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This notice is being issued jointly by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD), and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) in preparation of a joint National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and TRPA EIS.

NOTICE OF INTENT/NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: California State Clearinghouse
Nevada State Clearinghouse
California Responsible Agencies
California Trustee Agencies
Other Interested Public Agencies
Interested Parties and Organizations
Affected Property Owners (within 300 feet of the terminal and maintenance sites)

Subject: **Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare a NEPA Draft EIS and Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a CEQA Draft EIR and TRPA Draft EIS for the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project**

Lead Agencies:

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Project Title: Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project

Project Location: The project consists of a cross-lake ferry service with a South Shore Ferry Terminal at the Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County, California, and a North Shore Ferry Terminal at the Grove Street Pier just west of the Tahoe City Marina in Tahoe City, Placer County, California. The project area encompasses the proposed ferry route on Lake Tahoe, the two ferry terminals, and a vessel assembly and maintenance location using existing facilities at the Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe. Additional north shore terminal locations may be considered if an initial assessment determines those locations to be adequate for operations.

Project Overview: The proposed Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would provide direct waterborne transit service between the north and south shores of Lake Tahoe. The service is proposed to operate year-round and on a fixed schedule. Additionally, the service would coordinate with existing local transit services on the north and south shore. Implementation of the project would assist in achieving local, state, regional, and federal environmental and transportation goals by reducing dependency on the private automobile and environmental impacts associated with automobile use. Additional goals to improve mobility, connect communities, and enhance economic vitality would also be realized. The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project is an identified project in the

Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization's *Mobility 2035: Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP), which includes a suite of projects and transportation initiatives intended to improve mobility in the Region, assist in controlling greenhouse gas (GHG) and air pollutant emissions, and meet the environmental threshold carrying capacities established by TRPA Compact. Goal 4.6 of the RTP requires the consideration of waterborne transit systems in coordination with other public and private transportation systems to minimize air and water quality impacts as an alternative to automobile travel within the Region. The proposed project is also listed on the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) 5-year priority project list (EIP Project No. 03.01.02.21).

FTA, TTD, and TRPA are initiating preparation of a joint EIS/EIR/EIS for the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project. The joint document is currently anticipated to be (1) an EIS prepared pursuant to NEPA (Title 23 of the U.S. Code [USC], Section 139), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Section 1500 et seq.), FTA/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR Section 771), and FTA environmental process refinements being implemented pursuant to the 2012 Transportation Reauthorization Act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) with FTA as the lead agency; (2) an EIR prepared pursuant to CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.) with TTD as the lead agency; and (3) an EIS for TRPA prepared pursuant to the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact (Public Law 96-551), Code of Ordinances, and Rules of Procedure. This notice meets the CEQA and TRPA noticing requirements for a NOP, and provides local notice of a NOI for NEPA purposes. The NOI will also be published in the Federal Register in accordance with NEPA requirements.

A brief description of the project, the purpose and need, and a summary of the probable environmental effects of the proposed project are attached hereto, or are available for review on the TTD and TRPA websites at: www.tahoetransportation.org and www.trpa.org.

Public Scoping: The purpose of this NOI/NOP is to solicit 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 EIS/EIR/EIS. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their legal authority and statutory responsibilities in connection with the project.

The designated public scoping period will extend for 40 calendar days beginning on November 11, 2013 and concluding on January 3, 2014. Comments would be most helpful if received within the designated scoping period. Please send your comments and contact information to Alfred Knotts, TTD Project Manager, by mail, fax, or email; contact information is listed above.

Two public scoping meetings will be held to provide the opportunity to learn more about the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project and to receive comments from the public and other interested parties and agencies regarding the issues that should be addressed in the EIS/EIR/EIS. The scoping meetings will be held as follows:

Wednesday, December 4, 2013	Friday, December 13, 2013
Beginning at 9.30 a.m.	Beginning at 9.30 a.m.
TRPA APC Meeting	TTD Board Meeting
TRPA – Board Room	Granlibakken Conference Center
128 Market Street	725 Granlibakken Road
Stateline, NV 89449	Tahoe City, CA 96145

The TTD Board and TRPA APC meetings will begin at 9:30 a.m.; however, scoping for the proposed project is not time certain. Please refer to the agendas posted at www.tahoetransportation.org and www.trpa.org no more than one week prior to the meetings for updated information. The locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual who requires special assistance, such as a language interpreter, to participate in the scoping meetings should contact Alfred Knotts with TTD at least three days prior to the meetings at (775) 589-5503 or aknotts@tahoetransportation.org. If you have further questions or require additional information, please contact Mr. Knotts.

