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FOREST SERVICE
LAKE TAHOE BASIN MANAGEMENT UNIT**
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This notice is being issued jointly by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in preparation of a joint TRPA Environmental Assessment (EA) and NEPA EA

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

RECEIVED

AUG 19 2009

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
BUDGET AND PLANNING DIVISION

To: Nevada State Clearinghouse
California State Clearinghouse
Cooperating Agencies
Other Interested Public Agencies
Interested Parties and Organizations
Affected Property Owners (within 300 feet)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a joint TRPA EA and NEPA EA for the Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway, South Demonstration Project in Stateline, Nevada

Lead Agencies:

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Project Title: Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway, South Demonstration Project

Project Location:

The project site is located in Nevada on the east shore of Lake Tahoe, beginning on Lake Parkway at the Nevada state line in the south shore casino core, and ending just north of Round Hill at U.S. 50 (Exhibit 1). The proposed shared-use bike path would be approximately 3 miles long and would include a 10-foot-wide paved path with 2-foot shoulders on both sides.

The TRPA and USFS are seeking comments on the Proposed Action and an alternative route being considered for the Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway, South Demonstration Project (for internal purposes, the USFS refers to the project as the Stateline, CA to Round Hill, NV Bike Path). The environmental document for the proposed project is a joint EA prepared pursuant to NEPA Regulations, TRPA's Compact, and Chapter 5 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. The USFS will be the lead agency for the NEPA process.

The South Demonstration Project is within the study area of the Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway Project Feasibility Study, which encompasses an approximately 30-mile corridor between Stateline, Nevada and Crystal Bay, Nevada. This notice addresses only the South Demonstration Project. If other projects are proposed in the

future as a result of the feasibility study conclusions, they will be subject to their own environmental review processes.

While there is no requirement for a Notice of Preparation for an EA, the lead agencies would like to solicit the views of interested persons, organizations, and agencies as they relate to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the environmental document. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their legal authority and statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. If you would like to review the project description and alignment map (Exhibit 2), they can be accessed on the project website at <http://www.nvtahoebikeway.com> in the Document Library folder, or by contacting the TRPA offices at (775) 589-5242 or the USFS at (530) 543-2762.

Public Scoping:

One public scoping meeting is being conducted to provide you with the opportunity to learn more about the South Demonstration Project and to express oral comments about the content of the EA, in addition to your opportunity to submit written comments. The scoping meeting will be held at the following time and location:

Thursday, September 10, 2009
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
TRPA
Tahoe Room
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449

The public scoping period will extend for a period of 32 calendar days beginning on August 21, 2009 and concluding at 5:00 p.m., September 21, 2009. Written responses should be sent at the earliest possible date, as comments received after 5:00 p.m. on September 21, 2009 are not required to be considered. Please send your written responses to Melissa Shaw, Recreation Program Manager at TRPA at the address shown above. Responses should include the name of a contact person at your agency or organization.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway Project is a joint proposal of local, state, and federal agencies with responsibilities on the Nevada side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The sponsoring agencies are Douglas County, Washoe County, Carson City, Incline Village General Improvement District, Tahoe Transportation District, Nevada Division of State Parks, Nevada Division of State Lands, TRPA, and USFS. The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Washoe Tribe are partnering entities. A “Working Group” has been formed to oversee the Bikeway project and consists of staff from the sponsoring and partnering agencies that are helping to direct the project planning, environmental review, and bikeway design. The proposed South Demonstration Project is within the larger part of a Stateline-to-Stateline feasibility, the purpose of which is to define how and where to develop a premier shared-use bike path on the east side of Lake Tahoe between the Nevada state line in Crystal Bay and the casino core in Stateline, Nevada.

Additional information on the Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway Project may be obtained at <http://www.nvtahobikeway.com>. This website is a key public outreach tool for the Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway Project, providing information on how the public can get involved, when and where meetings and presentations will be scheduled, and answers to frequently asked questions.

