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STAFF REPORT

Date: December 11, 2019

To: TRPA Governing Board

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Proposed Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority Tahoe South Events Center Project; 55 Highway 50, Stateline, Nevada

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

Staff will provide an informational update on the Tahoe South Event Center (TSEC) project. This item is for informational purposes and no action is required.

Background:

In early 2015, the Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority (TDVA) conducted a feasibility study for the potential development of a new multi-purpose entertainment and conference center on Lake Tahoe's South Shore. The study analyzed the local market, demographics, economic and fiscal impacts, and competitive and comparable facilities. Subsequently, the TDVA submitted a project application to TRPA for a 6,000-seat event center located in Stateline, Douglas County, Nevada at the southeast corner of the US Highway 50 intersection with Lake Parkway. The TDVA is responsible for the planning, construction and eventual operation of the TSEC. TRPA is currently reviewing the application and preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project.

TRPA anticipates releasing the EA in early January, presenting and taking comment on the EA in January 2020, and taking the project as an action item in February 2020.

Applicant's Project Purpose and Need:

The South Shore of Lake Tahoe currently lacks a year-round venue necessary to attract conventions, trade shows, special events and entertainment. The TDVA desires a high-quality public assembly and entertainment venue for residents and visitors to the south shore of Lake Tahoe. There is also a desire to reinvent the built environment, animating the street with retail, dining, entertainment and events, providing aesthetic and environmental enhancements and improving the area's market position and visitor experience.

The TDVA proposes a facility capable of accommodating the seating for 6,000 persons for entertainment and with an area of 29,000 sf for sporting events. This space allocation will also accommodate floor exhibition and trade show functions, as well as banquet seating for up to 1,500 persons. The TSEC program is typical for small multi-use facilities and is similar in dimensions to a sister structure in Dodge City, Kansas. To host the range of anticipated events, approximately 10,000 sf of meeting rooms, a

commissary kitchen, concession stands, locker rooms, dressing rooms, storage, ticket office, and supporting office spaces are programmed. TDVA anticipates most annual events (approximately 90) will be expected to draw between 250 and 1,200 attendees.

List of Project Objectives:

1. Continue transition from a gaming-based economy to a recreation-based economy.
2. Create a facility that can accommodate performing arts, sports, exhibition and association and corporate group business.
3. Develop a facility to attract shoulder season (spring/fall) and mid-week business.
4. Develop a facility to mitigate the significant decline in work hours impacting the tourism-based work force in spring and fall.
5. Implement a formal paid parking program in the casino core to reduce VMT and incentivize residents and guests to utilize alternatives to the private automobile.
6. Implement a seasonal, free and frequent micro-transit system with the goal to expand the system if ridership demonstrates the micro-transit system is an attractive alternative to the private automobile.
7. Construct an emergency shelter-in-place location within the casino core.
8. Reduce pollutants of concern discharged to the Stateline Stormwater Association regional water quality system.

Project Location:

The Tahoe South Events Center Project (Project) is proposed in Stateline, Douglas County, Nevada at the southeast corner of the US Highway 50 intersection with Lake Parkway. The project area consists of portions of two parcels currently owned by Edgewood Companies: the site of the MontBleu Resort Casino and Spa (APN 1318-27-001-007) and an adjacent undeveloped parcel (APN 1318-27-002-006). Although both parcels have been used to define the project area, the proposed improvements associated with the Tahoe South Events Center (TSEC) will be sited within a 13.3-acre project area boundary that fits almost entirely within the existing MontBleu surface parking lot.

Project Description:

The proposed Events Center building would consist of two levels: an event floor level and a suites and offices level. The building footprint is approximately 88,000 square feet and the total floor area is approximately 122,000 square feet. The proposed Events Center design has a maximum height of 85 feet and complies with the maximum height limits within 100 feet of U.S. Highway. The facility's design would offer the flexibility of hosting a wide variety of events including conventions and conferences, sports, trade shows, performing arts and musical concerts. The maximum seating capacity is approximately 6,000, which would include floor seating for a concert or performing arts event.

During trade shows, ice skating shows, and sporting events, such as hockey, basketball and volleyball, up to 4,200 seats would be available. To reduce traffic loads and competition with other area venues during the peak season, which runs from June 15 through Labor Day, a 2,500-seat limit would be implemented for the Events Center during the peak season. In addition, the Events Center is designed as a "shelter-in-place" for use as an emergency shelter should a natural disaster occur in the area.

Patrons arrive for events via the ground level concourse or the event floor level. Fixed, telescopic seating is arranged in a horseshoe pattern around the event floor with the event stage at one end. This ground level concourse also includes restrooms, concessions, ticketing, first aid and entry vestibules. The second level includes fixed loge seating, 13 suites, press boxes, spectator concourse, support facilities, meeting rooms, conference space, offices and restrooms. Office and meeting spaces are designed to accommodate event center administration, the TDVA and the Tahoe Chamber. It is anticipated that community meetings such as the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners would be held in one of the meeting rooms.

Environmental Assessment (EA):

An EA is being prepared for the project. The EA will assess whether the project may proceed without preparation of a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if all potential impact can be safely determined to not be significant. The primary issues that will be discussed in the EA to date are:

Traffic:

The EA will describe the existing traffic, parking, and circulation system in the vicinity of the project site, presents the regulations applicable to the study area, identifies significance criteria for traffic, parking, and circulation impacts, and evaluates the potential impacts associated with “no project” and “plus project” conditions. In addition, future cumulative transportation impacts will be evaluated. Paid parking and micro transit service are key elements of the project description that are aimed addressing impacts related to traffic.