LAKE TAHOE PASSENGER FERRY PROJECT EIS/EIR/EIS

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND LOCATION

The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) is proposing the development of an all-season, passenger ferry service between the north shore and south shores of Lake Tahoe (Exhibit 1). The proposed ferry service would improve mobility within the Lake Tahoe Region, reduce vehicle miles traveled by automobile, and move the Region toward achievement of the regional water quality, air, and GHG goals.

The Lake Tahoe Region has seven points of entry, all served by state or federal highways. Access around the Lake is also provided by state or federal highways with much of the route limited to two-lane roadways with changing and often steep grades. During summer and winter months, heavy traffic congestion and rugged mountain terrain can make traveling around the Lake slow and difficult, particularly driving between the north and south shores on the narrow, winding highways. During the winter season, traveling these routes can be especially hazardous as a result of snow and ice on the roadways. Routes can also be restricted in winter to vehicles with only four wheel drive or closed all together due to avalanche control. Development of the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would help reduce regional automobile travel, alleviate roadway congestion, and provide a safe, convenient, and affordable alternative for traveling between the north and south shores of Lake Tahoe.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project is to support regional goals and planning mandates by: providing a multi-modal transportation alternative and promoting smart growth; enhancing transportation and regional mobility with a safe, reliable, year-round transit service between the north and south shores; controlling vehicle miles traveled and GHG emissions; improving and maintaining air and water quality; and promoting livability and connectivity within the Tahoe Region.

The project would fulfill the following specific needs:

- **Support Regional Planning Efforts and Mandates**
  - *Provide Multi-Modal Transportation Alternatives.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project supports regional planning efforts to provide multi-modal transportation alternatives to private vehicle trips. According to visitor statistics, the dominant mode of travel into the Tahoe Region is the automobile. Over 90 percent of overnight visitors access the Tahoe Region through the use of a private or rented automobile. A ferry service connection between the north and south shores would provide the basis to create a distribution system for auto trips entering the Region. As discussed in greater detail below, travel time savings on a transit alternative is estimated to be approximately 40 minutes over a one way vehicle trip between the north and south shore.
  - *Smart Growth Principles.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project supports smart growth planning principles in the Region by focusing transportation improvements between the north and south shore with an alternative to the automobile and increased regional travel capacity. These improvements will allow for transportation and land use decisions at either end of the Lake to be made in context of the entire Tahoe Region and its rural, alpine setting. The proposed ferry service maximizes the connectivity of the transportation system to proposed developments in urban centers, while minimizing the impacts to surrounding communities and natural resources.

- **Transportation**
  - *Time Travel Savings.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would provide travel-time savings over existing seasonal transit service between the north and south shore and, more importantly, over the existing travel time of private vehicles using highways on either side of the Lake. Preliminary planning indicates that the proposed ferry service could be 18 miles in length and take approximately 20 to 25 minutes. This is a substantial travel-time savings over private vehicles trips, which are 32 to 39 miles in length, depending on the route, and can take 60 to 90 minutes or potentially more, depending on the season, weather conditions, and time of day. Overall, the advantage of the passenger ferry transit connection is that it provides both a travel-time savings and a more reliable trip time, while being attractive to both residents and visitors.
  - *Consolidate Transit Service.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would create a year-round transit connection between the north and south shore and consolidate transit service into a priority corridor. The proposed passenger ferry would connect the two largest urban population, employment, and activity centers in the Tahoe Region by providing all-day, two-way transit service. This regional connection allows local transit on either end to be modified, so that their service focuses on trip distribution to/from the ferry terminals, leading to regional/local operations that work together as an integrated transit system, which is currently lacking.
  - *Improve Non-Motorized Connections.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project provides an opportunity for improved non-motorized mobility, as well. Many of the non-motorized trips (e.g., bicycle, pedestrian) in the north or south shore are constrained to stay within those local areas, because a motor vehicle trip is required to access the other end of the Lake. The passenger ferry transit connection opens up a cross-lake trip opportunity for these non-motorized modes, and allows public as well as private shuttle companies to support these trips as necessary based on demand and the destination wishes of the traveler. Both proposed north and south shore locations are served by existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities that would facilitate these non-motorized connections.
- **Mobility**
  - *Year-Round Transit Connection.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would address year-round transit demand and mobility in the Tahoe Region. The largest urban areas with the greatest population, employment, and economic activity in the Tahoe Region are the north and south shores. Current opportunities to connect these urban areas via transit from other points in the Tahoe Region vary from limited to non-existent. The link between these locations is important, because both the north and south shores serve as gateways to other destinations both from and within the Tahoe Region. Currently, the only transit connection between the north and south shore is seasonal transit service on the west shore provided by the Emerald Bay Connection, which is a summer bus service. The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would respond to a shift in regional travel patterns from seasonal to year-round service and bypass points of congestion that currently exist on both the north and south shores.
  - *Safety and Reliability.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project seeks to provide a safe and reliable transit connection between the north and south shore. Currently, there are safety and reliability issues associated with the highways on the east and west shores of Lake Tahoe, particularly State Route (SR) 89 during the winter. For example, travel between the north and south shore can be hindered by weather during the winter months because of the narrow roadways and the combination of snow, ice, and poor visibility. Roads can be restricted and or closed all together during the winter months. During the summer, peak traffic volumes lead to substantial congestion and travel time delays on U.S. Highway 50 (US 50), SR 89, and SR 28. Together, these seasonal travel issues have a detrimental impact on the safety and reliability of travel of people, goods, and services between the north and south shore. One intended benefit of the proposed Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would be to provide an alternative regional travel opportunity that is safe and reliable.
  - *Serve Transit Dependent Populations.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project improves transit options for the large transit dependent population in the Tahoe Region. Many of the transit dependent trips in the north or south shore are constrained to those local areas, because most of the time a motor vehicle