PURPOSE AND NEED

- Purpose:** The purpose of the Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway, South Demonstration Project is to provide non-auto transportation opportunities that link recreation areas, community centers, transportation facilities, and neighborhoods in the Stateline to Round Hill, Nevada area in order to expand recreational access and transportation choices for residents and visitors to the Tahoe Basin.
- Need:** Existing bikeways in the Basin are extremely popular and public surveys show that expansion of the system around the entire lake is desired. Separated bicycle facilities are not available along most of the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe. The proposed South Demonstration Project would provide a spectacular recreation opportunity to link the Stateline community and its casino core to public beaches and coves along the picturesque east shore up to Round Hill Pines Beach. Currently, these popular recreation areas are generally accessed by automobile. Providing bicycle links to recreation areas and the casino core is an important step toward reducing vehicle impacts, improving the multi-modal options available to residents and visitors, improving safety, and providing an unparalleled recreation experience in the bike path itself.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The following goal and objectives were developed for the Proposed Action to meet the purpose and need:

Goal: The primary goal of the project is to design and construct a demonstration bicycle facility to showcase the potential for creating the Nevada portion of a premier separated bikeway circling Lake Tahoe.

Objectives:

- ▶ Create a successful separated, shared-use bike path to promote alternative transportation modes to the automobile that connects the casino core in Stateline, Nevada to Nevada Beach and Round Hill Pines Beach.
- ▶ Provide a separated shared-use path that provides a high-quality user experience.

- ▶ Serve a broad spectrum of users by meeting American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards.
- ▶ Provide new high quality recreation opportunities while protecting the quality, integrity, and character of existing recreation opportunities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The South Demonstration Project bike path would extend from the Nevada/California border in Stateline, Nevada to approximately 0.3 miles north of the entrance to Round Hill Pines Beach (Exhibits 1 and 2). The length of the proposed shared-use bike path is approximately 3 miles, of which approximately 2.2 miles is proposed on National Forest System (NFS) lands. The proposed separated, shared-use bike path would conform to AASHTO standards for a shared-use bike path. These standards generally require a 10-foot-wide paved path with 2-foot shoulders on both sides. To meet ADA criterion, the South Demonstration Project would be designed to avoid longitudinal slopes in excess of 5% to the extent feasible.

In addition to the AASHTO and ADA standards, the South Demonstration Project would be designed to meet the 15 design principles established by the Working Group for the broader Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway Project. These principles are:

1. Identify and provide convenient buildable connections to communities, public facilities, public lands, the lakeshore, and open space.
2. Establish separated bikeway alignments wherever feasible.
3. Serve both recreation and commuter needs, with recreation needs receiving first priority where choices must be made.
4. Support the protection, restoration, and sustainability of natural and cultural resources.
5. Anticipate future growth in the surrounding communities in Nevada and California.
6. Provide for a variety of bicycle and pedestrian uses on the bikeway, while recognizing and managing potential conflicts.
7. Provide adequate public and private support facilities.
8. Remain sensitive to the cultural resources and traditions of the Washoe Tribe.
9. Design the bikeway to create social and economic benefits.
10. Provide interpretive opportunities along the bikeway for natural, cultural, and historic resources.
11. Minimize the number of at-grade crossings on State Route 28 and U.S. Highway 50.
12. Provide connections to existing or new trails to recreation areas, transportation facilities, and community centers along the bikeway.
13. Where appropriate, enhance and use existing disturbed area, such as old logging and fire access roads, and take advantage of joint parking opportunities, such as at school sites.
14. Include opportunities for ADA accessibility.

