
STAFF REPORT

Date: February 19, 2020

To: Environmental Improvement, Public Outreach, and Transportation Committee

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Regional Transit Coordination Update

Action Requested:

Discussion and possible direction to staff regarding the 2020 Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan update.

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

The presentation and discussion will cover the following:

- A near-term transit performance measure, consistent with the 2018 Bi-State Transportation 10-Year Action Plan, to be included as an assumption in the 2020 RTP Update. Staff will discuss cost, resources, and outcome needed to achieve the differing assumptions in transit performance and seek clarification on assumptions to be included in the 2020 RTP update.
- Progress on a short-term Transit Action Plan under development by the Region's transit operators in coordination with TRPA. The short-term implementation plan delivers the first increment of transit actions prioritized in the December 2018 Bi-State Consultation on Transportation 10-Year Action Plan. The near-term plan, or Transit Action Plan, includes transit service that partners believe can reasonably be implemented within the next five years, and these services will be assumed as near term implementation actions in the RTP analysis and project list.
- Funding strategies under consideration to implement the Transit Action Plan as well as longer term transit funding needs within the Region.

Background:

At the November 2019 meeting of the committee, staff presented information on regional transit operations and funding. Transit program enhancements are under development for the 2020 Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan update (RTP or Plan). In November, the Committee directed staff to bring forward both near-term transit actions and a longer-term approach to realizing a coordinated Tahoe transit system over the next 25 years. That presentation outlined data and analyses completed supporting the regional transit system for both near-term and long-term transit serving commuters, transit dependent travelers, and recreation visitors.

TRPA, as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for coordinating transportation planning across all modes. Vision plans, programs and projects are aggregated into a comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that is updated every

four years. TRPA is accountable in the RTP to show that the regional slate of transportation programs and actions will achieve required transportation performance measures, including greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, and must evaluate and forecast transit's contribution to those goals. Thus, the planned transit service, as part of the overall transportation system for the Region, is included in the RTP and analyzed as to its effect on achieving mobility and reducing GHG emissions. In addition, TRPA is responsible for administering federal and state transit funding. That requires TRPA to evaluate and approve transit projects, seek public input on unmet transit needs, and provide productivity improvement recommendations to the regional transit operators, TTD on the south shore and Placer County on the north shore. The transit operators (TTD and Placer County) are responsible for providing transit services, planning system improvements, and reporting operating data to the Federal Transit Administration and TRPA.

Since the last committee meeting in November 2019 and to satisfy RTP requirements, staff from TRPA, the Tahoe Transportation District and the Placer County Department of Public Works have been updating a specific near-term (3 to 5 year) Transit Action Plan that builds from the existing TTD and TART transit plans, current development project transit requirements (e.g., Events Center mitigation), and includes the transit priorities of the Bi-State Consultation on Transportation from the 10-year Action Plan. The near-term Transit Action Plan establishes regional transit goals, specifies immediate transit service necessary to realize those goals and, provides a transit implementation roadmap that can be used to highlight the funding gap associated with executing the identified transit enhancements. These near-term transit enhancements are the basis for immediate action and illustrate the foundational system improvements needed to implement a world class resort-community transit system.

In developing the Transit Action Plan, TRPA, TTD, and Placer County identified key assumptions that require review and alignment among the partner agencies in order to complete the analysis and assumptions for input into the 2020 RTP update. These include:

Establishing a regional near-term transit mode share goal: The TRPA Regional Plan and Regional Transportation Plan establish the need to increase transit ridership and overall non-auto mode share to meet the established regional GHG reduction target. The **current transit mode share in the Tahoe Region is approximately .9%**, meaning that approximately one percent of trips are taken on transit. Over the last two years, transit mode share dropped by half a percent as transit ridership dropped substantially on the south shore. The Bi-State Transportation Working Group's action plan included a realistic goal to double the number of transit riders. Staff recommends that the Committee sets guidance to assume this feasible and achievable mode share goal. Staff is currently analyzing the estimated increase in regional transit capital investment and increase in regional transit operating costs for this shift. The TRPA-TTD-Placer County partnership is currently designing the near-term Transit Action Plan for incorporation into their future short-range transit plans, to be completed in 2021. The recommendation is also consistent with the transit priorities identified in the 10-Year Action Plan endorsed by the two states in the December 2018 Bi-State Consultation on Transportation Summary Report.