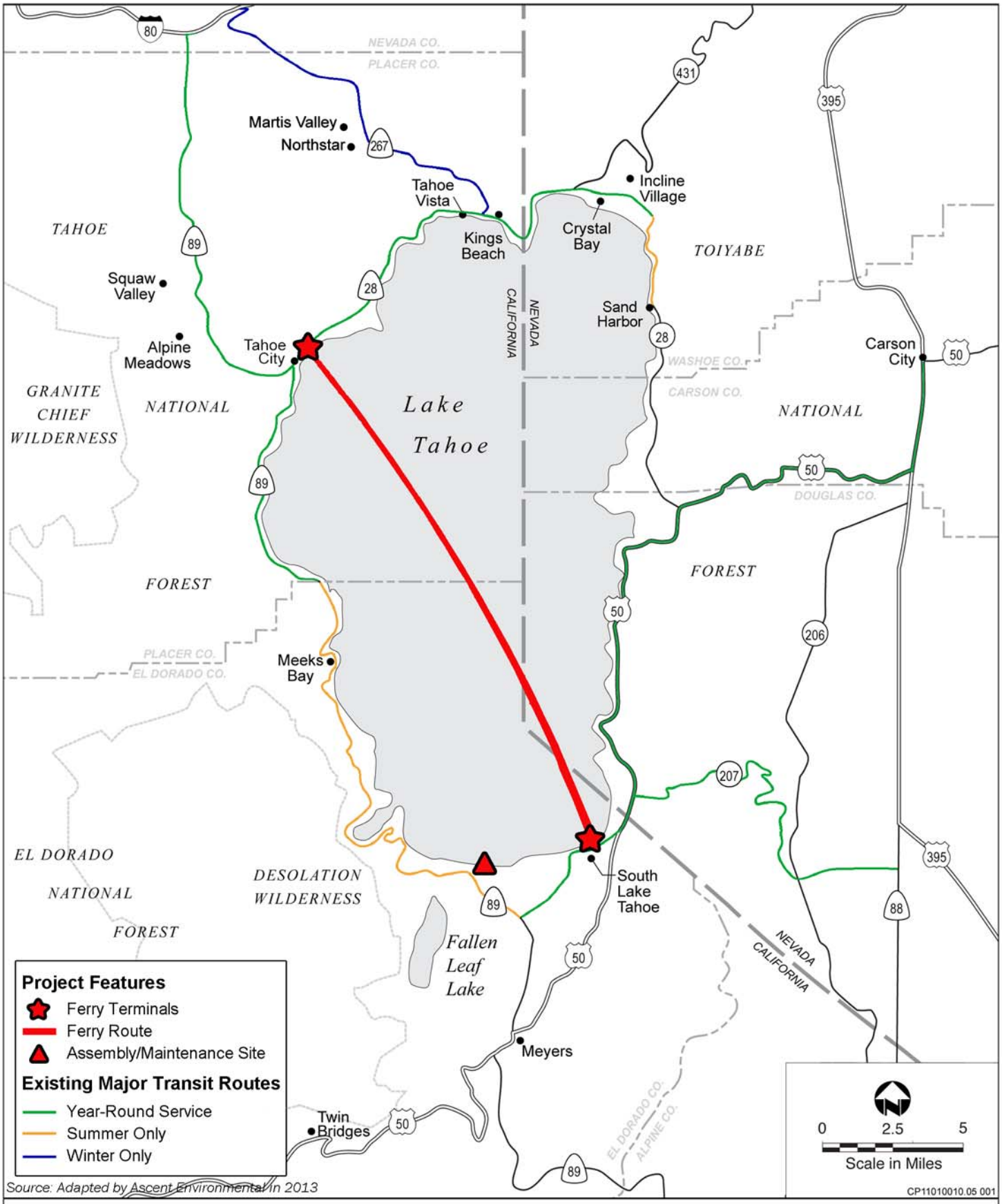
trip is required to access the other end of the lake. The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project provides the cross-lake transit service needed by the transit dependent population and allows both public and private transit companies to support these trips with local connections, as necessary.