15. Provide visitor amenities, such as rest areas and vistas, to make the bikeway an enjoyable experience.

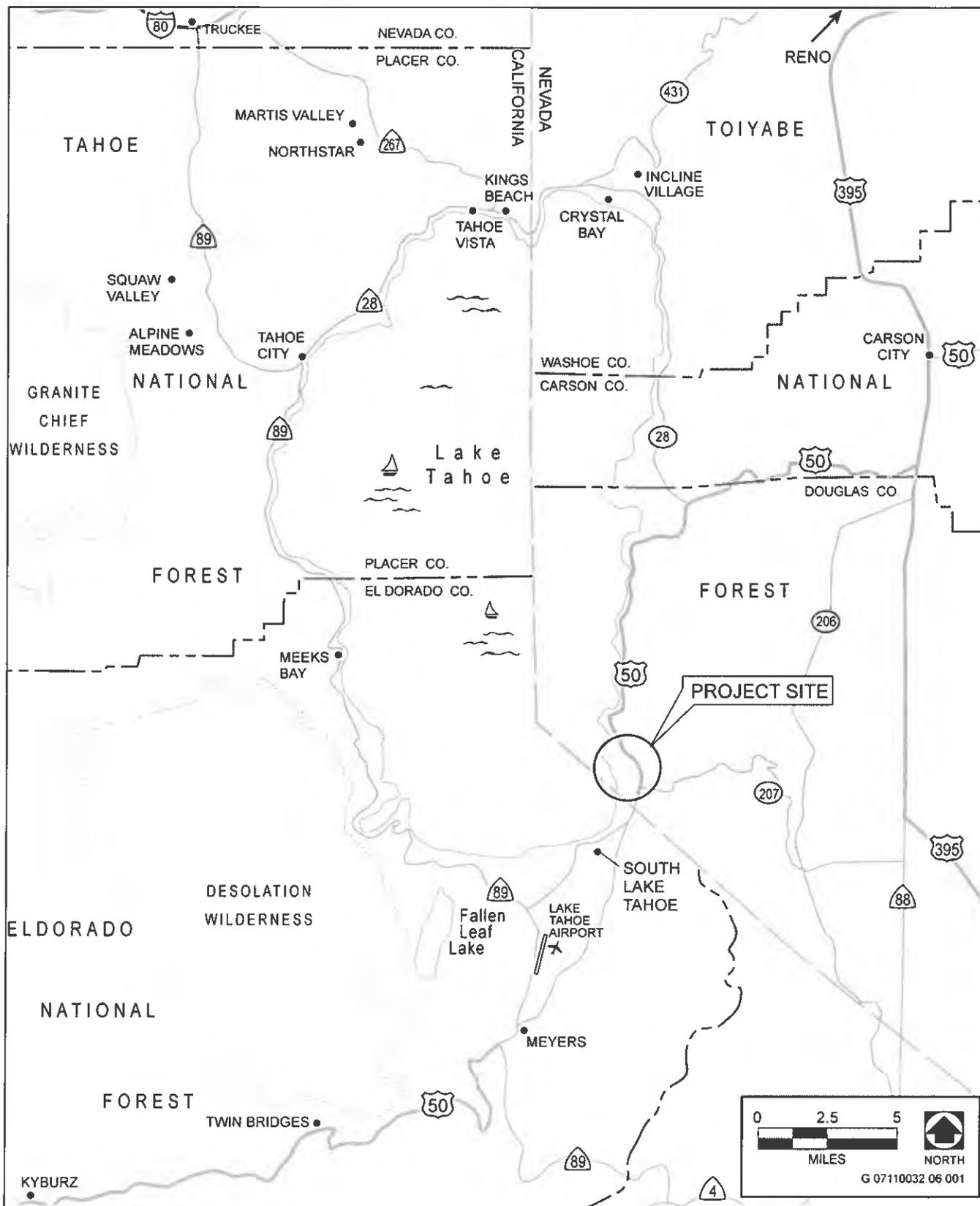
There are three alternatives under consideration for the South Demonstration Project, including the Proposed Action (Alternative A), Alternative B, and the No Project/No Action Alternative (Alternative C).