Integration of private sector operated micro-transit with publicly operated transit service: Due to new private transit services in the region, significant differences have come to light in the cost of providing public versus private transit service. The near-term Transit Action Plan makes assumptions regarding the proportion of public versus private sector provided

transit. For the south shore where the greatest uncertainty in transit service exists currently, the near-term Transit Action Plan assumes delivery of the proposed transit programs from the US Highway 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project (SSCRP) Main Street Management Plan and the Event Center private micro-transit. The proposed transit programs are 15-minute headway fixed route TTD service along the “Main Street” corridor that is free for those boarding within the corridor and for free to the user private service micro-transit in the area surrounding the Events Center. Staff recommends that these transit proposals be included as the basis for the Transit Action Plan for the RTP update.

Transit system funding strategy alignment: The transportation funding partners are reconciling and aligning strategies to fill unfunded transit service needs. TTD initiated the One Tahoe study to look at options to fully fund the \$1.5 billion in unfunded RTP transportation needs. The multi-stakeholder Bi-State Transportation Consultation reconvened in 2020 to assist in guiding transit funding strategies for the Region. To meet the needs of the near-term Transit Action Plan assumed for the RTP, the Event Center project conditions provide a path to securing significant catalyst funding needed to start-up micro-transit services on the south shore, a need that has gone unfunded. Combining the funding for private micro-transit needed to mitigate traffic impacts from the proposed South Tahoe Event Center project, if approved, with the mainline transit service currently operated by TTD to satisfy the Main Street Management Plan transit program would significantly implement the unfunded portions of the Transit Action Plan designed for the south shore transit service needs of the RTP.

Other expected enhancements to the RTP transit element will include recent transportation corridor updates and transit capital projects as well as enhanced transit service. For example:

- **Emerald Bay SR89 Corridor Plan:** If approved, transit will provide new travel options for this corridor. Alternatives being considered include a dedicated transit lane segment, 65% to 85% transit mode share, intercept lots, and parking management strategies.
- **Resort Triangle Transportation Plan:** Stakeholders are developing implementation plans for a cohesive multi-modal transportation system within the North Tahoe Resort Triangle (bounded by State Routes 28, 89 and 267).
- **The Hwy 89 and 267 Bus-on-Shoulder Projects:** This proposal seeks to make transit a better option than the private automobile by improving transit travel time via a dedicated transit lane along the shoulders of State Route 89 and 267 in North Lake Tahoe.

In addition to transit operations, infrastructure improvements are necessary to support the future transit system, such as development of mobility hubs that serve as multimodal nodes and intercept parking lots within and adjacent to the Lake Tahoe Basin, and a larger bus fleet to increase the frequency of buses and number of transit routes. A larger fleet will in turn create a need for new and improved transit maintenance/operations facilities, the most pressing need being on the south shore.

Next Steps:

TRPA staff is requesting the EIP Committee provide direction endorsing the recommendations and approaches to the near-term Transit Action Plan for the RTP outlined herein including:

- Establishing a feasible and achievable regional transit mode share goal
- Developing a near-term (5 year) Transit Action Plan to realize the goal.

The Committee's direction will be included at the next Bi-State Transportation Consultation meetings and be made part of the 2020 RTP Update on transit. TRPA will continue to coordinate with TTD, Placer County and other stakeholders to finalize the Transit Action Plan proposed to achieve the goals of the RTP.

Contact Information: For questions or comments regarding this item, please contact Michelle Glickert, Transportation Program Manager, at 775.589.5204 or mglickert@trpa.org.