- *Facilitate Non-Auto Trips.* The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would substantially improve the ability of a visitor to arrive at Lake Tahoe and travel within the Region without bringing an auto. With a complete regional transit system, visitors can arrive at their destination and be able to move around the Lake without being dependent on an automobile. As part of the complete system of bicycle/pedestrian trails, transit, and road system improvements, the passenger ferry helps to achieve the characteristics of a destination resort.

- **Environmental**
  - *Air and Water Quality.* The TRPA Regional Plan update process (completed with the adoption of the Regional Plan by the TRPA Governing Board on December 12, 2012) identified the following important topics related to maintaining or improving air and water quality: (1) visibility or clarity, (2) impact on human health, (3) impact on ecosystem health, (4) reduction of emissions, and (5) restore and then maintain water quality. Each of these goals has an important item in common: to reduce pollutant emissions within the Tahoe Region. Increasing use of public transit was identified as one important way to achieve this goal and to contribute to achievement of TRPA environmental thresholds. Pollutants from cars and the roadway contribute particles directly into Lake Tahoe via road dust and direct deposition. With the implementation of a proposed cross-lake ferry service, a reduction in auto trips, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and attendant emissions are feasible.
  - *Greenhouse Gas Emissions.* In 2012, the California Air Resource Board assigned per capita GHG reduction goals for the Tahoe Region, in compliance with state law (SB 375, Statutes of 2008). Mobile sources are an important target for per capita GHG reduction. A cross-lake passenger ferry and an interconnected, regional transit system would help reduce vehicle trips and, therefore, contribute to this goal.
- **Livability**
  - *Consolidate Development Around Transit Service Areas.* The integration of transportation and land use is a critical element of regional growth and circulation goals. The Regional Plan promotes concentrating redevelopment within the community centers of the Tahoe Region, which would contain mixed-use development that is easily walk-able or bike-able, and also close to transit stops. While this pattern of concentrated development will help communities focus future development, travel patterns suggest visitors wish to travel to regional destinations outside the local communities, such as casinos, summer and winter resorts, recreation sites, and public lands. The proposed Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project would allow visitors to travel between the north and south shore without needing an automobile. The proposed project would also better connect the economies of the north and south shores of Lake Tahoe, and would expand local job markets and allow for a more diversified workforce.
  - *Direct Connection to Housing Choices.* While visitors traveling into and throughout the Tahoe Region make up the majority of trips annually, residents who live and/or work in the Region create another important source of travel demand. A regional priority is to improve housing choices within the proposed redevelopment areas of the Tahoe Region community centers. Residents in these communities would benefit both from easier pedestrian and bicycle access to amenities and also the regional transit accessibility provided by the proposed project.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed project would include development of a South Shore Ferry Terminal at the Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe and a North Shore Ferry Terminal at the Grove Street Pier at the end of Grove Street in Tahoe City (Exhibit 2). A brief description of the existing facilities and surrounding land uses is provided below.



Source: Adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2013

Exhibit 1

Regional Location

ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

Exhibit 2 Proposed Ferry Terminal Locations

ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

GROVE STREET PIER

The Grove Street Pier is a privately-owned pier located just west of the Tahoe City Marina and approximately 0.5 mile east of the intersection of SR 89 and SR 28, known as the "Wye". The existing Grove Street Pier is a fixed pier that is approximately 400 feet long and 8 feet wide. The pier includes two 2-foot wide adjustable height boat access platforms and an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) lift at the end of the pier. There are no fueling facilities located at the Grove Street Pier; however, fueling is available at the adjacent Tahoe City Marina. The pier is open to the public.

Surrounding land uses include Commons Beach (a 4-acre park and beach area), the Lakeside Bicycle Trail, the Tahoe City Marina, Safeway, the Marina Mall, the Boatworks Mall, and business establishments along SR 28 within the commercial core of Tahoe City. Tahoe Area Regional Transit (TART) operates a local, year-round bus service along SR 28 in Tahoe City. Exhibit 2 shows the location of the Grove Street Pier relative to the Tahoe City Marina and SR 28.

Tahoe City has the largest population of the California communities on the north shore of Lake Tahoe and provides access to nearby ski resorts, including Squaw Valley USA, Alpine Meadows Resort, Homewood Mountain Resort, Northstar, Sugar Bowl, and other smaller resorts. Various recreational facilities and visitor-oriented, commercial establishments provide a resort community atmosphere in Tahoe City, which is known as the "gateway" to the north shore.