ALTERNATIVE A - PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action alignment begins at Lake Parkway and the Nevada state line in the casino core. The trail runs parallel to Lake Parkway on the Edgewood Golf Course side of the road using a narrow strip of the Edgewood Golf Course property. (Note: discussions with Edgewood Companies regarding this easement are underway.) Just before reaching U.S. 50, the alignment turns to the north and runs through golf course property to the intersection of Laura Drive and 4-H Camp Road. At this point, the trail follows Laura Drive to Kahle Drive and enters NFS land on the north side of Kahle Drive. A new parking lot would be constructed at this location to replace the existing lot near the corner of Kahle Drive and U.S. 50. The new lot would be sized to accommodate additional parking demand generated by the new bike path. Parking for the Proposed Action would also be available at the Douglas County Transit Center parking structure and at the Kahle Community Center on the east side of U.S. 50. Where needed, off-site parking would be linked to the Bikeway. The existing parking lot at the Lam Watah trailhead and the section of the Lam Watah Trail between the existing lot and the proposed relocated lot would be restored to their natural condition.

The Proposed Action alignment proceeds east toward U.S. 50 and turns north to parallel U.S. 50 on the west side for approximately 0.6 mile, at which point it turns to the northwest to connect with and follow existing dirt trails through a forested area to the existing shared-use bike path on the south side of Elks Point Road. (Note: an approximately 350-foot section of the trail segment could cross private property [Assessor's Parcel Number 1318-22-002-018] that fronts U.S. 50).

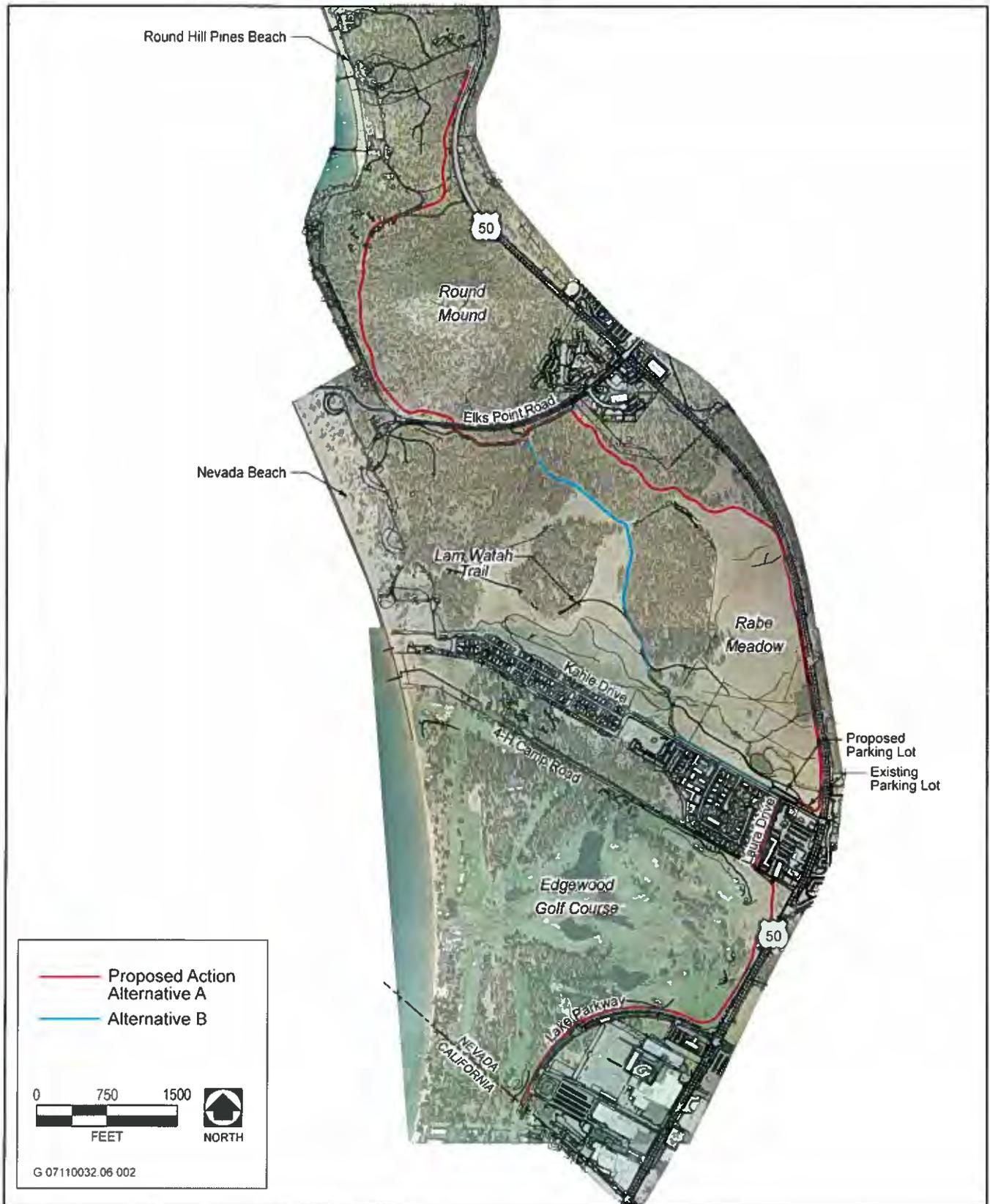
The alignment follows the existing bike path toward Nevada Beach, crossing Elks Point Road just before the entrance to the Nevada Beach Campground. From the north side of Elks Point Road, the trail follows contours around the west side of Round Mound approximately 150 feet uphill from Hill Street. The alignment goes through the abandoned Round Hill Pines Resort, and then connects to a segment of the Old Lincoln Highway that runs parallel to and west of U.S. 50. The alignment follows the Old Lincoln Highway to a point approximately 0.3 mile north of the entrance to Round Hill Pines Beach.