The parameters of the paid parking program are as follows:

- At a minimum, the paid parking program would be in place daily during the peak summer visitation period (e.g., mid-June to mid-September) and each weekend during heavily visited seasons throughout the rest of the year.” Employees are exempted from the paid parking program.
- Paid parking is assumed for Harveys, Harrah’s, MontBleu and Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.
- A flat parking fee of \$20 per day, at a minimum, is assumed. This includes all guests/customers, including club card holders.
- No other changes in parking supply and controls are assumed. The existing paid parking at the Heavenly Village Parking Garage and along Transit Way and Bellamy Court are assumed to stay in place, along with other existing parking limitations. No other parking management measures (such as additional parking duration limits) are assumed.

The parameters of the micro transit service are as follows:

- A general route would be followed between the Round Hill, NV area on the north and the Bijou Center, CA area on the west, including a one-way loop around Pioneer Trail, Ski Run Boulevard and US 50. Key stops would be served on a schedule, and the vehicles would deviate up to a half-mile to serve requests received through an app, by phone, or on request to the drive.
- Service would be provided from approximately June 15th through September 15th (encompassing the peak summer period), from 10 AM until 2 AM on Fridays, Saturdays and holidays, and from 10

AM until 10 PM on other days (encompassing the peak traffic period).

- Service would be provided with a minimum of two vehicles at a time. In off-peak times, this would result in service every 30 minutes, while in peak traffic times delays would increase travel times to approximately 45 minutes.
- The service would be operated using a vehicle with 20 to 25 passenger capacity.

The traffic analysis evaluates the daily one-way vehicle trips (DVTE) based on a 2,500-seat capacity limit during the peak summer season with paid parking and micro-transit service in place. The preliminary traffic analysis identifies a net reduction of approximately 6 percent of daily DVTE made to and from the casino access points primarily due to the implementation of paid parking and micro-transit. During the PM peak hour, the project would result in a net increase of less than one percent of DVTE.

When compared to the existing summer daily vehicle miles travelled (VMT) in the Tahoe region the proposed project is estimated to reduce region wide VMT from existing conditions by approximately 1.1 percent. To validate the assumptions in the traffic analysis regarding the effects of paid parking and micro transit TRPA staff retained a transportation consulting firm to conduct a peer review of the traffic analysis which is currently in progress.

Groundwater Interception:

Groundwater is expected to be intercepted during construction and seasonally over long term operations of the facility. Generally, seasonal high groundwater measurements across the project area range from 13.5 feet to over 25 feet below ground surface (bgs) where excavations are proposed with groundwater levels generally higher at the eastern portions and lower at the western portions of the site. The Proposed Action requires a maximum excavation depth of approximately 25.5 feet, which would extend approximately 12 feet below the seasonal high groundwater levels at the eastern extent of the proposed structure (located at the back of house and vehicle service area).

Most of the excavation depths are not anticipated to extend to the seasonal high groundwater level. However, because of seasonal fluctuation and the timing of construction and slope topography across the site, the need for construction and post construction dewatering is anticipated. The TRPA Code of Ordinances allows for the interception of groundwater if “there are no feasible alternatives for locating mechanical equipment, and measures are included in the project to prevent groundwater from leaving the project area as surface flow, and any groundwater that is interfered with is rerouted in the ground water flow to avoid adverse impacts to riparian vegetation.”

Mechanical equipment such as boilers, electrical, chillers and an elevator are located on the ground floor which is the same level as the event floor. According to the project architect the building would not be marketable if mechanical equipment associated with back of house functions (such as loading/unloading dock) were not located on the same level as the event floor. The EA is identifying dewatering methods for during construction and over long-term operations of the facility to prevent the intercepted groundwater from leaving the site as surface flow.

Project Conditions:

In order to consider approval of the project, a number of special conditions will have to be included within the permit addressing several key areas:

Venue Capacity/Parking Management/Micro-transit

	TDVA	TRPA
Proposal:	To reduce traffic loads and competition with other area venues during the peak season, which runs from June 15 through Labor Day, a 2,500-seat capacity limit would be implemented for the Events Center during the peak season.	
Permit Condition:		Prior to permit acknowledgement TDVA will record a TRPA approved deed restriction limiting venue capacity in perpetuity. The deed restriction will not be revocable, or modified, in the future without TRPA approval.
Proposal:	Implement a formal paid parking program in the casino core to reduce VMT and incentivize residents and guests to utilize alternatives to the private automobile. Paid parking is proposed for Harveys, Harrah's, MontBleu and Hard Rock Hotel and Casino during the peak summer visitation period (e.g., mid-June to mid-September) and each weekend during heavily visited seasons throughout the rest of the year.	
Permit Condition:		Prior to permit acknowledgement TDVA will submit parking agreements approved by all parties documenting the details of the proposed paid parking program.
Proposal:	Implement a seasonal, free and frequent micro-transit system with the goal to expand the system if ridership demonstrates the micro-transit system is an attractive alternative to the private automobile.	
Permit Condition:		Prior to permit acknowledgement TDVA will submit a transit plan specifying the details (e.g. schedule, routes, vehicle capacity, etc.) of the proposed micro-transit system.

Groundwater Interception

	TDVA	TRPA
Proposal:	Implement dewatering methods during construction and over long-term operations of the facility to prevent the intercepted groundwater from leaving the site as surface flow.	
Permit Condition:		Prior to permit acknowledgement TDVA will submit a temporary and permanent groundwater interception and re-infiltration plan prepared by a qualified engineer.

Anticipated Project Hearing Schedule:

December 2019

- Governing Board informational item to introduce the project and discuss major issues identified to date during the environmental review.

January 2020

- Governing Board public hearing on draft Environmental Assessment to solicit public comment on environmental document. The draft EA will be released prior to GB meeting for members and public to review.

February 2020

- Governing Board public hearing to consider action (approve/deny/continue) on EA and project.

Contact Information:

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