A small stream enters Lake Tahoe just east of the Tahoe City Marina and about 725 feet east of the Grove Street Pier. This stream is unnamed, but is known locally as Antone Creek.

SKI RUN MARINA

Ski Run Marina is a privately-owned marina located at the northern end of Ski Run Boulevard. The marina includes two connected fixed piers. The piers extend approximately 120 feet and 65 feet from the shore of Lake Tahoe. The Tahoe Queen, a paddle-wheel touring vessel, docks on the westernmost of the two piers. The marina includes boat slips, fueling facilities, and motorized and non-motorized public boat rentals.

Street access to the terminal site is provided by Ski Run Boulevard and US 50. Existing non-motorized access to Ski Run Marina includes a shared-use path that runs parallel to US 50 on the north side of the highway on both sides of Ski Run Boulevard. Transit access is provided year-round by the South Shore bus service along US 50.

Surrounding land uses include Ski Run Marina Village (a collection of shops and restaurants), Tahoe Beach & Ski, and Lake Tahoe Vacation Resort (timeshare accommodations), Tahoe Meadows (an approximately 100 acre private residential community listed on the National Register of Historic Places), Ski Run Boulevard commercial district, Heavenly Mountain Resort at the end of Ski Run Boulevard, and numerous business establishments along US 50. Exhibit 2 shows the location of the Ski Run Marina relative to these uses and US 50.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Ferry service would be provided year-round, with a travel time of approximately 25 minutes between terminals and hourly headways (i.e., the length of time between departures at a given terminal). Projected daily ridership is estimated to be between 1,600 to 1,800 passengers, using two ferry vessels.

Limited parking for ferry passengers would be provided at or near the terminals. Passengers would also be encouraged to use existing public transit and/or pedestrian and bicycle facilities to access the terminals. A parking plan would be developed later in the design process, after alternatives have been formalized for evaluation in the EIS/EIR/EIS.

The Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry would link existing and proposed alternative transportation modes including public transit, water taxies, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Additionally, the vessel currently under consideration would provide space for bicycles. The proposed North Shore Ferry Terminal would be located along the existing TART bus line, which provides service between Tahoe City and Truckee and to Lake Tahoe communities from Tahoma to Incline Village. The recently completed Tahoe City Transit Center would serve as a hub to access surrounding communities, resorts, and adjacent public lands. The South Shore Ferry Terminal would be located within the service area of the South Shore fixed route transit line in South Lake Tahoe, which provides service from the south shore "Y" in South Lake Tahoe to Stateline, Nevada with connections to the Emerald Bay trolley (providing service from the "Y" to Tahoe City) and the Lake Valley Express (Stateline to the Carson Valley communities of Carson City, Minden, and Gardnerville in Nevada). Currently, seasonal water taxi service is available from Tahoe City south to Homewood and north to Carnelian Bay. A south shore water taxi operates between Camp Richardson Resort and Lakeside Marina; however, it does not currently stop at Ski Run Marina. A network of shared-use paths, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes exist near both proposed terminal locations.

Vessel Description

The proposed ferry vessels would be catamarans (a vessel with two parallel hulls; a hull is the body of a vessel) with a passenger capacity of up to 150 persons. The specific manufacturer is not known at this time. The proposed service speed for the vessels would be 37 knots or 43 miles per hour (mph). Fuel consumption is estimated at approximately 2,000 gallons per day. The passenger ferry, *Rich Passage I*, is a vessel used for ferry service between Seattle and Bremerton in Washington. It is representative of the type of vessel that is being proposed for use as part of the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project.

Vessel Manufacturing, Assembly, and Maintenance

The proposed vessels would be too large to be hauled by truck into the Tahoe Region on area highways in one complete piece. Components of the vessels would be manufactured at facilities outside of the Tahoe Region. Vessel manufacturing is expected to take between 12 and 16 months. Following final manufacturing, all U.S. Coast Guard inspections would occur at the manufacturer's facility prior to transport and delivery to ensure the vessels meet all safety requirements and specifications. Once all certifications have been issued, the vessel would be partially disassembled into truck-transportable sections and hauled on semi-trailers to an assembly site within the Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe. Reassembly would require 1-2 weeks to complete. The assembly site would be located on paved surfaces or high capability land with all required water quality best management practices (BMPs) installed and approved prior to assembly.

Dry-dock and other facilities for ongoing maintenance of the ferry vessels would also be located at the Tahoe Keys Marina. Some required maintenance inspections could take place in the water. If maintenance or routine inspections require moving the vessels to a dry-dock facility, the existing facilities at Tahoe Keys Marina would be adequate such that no new development or substantial physical improvements would be necessary. The Tahoe Keys Marina already services vessels of a similar size (such as The Safari Rose, an 80-foot vessel; and the Woodwind II).