Source: Adapted by EDAW in 2009

South Demonstration Project Regional Location

Exhibit 1



Source: Lumos & Associates 2009

South Demonstration Project Alignment Options

Exhibit 2

ALTERNATIVE B

An alternative to the Proposed Action would be to align the trail through NFS land farther to the west of U.S. 50. This alternative would be identical to the Proposed Action from the state line to Kahle Drive. After crossing Kahle Drive at Laura Drive, the Alternative B alignment would turn to the west and run adjacent to Kahle Drive for approximately 0.3 mile, at which point it would turn toward the north and connect with the Lam Watah Trail. Alternative B would share the Lam Watah Trail for a short distance before splitting off to the north and following existing dirt trails to the bike path on the south side of Elks Point Road. The approximately 1,200-foot shared portion of trail may require resurfacing and widening of the Lam Watah Trail, and either widening the existing bridge structure or constructing an additional structure (with each structure accommodating one-way traffic) across Burke Creek. From Elks Point Road, the trail follows the Proposed Action alignment around Round Mound to its terminus.

PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

Project design features are elements of the project design that were developed to reduce or avoid negative environmental effects of the Proposed Action or alternatives on forest resources. These project design features would apply to the Proposed Action, Alternative B, and any additional alternatives developed from scoping. Project design features would address the following resource areas: recreation, visual resources, cultural resources, wildlife and aquatic resources, botany, soils and hydrology, and non-native invasive plant species.

ALTERNATIVE C (NO PROJECT/NO ACTION)

With Alternative C, the project would not be constructed. Existing conditions on the project site would be projected into the future.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED FROM DETAILED EVALUATION

The following alternatives were considered and dismissed from further evaluation either because they did not meet the project objectives, were not feasible, or did not reduce adverse environmental effects.

