advanced in Tahoe through proposed action items:

1. Priority Community Access to Transportation is a key performance measure of the plan.
2. Transportation needs of Priority Communities will be assessed through continued public outreach through the SSTAC, and through the annual Unmet Transit Needs reporting.
3. Tracking affordable housing initiatives and ensuring that they are built with good access to transit and trails. TRPA will complete an EJ study prior to the

next RTP/SCS update that will review and make recommendations on, among other things: Consideration of built environment access needs

4. A transportation system gap analysis
5. Analyzing the displaced workforce to neighboring communities like Carson/Reno that have more affordable housing

In addition to the study, a new definition for CTC disadvantaged communities should be adopted by TRPA to reflect that work. This task will need to coincide with the California's Active Transportation Program Cycle.