Fueling Facilities

The ferry vessels would be refueled by truck or would require development of fueling facilities or improvement of existing fueling infrastructure at the identified ferry terminals.

Pier Modifications

Modifications to the existing piers would involve increasing the length of the piers, adding ramped access that meets ADA standards, and construction of a proposed floating pier platform that would be long enough to accommodate the ferry and at least 16 feet in width. The area surrounding the proposed pier expansions and floating platforms would require dredging for construction and maintenance dredging to provide sufficient depth during low lake level periods.

The security requirements at each ferry terminal would likely include fencing, gates, security cameras, lighting, and alarms to comply with Homeland Security Act requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

TTD has been conducting a planning process with FTA oversight that has considered a broad range of alternatives, in accordance with federal procedures (discussed below). The EIS/EIR/EIS will consider one or more action alternatives to the proposed project that achieve the project goals and meet the Purpose and Need, and a No Project Alternative. Under the No Project Alternative, no ferry terminals would be developed and year-round transit service between the north and south shores would not occur. It is expected that the action alternatives that will be evaluated in the EIS/EIR/EIS will be limited to alternatives that also include cross-lake ferry service between the north shore and south shore. Alternatives that involve other transportation modes (i.e., bus service or a combination of bus and ferry service) to accomplish year-round transit service between the north and south shores have been considered in detail in the TTD planning process, but have been eliminated from further evaluation. Action alternatives that may be considered could include alternative pier designs (such as a fixed versus floating pier), landside facility configurations, vessel sizes, operational characteristics (such as service frequency), terminal locations, and assembly and maintenance sites. The action alternatives will be defined for the EIS/EIR/EIS after consideration of input solicited during this public scoping period. Alternatives evaluated in the EIS/EIR/EIS will be analyzed at an equal level of detail as the proposed project.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER EVALUATION

Under a federal grant program (49 USC Section 5339) administered by the FTA, TTD conducted a comprehensive Alternatives Analysis (AA) consistent with FTA's guidelines to evaluate the costs, benefits, and impacts of a range of transportation alternatives designed to address north-south mobility problems within the Lake Tahoe Region. A copy of the complete AA is available on TTD's website at www.tahoetransportation.org. The AA evaluation process included the following steps: (1) development of the project's purpose and need, (2) development of project alternatives; and, (3) Tier 1 initial screening, Tier 2 final screening, and identification and adoption of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) by the TTD Board of Directors on April 13, 2012, which would become the proposed action for environmental review.

Ten alternatives were evaluated in the AA that could provide year-round transit service between the north and south shores of Lake Tahoe. The alternatives included four alternatives that included ferry service only, two alternatives that included bus service only, and four hybrid alternatives that included a combination of bus and ferry service.

The initial screening involved ranking the alternatives based on a rating scale of high (3), medium (2), and low (1) performance with respect to the following criteria:

- mobility
- ridership potential
- capacity
- missed destinations
- expandability
- expandability
- economic development
- fatal flaws
- travel time
- capital costs
- operation and maintenance (O&M) costs
- transit system integration
- transit system integration
- traffic delay
- plans and guidelines
- anticipated community support

These 14 criteria were weighted equally and summed. Based upon the initial rankings, seven alternatives were eliminated from further consideration, and three alternatives, including the proposed project, were advanced to a final screening. The final screening process addressed environmental issues and economic development potential, in addition to the initial screening criteria.

Based on the results of the final screening evaluation, it was recommended that cross-lake ferry service between South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe City (the proposed project) be identified as the LPA. The proposed project would serve 1,600 to 1,800 riders per day for travel between South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe City, using two vessels. Additional destinations could be added with minimal investment. Vessels are anticipated to have a lifespan of 25 years, accommodate up to 150 passengers, and allow for transport of 10 bicycles per ferry.

The proposed project was selected as the LPA because it was determined to:

- provide the most direct service between the north and south shore
- provide the fastest travel time between the north and south shore
- have the lowest capital and operation/maintenance (O/M) cost of the ferry alternatives
- have the lowest cost per user of all alternatives
- provide optimal service in terms of transit integration
- provide the highest passenger and bicycle capacity
- have the fewest environmental issues for all alternatives
- received the most community support
- could be expanded to serve nearby destinations by water taxi in the future

The two alternatives that were considered in the AA through the final screening phase and eliminated from further consideration are summarized below; the primary reasons for their elimination are also discussed below. This discussion is followed by a list of the alternatives considered during initial screening and eliminated from further evaluation.

