

---

**STAFF REPORT**

Date: November 13, 2019

To: Environmental Improvement, Transportation, & Public Outreach Committee

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan 2045 Update – Transit Discussion

---

**Summary and Staff Recommendation:**

This item is for informational purposes and may result in direction to staff.

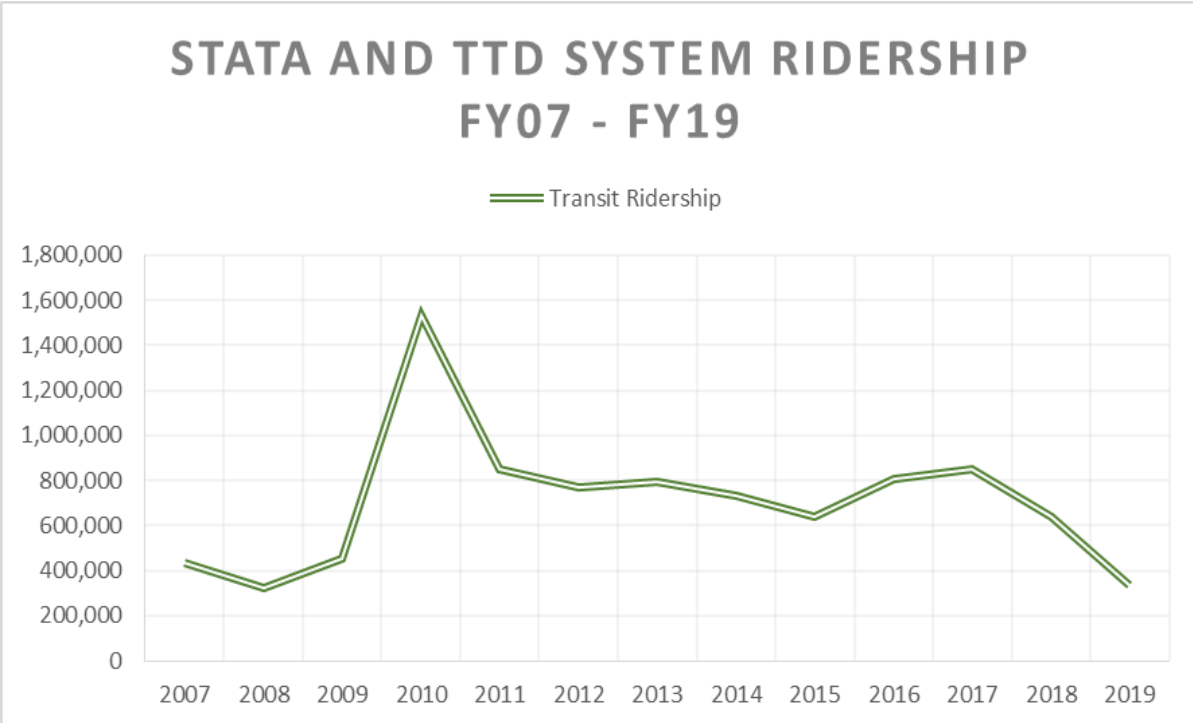
**Background:**

Staff presented an overview and schedule for the development of the 2020 Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) including proposed outreach strategies, plan structure, and document development and approval process at the September 2019 Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Governing Board meeting. Staff confirmed the Environmental Improvement, Public Outreach, and Transportation Committee would serve as the steering committee for the 2020 RTP, and there would also be frequent check-ins with the Governing Board. The current RTP update will include alignment on a public transit vision, and generating funding for improvements in the RTP, among other refinements.