BEACHFRONT ALIGNMENT

A possible alignment of the bikeway through the Edgewood Golf Course and parallel to the beach between the golf course and Elks Point Road was considered. This alternative would provide spectacular views of the Lake and direct bicycle access to Nevada Beach, a popular recreational facility. This alignment would require property acquisition or easements from the Edgewood Golf Course, the University of Nevada Reno (4-H Camp), and the Beach Club on Lake Tahoe development. This alternative was dismissed because it would require considerable development within a TRPA waterfowl threshold site, Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) areas, and because it would conflict with golf course operations.

ALIGNMENT PARALLEL TO THE EAST SIDE OF U.S. 50

This alignment alternative would place the Bikeway on the east side of U.S. 50 between Kahle Drive and Elks Point Road. This alignment would require crossing U.S. 50 at both Kahle Drive and Elks Point Road and would also require private property acquisition or easements near Elks Point Road and on either side of Lake Village Drive. This alignment also requires crossing entrances to commercial areas, the Lake Village residential area, and the entrance road to the Round Hill wastewater treatment facility. Additionally, due to the private property constraints adjacent to U.S. 50, this alignment would need to be placed in close proximity to the highway, thereby reducing the recreational experience for Bikeway users. For these reasons, it was determined that this alignment would not meet the project objectives.

ALIGNMENT PARALLEL TO THE WEST SIDE OF U.S. 50 AND EAST OF ROUND MOUND

This alignment would be similar to the Proposed Action (Alternative A); however, it would continue to run parallel to U.S. 50 for the entire section between Kahle Drive and Round Hill Pines Beach. This alignment requires crossing Elks Point Road and entrances to commercial areas near Elks Point Road. This alignment would require private property acquisition or easements on both sides of Elks Point Road. While the alignment provides a relatively direct route between Kahle Drive and Round Hill Pines Beach, the section of Bikeway north of Elks Point Road would exceed the AASHTO and ADA slope standard of 5%. For these reasons, it was determined that this alignment would not meet the project objectives.

UPHILL ALIGNMENT EAST OF U.S. 50

This alignment provides an uphill option on the east side of U.S. 50 that maximizes use of existing paved trail. This alignment follows the same path as the Proposed Action to the intersection with U.S. 50 at Loop Road/Lake Parkway. The route then follows Lake Parkway to the east deviating to the north through private property at the point where the roadway begins to curve to the south. From here, the Bikeway proceeds north to Kingsbury Grade (SR 207) through an open field, crossing private property and Edgewood Creek, and connecting to a gated and abandoned road on the south side of SR 207 between Deer Run Court and Market Street. A road crossing would be required at SR 207 to connect to an existing paved trail that extends through Kahle Park on the north side of SR 207.

On the north side of Kahle Park, this alignment would turn to the east climbing gradually behind an industrial and residential area to connect to an existing paved trail at the north end of Pine Ridge Drive. This existing paved trail varies in width from 6 to 8 feet, with irregular shoulders. The Bikeway would follow the existing trail, which generally follows a contour with gently rolling hills. The trail connects to the Kingsbury Middle School campus (now closed), then picks up again on the northwest side of the campus and continues as a gently rolling path that descends to connect with Elks Point Road just north of U.S. 50. Portions of this path exceed ADA slope standards. This alternative then crosses to the west side of U.S. 50, which it parallels to the end of the South Demonstration Project.

This alternative was dismissed from further analysis because it does not meet ADA slope requirements, does not offer views of Lake Tahoe, and would require construction in a Northern Goshawk protected activity center (PAC).

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The following subject areas include potential environmental effects that will be analyzed in the EA:

Land Use. Land use impacts to be addressed in the EA include changes to on-site uses, community character, and compatibility with adjacent land uses. The EA will also address consistency with the TRPA plan area statement (PAS) requirements, community plans, ordinances, and goals and policies, and the USFS planning guidance (Forest Plan).