Alternatives Eliminated During Final Screening

Ferry Alternative: Terminals in South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe City, and Kings Beach

This alternative would serve travel between South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe City, and Kings Beach, using three vessels. Capital costs, O&M costs, and travel times would be greater than the LPA. The size and capacity of the vessels would be the same as the LPA. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration, because it would have the highest combined capital and O&M costs, the segment between Tahoe City and Kings Beach is already served year-round by TART bus service, and TART would require additional fleet vehicles to maintain the same frequency as the ferry.

Bus Alternative: Service between South Lake Tahoe and Kings Beach via East Shore

This service would provide bus service between South Lake Tahoe and Kings Beach, using six buses. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration, because it would have the slowest travel time, received the least community support, and would still be subject to winter travel restrictions.

Alternatives Eliminated During Initial Screening

The following seven alternatives were considered during initial screening and prior to final screening they were eliminated from further consideration in the AA:

- Ferry Alternative: Terminals in South Lake Tahoe, Homewood, Tahoe City, and Kings Beach
- Ferry Alternative: Terminals in South Lake Tahoe, Homewood, Tahoe City, Kings Beach, and Zephyr Cove

- Bus Alternative: Service between South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe City via West Shore
- Bus/Ferry Alternative: Bus Service between South Lake Tahoe and Homewood, and Ferry Service between Homewood and Tahoe City
- Bus/Ferry Alternative: Ferry Service between South Lake Tahoe and Homewood, and Bus Service between Homewood and Tahoe City
- Bus/Ferry Alternative: Bus Service between South Lake Tahoe and Kings Beach, and Ferry Service between Kings Beach and South Lake Tahoe
- Bus/Ferry Alternative: Bus Service between South Lake Tahoe and Kings Beach, and Ferry Service between Kings Beach, Tahoe City, and South Lake Tahoe

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Probable environmental effects associated with the proposed project are described briefly below. Mitigation measures will be recommended for any identified significant or potentially significant effects. Because the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project was one of the transportation improvement projects contemplated and evaluated at a program-level in the *Mobility 2035: Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy EIR/EIS (RTP/SCS EIR/EIS)*, certified by the TRPA Governing Board and the Tahoe Metropolitan Organization (TMPO) Board on December 12, 2013, the EIS/EIR/EIS analysis will consider environmental issues already addressed in the program-level analysis and incorporate by reference specific information contained in that document. For purpose of the CEQA process, the proposed project is a "later activity" that is consistent with the previous program EIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c).

The following subject areas will be analyzed in detail in the EIS/EIR/EIS.

Land Use and Community Effects. The project would include development of ferry terminals, which may include extensions of existing piers and development of landside facilities (such as parking and transit connections) at north shore and south shore locations. The project would not alter the nature and types of land uses in the surrounding area nor would it displace any existing residences or businesses. The land use analysis will consider changes to onsite uses, land use compatibility, and community character in terms of the nature and type of proposed uses, and integration of proposed uses with existing and planned surrounding lands. The EIS/EIR/EIS will also evaluate the project's consistency with applicable TRPA goals and policies and the following planning documents: the RTP, relevant community plans (Tahoe City Community Plan and Stateline/Ski Run Community Plan) and/or Area Plans that are developed and supersede these plans, the Tahoe City Marina Master Plan, the Ski Run Marina Master Plan, the Placer County General Plan, the City of South Lake Tahoe General Plan, and other relevant planning and policy documents. The need for any plan amendments will also be evaluated and discussed in the EIS/EIR/EIS.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The project may include pier modifications within Lake Tahoe and landside facility improvements adjacent to the lake. The project could also affect existing drainage features in the project area. Both pre- and post-construction impacts to these features will be identified and analyzed in the EIS/EIR/EIS. This will include non-point pollution sources from the project, potential contaminants, proposed source control methods, and proposed temporary and permanent BMPs to address potential impacts on water quality. The analysis of water-related impacts will also consider potential motorized watercraft pollutants (e.g., fuel constituents, combustion products), lake current and sediment transport within the lake, run-off related pollutants, potential short-term and long-term changes in sediment rate and transport as it relates to altered landscapes, and source water protection (wells and intake lines). Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Geology and Soils, Land Capability, and Coverage. The proposed project includes landside improvements that include parking and transit connections. The EIS/EIR/EIS will include a discussion of topographic alteration, land