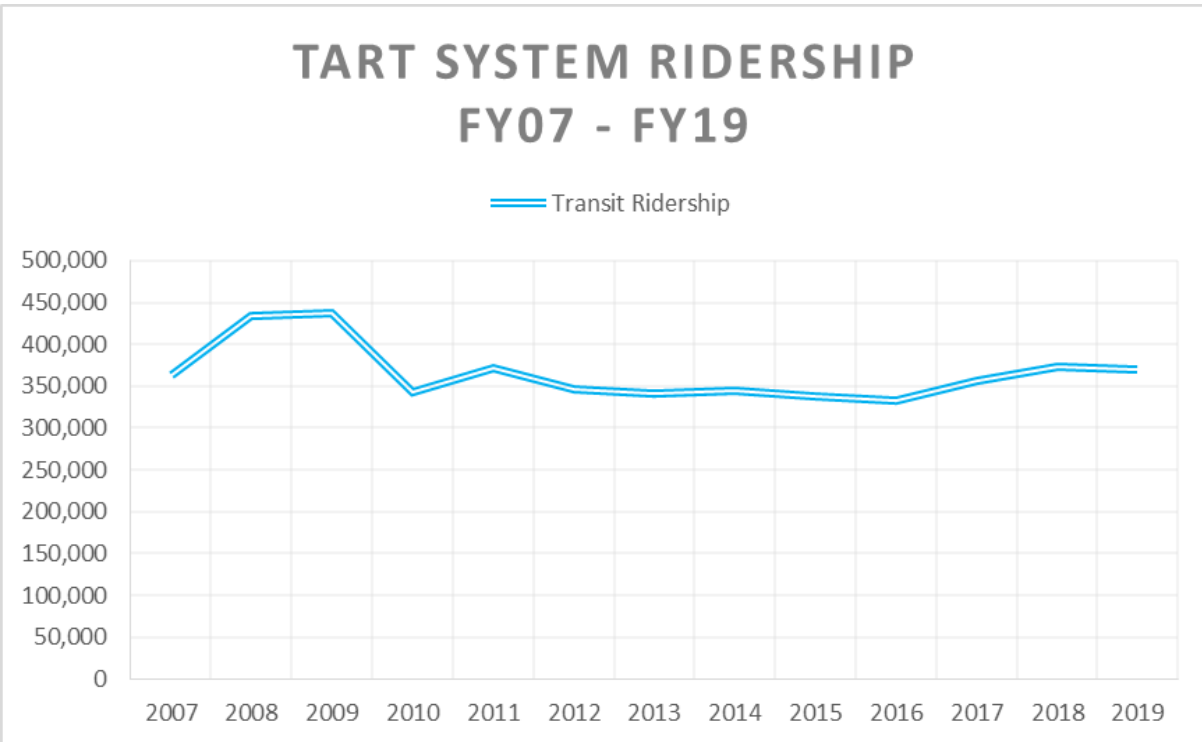
The 2017 Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan focused on a multimodal network of transportation options which included strategies for reducing the dependency on the automobile and improving non-auto mode share using transit, trails and technology. Since the 2017 Plan was completed large gains in closing trail gaps and creating new travel options have occurred.

Lake Tahoe's long-standing transportation policy direction has been clear, while agreement around the solutions has morphed over time. As the region faces visitation growth from the growing drive-up markets, the solution is to look to multiple modes of transportation. The roadways can only handle so much capacity, the trail system can only accommodate so many users, so the transit systems have become the focus for handling existing and increasing travel demand. Compounding the challenge of focusing on transit is the fact that transit is the most underfunded mode of transportation in Lake Tahoe. While the definition of "transit" continues to evolve with technological advances, it remains clear that more robust (ongoing) and diverse (public & private) sources of funding are necessary to operate and maintain the existing systems as well as explore new solutions. This agenda item focuses on providing a background on public transit at Lake Tahoe and outlines a framework for alignment on improving transit to effectively handle existing demands and those resulting from Lake Tahoe's growing visitation.