Hydrology and Water Quality. Bikeway construction and restoration of informal trails in the project corridor could create short-term increases in sediment load during the construction period. The alternatives being considered will cross several drainages, including Burke Creek and Edgewood Creek, and SEZ areas; trail crossings could affect hydrologic function/connection with these drainage ways and SEZ areas. Both pre- and post-construction impacts will be identified and analyzed in the environmental document. This will include non-point pollution sources from the project, potential contaminants, proposed source control methods, and proposed temporary and permanent best management practices (BMPs) to address potential impacts on water quality. The EA will also address potential hazardous materials issues in addition to focusing on potential short- and long-term changes in sediment fate and transport as it relates to altered landscape areas. The EA will also address long-term water quality monitoring needs. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Biological Resources: Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Vegetation, and Wildlife. Construction and use of the Bikeway could affect the distribution, extent, and quality of sensitive and common biological resources that may be located within the project site. Several streams and their associated SEZs would be crossed by the new Bikeway. Habitat that may be suitable for sensitive plant species occurs in the project area, particularly in riparian zones, SEZ areas, and along streams. The project area also includes a designated TRPA threshold site for nesting waterfowl, centered on the Edgewood Golf Course property. Noxious weeds are known to be present and abundant within portions of the project area. The relationship of the TRPA vegetation and wildlife threshold carrying capacities will be discussed, as will tree removal related to construction of the Bikeway. Impacts on native vegetation, fisheries and aquatic resources, and wildlife will be described based on the proposed site development. The potential for the project to result in the spread of noxious weeds will also be discussed. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Earth Resources: Geology and Soils, and Land Capability and Coverage. The project would involve excavation and possibly the placement of fill material for Bikeway construction, boardwalks, and bridges. Potential environmental effects related to land capability and coverage, soils and geology, topographic alteration, seismic hazards, slope stability, and erosion will be described. If soil export outside of the study area is necessary, potential disposal sites will be identified and evaluated. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Scenic Resources. Trail construction resulting from the project would result in changes to natural elements that contribute to the scenic quality of the study area (e.g., tree removal, hillside cuts, vegetation disturbance), as well as changes related to the installation of recreation-related structures (e.g., paved trails, boardwalks). Visibility of the Bikeway from U.S. 50, a TRPA-designated scenic travel route, will be determined. Visibility of the Bikeway from Lake Tahoe (particularly at locations on Round Mound) will also be determined. Potential impacts from construction and operation of the Proposed Action will be evaluated through the use of ground-level site photographs from sensitive viewpoints on or near the project site. Scenic effects will be evaluated in terms of visibility of the Proposed Action, alteration of the visual setting, sensitivity of viewpoints, and potential effects on TRPA scenic thresholds. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Public Access and Recreation. Construction and operation of the trail would result in changes in existing public access to and recreational uses of the study area. The proposed project would provide bicycle access to recreation areas to the north of the Stateline casino core, including Nevada Beach, Rabe Meadow, and Round Hill Pines Beach. This new access may increase demand for use of these recreation facilities. The EA will evaluate the changes to the demand for and use of these recreation areas relative to facility capacity, the effect on TRPA recreation thresholds, and consistency with Forest Plan recreation goals, including potential effects on the Lam Watah Trail and dispersed trails in forested areas east of Nevada Beach Campground, which are themselves recreation resources. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Cultural Resources. Much of the trail corridor is located on undeveloped land. The potential for cultural resources to be located on or near the Bikeway alignment and the potential for disturbance of known and/or undiscovered cultural resources due to implementation of the project will be analyzed. A review of previous investigations, historical maps, overview studies, and other existing data on file at the Nevada State Museum and the USFS's offices, has resulted in the identification of 17 resources that have been documented within the study area. Rabe Meadow is also an important cultural resource area to the Washoe Tribe. The evaluation methodology will include consultation with the Washoe Tribe, field reconnaissance in areas where previous investigations have not occurred, and evaluation of potentially significant resources in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and potential effects on the historic Round Hill Pines Resort. Mitigation measures will be proposed, if needed.

