

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: September 28, 2011

To: TRPA Regional Plan Update Committee

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Discussion of EIS Alternatives Summary and Table

In July 2011, TRPA completed a re-focus of the Regional Plan Update's (RPU) scope. Today, the RPU is focused on implementation of the recently adopted Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) in order to accelerate attainment of the water quality threshold, which is the only threshold that has consistently shown signs of decline for the past thirty years, and compliance with California Sustainable Communities legislation, which mandates changes to the Regional Plan. To implement this new focus, the majority of the Regional Plan's Goals and Policies need not be changed, but targeted modifications are proposed in the following areas:

- Land Use
- Water Quality
- Community Design
- Air Quality
- Transportation
- Housing
- Vegetation
- Wildlife and Fisheries
- Soils
- Scenic Quality
- Stream Environment Zones (SEZ)
- Public Services and Facilities
- Performance Review

EIS Alternatives Descriptions

TRPA has prepared a range of RPU alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental impact statement (EIS), which will be used by the Governing Board when it considers approval of the RPU. Each alternative will analyze the changes to the Regional Plan in

the areas listed above.

The alternatives descriptions can be found on the RPU homepage at <http://www.trpa.org/default.aspx?tabindex=1&tabid=130> under the heading “Draft Project Descriptions.” An outline of the major thematic differences across the alternatives, a summary of the existing setting in each area listed above, and an overview of the proposed Regional Plan changes in each listed area is provided in a narrative description at this link. For those who wish more detailed information, each narrative is further backed up by a table, also available at this link, which specifies each proposed change to a Regional Plan Goal, Policy, and Implementation Measure across the range of alternatives.

To make it easier to understand what is being proposed in the RPU, staff prepared a summary table of the major themes in the RPU and presented it to the Board as Attachment E of the materials for the July Board meeting. The July 2011 summary describes 33 themes and is 23 pages long; it can be found on the homepage under the heading “July 20, 2011 Draft Documents,” (click on “RPU Revised Scope”), or you can go directly to the document at:

http://www.trpa.org/documents/rp_update/Draft_PD/E_Revised_Scope_Table.pdf

EIS Alternatives Summary Table

To further simplify understanding of what is being proposed for change in the RPU, staff has prepared a new table summarizing the range of alternatives. It looks at 41 issues (inclusive of the 33 in the July summary table but with additional items to provide context) and is brief and factual. It can be used to understand how the four currently proposed EIS alternatives in the RPU provide four distinctly different policy directions for the future of the Basin. The RPU Committee is charged with expediting the December 2012 completion of the Regional Plan Update by: (a) facilitating the Board’s understanding of the proposed amendments to the Regional Plan; (b) consulting with the Board on proposals in the Regional Plan Update; (c) identifying areas of difference and recommending resolutions; and (d) accepting other responsibilities assigned by the Board.

The table is offered as an additional reference tool to help reviewers become clear about the current range of alternatives and anticipated differences across those alternatives. Given the RPU Committee’s charge (particularly items (a) and (b) above), it is a tool for the Committee to use so that the range of alternatives can be made final for analysis this month. This timing is essential for the EIS consultant to stay on track to meet the 2012 deadline. Nonetheless, the new table should also be valuable as an ongoing reference for the full Board and the public at large.

The EIS must be completed and certified by the Governing Board prior to any action by the Board to adopt any portion of the RPU. The EIS is scheduled to be completed in the

fall of 2012 in order to allow the RPU to be adopted by the end of 2012. Each of the Program Elements has four alternative possibilities. The EIS will analyze each of the alternatives to a level of detail that would allow any of the alternatives to be adopted by the Governing Board. If the RPU Committee, in the course of its discussions, recommends adding new alternatives or variations on the listed alternatives that could have impacts not otherwise being analyzed, these would have to be included in the EIS in order to provide the disclosure required by Article V of the Compact. Since TRPA is under a tight timeline, it is imperative that any new alternative or modification to existing alternatives that could have new impacts be identified no later than the end of this month.

Addition of a Fifth EIS Alternative

In preparation for this month's Committee meeting, staff has carefully analyzed the proposed range of EIS alternatives. Based on the analysis, we are adding an alternative so that the EIS would be analyzing five alternatives – 4 action alternatives and one “no action” alternative. The new alternative is a hybrid of Alternatives 2 and 4. The addition of this fifth EIS alternative is based first on assuring that we are analyzing the necessary adequate range of alternatives. The fifth alternative is also being added to increase the Board's policy-making choices when the Board considers approval of the RPU. Once analyzed, this range of alternatives would provide the Board with additional discretion to select elements from between and among the alternatives if there was no single alternative that satisfied the majority of the Board members. Board members have consistently stated that having this decision-making flexibility is an important guiding principle for consideration of the RPU, and the new alternative will provide the Board even further decision-making flexibility.

The details of the new alternative are still being refined within the 41 topic areas in the alternatives summary table appended to this staff report. A revised Alternatives Summary Table that includes this fifth alternative will be posted by Friday, September 23rd. We will summarize and describe the full range of EIS alternatives along with the new alternative at the Committee meeting.

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