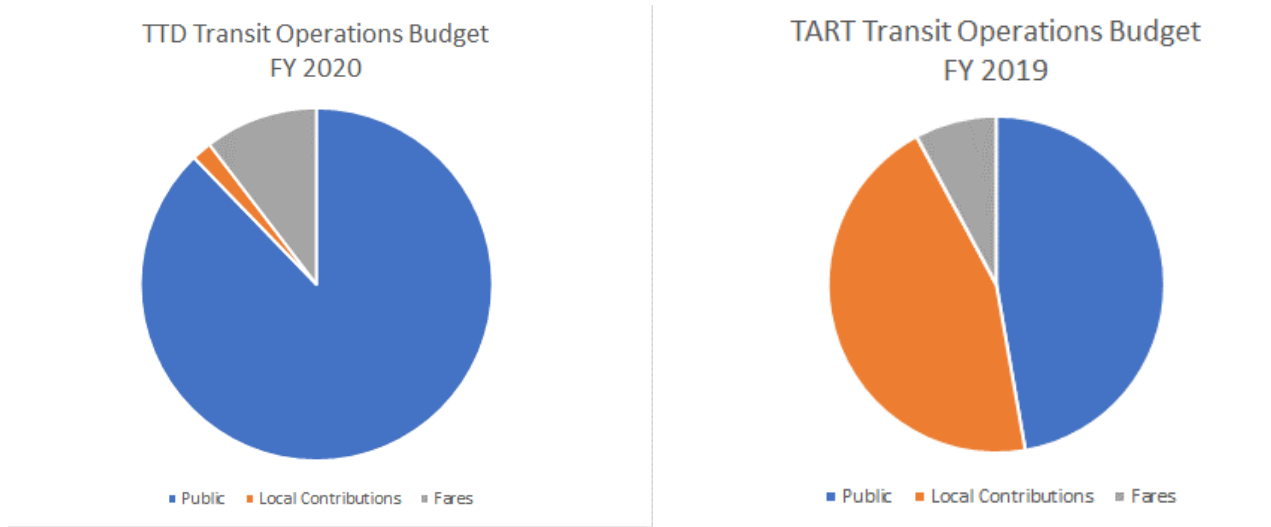
Transit by the Numbers



\*Note that STATA operated the transit system for the south shore until 2010. TTD assumed operations in 2010.



Budget Breakdown by funding sources of each system



Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit

Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART), operated by Placer County, provides transit service in the north shore and Truckee area. TART service is limited to the main highways in the Lake Tahoe Basin (Highways 28, 89 & 267) and connects with Truckee to form what is known as the “Resort Triangle”. Recent increases to TART service frequency have resulted in ridership gains. In 2018, TART also increased ADA paratransit services to provide daily trips between North Tahoe and Truckee and has seen paratransit use increase tenfold from the previous year. The TART service has benefited from private/public funding coordinated by Placer County and the Truckee – North Tahoe Transportation Management Association (TNT-TMA). Placer County is currently moving forward with a proposal for free to the user transit as early as this Winter. All of these improvements are identified in the TART Systems Plan and 2017 RTP.