Transportation, Parking, and Circulation. Trail construction would generate short-term construction-related traffic. Long-term traffic generated by the recreational components will also be discussed, but it is anticipated that Bikeway use as an alternative to the use of the automobile will offset new trips from recreational users. Therefore, the analysis will also discuss potential transportation benefits (e.g., trip and VMT reduction) that may result from

Bikeway construction and use. The transportation analysis will include identification of major roadways and intersections that may be affected by the proposed Bikeway construction, traffic volumes on those roadways, and potential neighborhood effects from parking on residential streets near the Bikeway corridor. Effects on local circulation patterns will also be discussed in these locations. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Air Quality. The Proposed Action would involve temporary construction emissions and generation of fugitive dust, as well as generate construction traffic in the area, contributing pollutants to the air basin. The EA will include an assessment of ambient air quality conditions, as well as short-term (i.e., construction) air quality impacts and long-term (i.e., operational) regional air pollutant emissions, including mobile and area source emissions. The potential for long-term air quality benefits will also be evaluated from its use as an alternative to the private automobile. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Noise. The EA will assess potential short-term (i.e., construction) noise impacts relative to sensitive receptors and their potential exposure. Noise levels of specific construction equipment will be determined and resultant noise levels at nearby receptors (at given distances from the source) will be calculated. Long-term (i.e., operational) noise impacts, including increased noise from mobile, stationary and area sources will be assessed. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Public Services and Utilities. The public services and utilities section of the EA will evaluate impacts on power, water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection, solid waste collection and disposal, police services, fire protection services, schools, and fire fuel management. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The EA will map and address potential hazardous materials located on the project site, such as petroleum products (including aerially deposited lead), fertilizers, and pesticides. The EA will also address hazardous materials issues related to adjoining properties. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Agricultural and Mineral Resources. The proposed alternatives are not expected to affect agricultural or mineral resources in the study area. Existing resources will be verified and discussed.

Socioeconomics. With the exception of recreation and land use compatibility, discussed above, the proposed alternatives are not expected to significantly affect socioeconomic factors within the study area.

Growth-Inducement. The effects of the proposed Bikeway on growth inducement will be addressed. However, the proposed Bikeway is not expected to induce or result in the growth of population in the region, cause an increase in demand for employment opportunities, or cause an increase in other public needs.

Cumulative Effects. The EA will identify and describe recently approved and reasonably anticipated projects in the vicinity of the proposed Bikeway or Bikeway alternatives (e.g., the Beach Club on Lake Tahoe Project, the Sierra Colina Village Project, the Edgewood Hotel and Golf Course Realignment Project, and the Chateau at Heavenly Village), and region-wide planning efforts currently underway (e.g., Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, TRPA Regional Plan Update). The EA will evaluate the project's direct and indirect contribution to the combined effects of these activities.

TRPA Threshold Carrying Capacities: The EA will include assessment of the Proposed Action's compliance with and contribution to the attainment and maintenance of threshold carrying capacities adopted by TRPA.

INTENDED USES OF THE EA

The USFS and TRPA will use this EA to consider the potential environmental effects, design features, mitigation measures, and alternatives, when reviewing the Proposed Action for approval. The EA will serve as the USFS's

NEPA compliance document and as TRPA's compliance document with respect to its Compact and Chapter 5 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. State agencies with authority over the project and federal cooperating agencies may also use this EA, as needed, for subsequent findings and approvals. State agencies and federal cooperating agencies may also use this EA, as needed, for subsequent discretionary actions. Information provided in the EA will also be used by agencies in their permitting process, including but not limited to, TRPA and Douglas County construction permits, NDOT encroachment permits, a United States Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit, and a Nevada Department of Environmental Protection National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Permit.