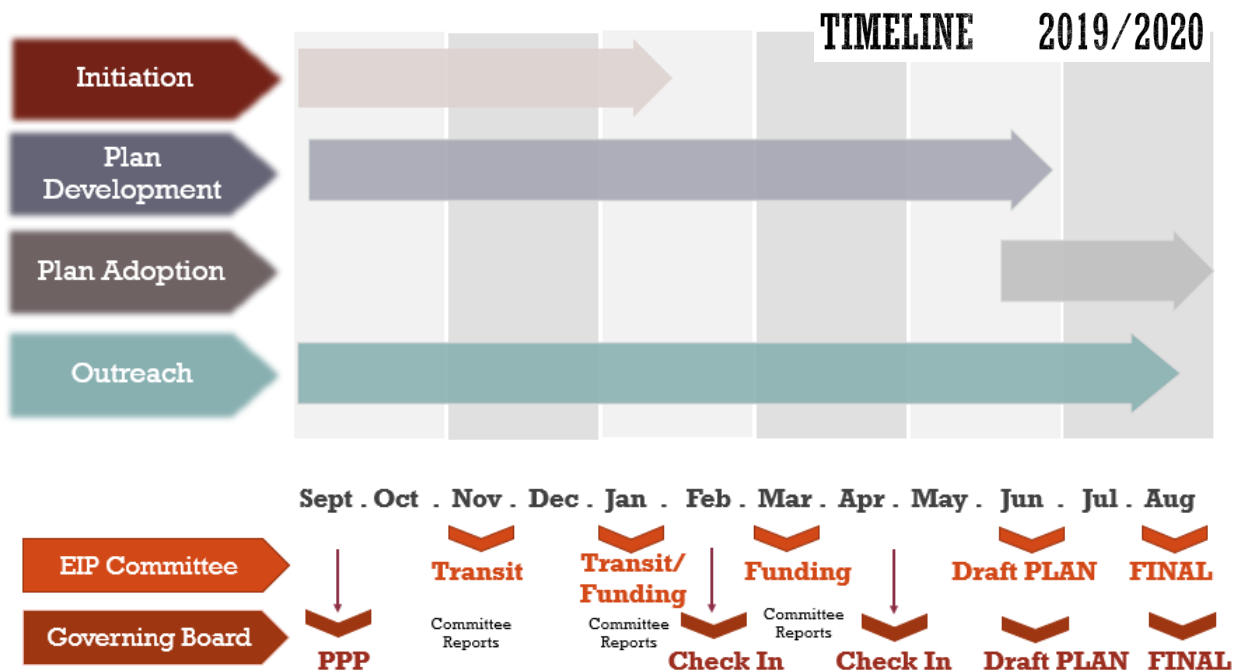
Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) Transit

The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) operates transit serving the south shore, Kingsbury Grade, and with connections to Carson City via Minden and Gardnerville. TTD also operates the popular East Shore Express which is a seasonal connection to Sand Harbor and the East Shore Trail from Incline Village. TTD’s paratransit services complement the fixed route services and provide origin to destination mobility options for seniors, disabled, Medicare cardholders, and veterans with a service-connected disability. TTD’s services are funded primarily by federal funds leveraged with Transportation Development Credits from California and limited local dollars. Without additional investment from other sources, TTD’s budget limitations render TTD unable to keep up with rising operating costs to provide transit and replace an aging bus fleet. This budget limitation has led to the realignment of TTD services to focus on serving critical routes and transit dependent riders. TTD also has a short-range transit plan, and a long-range regional transit plan that lay out service expansion to serve both the workforce and visitors.

Transit Planning and Coordination

Transit played a significant role in the previous RTP achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions for the Tahoe Basin as well as gains in non-auto travel mode share. However, there is a need to focus on specifically what the future of transit will be, considering the gains and declines since the adoption of the last plan. Staff will present a proposal that layers transit services, starting with a foundation layer or package of basic services and adding layers or packages of services that will provide new travel options early next year. Analysis to inform these options will include mapping resident home and work patterns and resident and visitor recreation travel to understand what is needed in our more congested times. The analysis will inform the potential for transit contribution to reducing auto use. Coordination of private and public systems will be explored to help identify how public transit and private providers can work together to reduce vehicle miles traveled. New technologies (e.g. app-based ride hailing) and new services (e.g. e-scooters and e-bikes) will provide opportunities and may create challenges for the region. These innovative services will be evaluated with an emphasis on integration with existing services to expand the reach of transit to more areas and users.

In January, working with the transit operators and engaging with the private sector, staff will bring forward for the Committee’s consideration logical transit packages for inclusion in the RTP update. These packages will build on one another so that basic services are first provided to those who need them most, then scaling up service packages to capture choice riders, including the everyday local and recreation travelers, in order to provide a seamless transportation system that serves all user groups with a suite of travel options. These packages will form the basis for transitioning to a discussion on developing new sustainable funding to implement the packages of transit improvements identified.



Contact Information:

For questions regarding this agenda item, please contact Michelle Glickert, Transportation Program Manager, at 775.589.5204 or [mglickert@trpa.org](mailto:mglickert@trpa.org).