capability and coverage, dredging, soil stability, geologic/geomorphological hazards (e.g., avalanche, earthquake, seiches, landslides, mudslides, ground failure, subsidence, and liquefaction), and erosion potential. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Scenic Resources. The proposed project may involve modifications to existing piers and landside improvements that would be visible from existing public recreation areas (e.g., Commons Beach, El Dorado Beach, and the Lakeside Bicycle Trail) and to and from Lake Tahoe. The EIS/EIR/EIS will consider the visibility of the project, alteration of the visual setting, effects on TRPA's scenic travel routes, and sensitivity of scenic viewpoints. The scenic resources evaluation in the EIS/EIR/EIS will use TRPA's visual assessment tool and contrast rating system to evaluate scenic impacts, as applicable. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Biological Resources: Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Vegetation, and Wildlife. Construction and use of the proposed project could affect the distribution, extent, and quality of sensitive and common biological resources that may be located within the project area. Lands within the project area are generally disturbed or developed. Modification to the existing piers and proposed dredging could result in temporary and permanent effects to fish habitat, including prime fish habitat. Trees and shrubs that occur within the project area may provide suitable nesting sites for protected raptors and other nesting birds. The EIS/EIR/EIS will evaluate biological resources effects in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 USC 703-712), the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; Public Law 93-205; 16 USC 1531 et seq.), and the California Endangered Species Act (Fish & Game Code Section 2050 et seq.). The relationship of the TRPA fisheries, vegetation, and wildlife threshold carrying capacities will be discussed. Impacts on native vegetation, fisheries and aquatic resources, and wildlife will be described based on the proposed site development. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Recreation. In addition to its mobility benefits, the proposed project would provide a new recreational amenity as it would provide convenient and affordable access to experience the lake as well as surrounding public lands. The proposed project includes modifications to existing piers located adjacent to the Lakeside Bicycle Trail, a popular shared-use path, which could temporarily limit access to portions of the trail during construction. Additionally, use of the Grove Street Pier as a ferry terminal could limit public access during construction and operation of the proposed project. In South Lake Tahoe, construction of the proposed southern terminal could temporarily affect marina access for recreational boaters. The potential effects to recreation will be evaluated in the EIS/EIR/EIS and mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Cultural Resources. The EIS/EIR/EIS will provide an overview of the project area's prehistory, ethnography, and history; and will include discussion of the study methodology, and of documented archaeological and historical resources. The project area has been developed since the 1940s and contains buildings and structures that may be 50 years old or older. The Tahoe Meadows residential subdivision, located directly east of the Ski Run Marina is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The potential for the project to adversely affect known and unrecorded sites, features, or objects will be evaluated, and suitable measures designated to mitigate project-related impacts will be identified as necessary. For any potentially affected resources, the EIS/EIR/EIS will include an evaluation for National and California Register eligibility in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; Public Law 89-665 and amendments thereto; 16 USC 470 et seq.), Chapter 67 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances and Section 5024 et seq. of the California Public Resources Code. The evaluation methodology will also include consultation with the Washoe Tribe. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Hazards and Public Safety. The proposed project would involve the transportation of hazardous materials (e.g., fuel, paint) to the project site during construction and operation. The potential for these materials to be released to the environment will be evaluated in the EIS/EIR/EIS. Historical uses and the potential for site contamination will be documented in the EIS/EIR/EIS, and areas of potential soil or groundwater contamination

in the project area will be described. In addition, this analysis will also address potential effects on emergency response plans and fire hazard risks. The EIS/EIR/EIS will also include discuss safety of passengers, crew, and other users of Lake Tahoe resulting from the operation of the Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Project. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Traffic Parking and Transit. The proposed project is intended to reduce roadway congestion along north-south routes within the Lake Tahoe Region, to increase transit patronage near ferry terminals, and to provide a year-round multi-modal transportation option which reduces VMT by increasing transit use and providing pedestrian and bicycle-friendly connections from the ferry terminals. The proposed project would generate short-term, construction related traffic. Long-term traffic effects are anticipated to be beneficial. The transportation analysis will include identification of major roadways that may be affected by the proposed project, a discussion of traffic volumes and vehicle mix on those roadways, and their overall operating conditions, and potential impacts to traffic flow, safety, snow removal operations, and road wear. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be recommended, if necessary.

Air Quality. Air Quality is an important resource issue in the Lake Tahoe Region and is related to multiple factors, including transportation and circulation. The EIS/EIR/EIS 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 the ferries use as an alternative to the private automobile and potential reduction in VMT. The analysis will identify sensitive receptors within and in the vicinity of the project area, discuss potential emissions of odors and/or hazardous air pollutants generated by stationary and area sources in the area, General Conformity and Transportation Conformity, and determine the significance of air quality impacts in comparison with applicable local, state, and federal standards and significance thresholds. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be recommended, if necessary.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change. The EIS/EIR/EIS will include an analysis of potential project impacts relative to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change. This analysis will not need to repeat the GHG analysis performed previously for the Regional Plan update and RTP/SCS environmental documents. It will include a quantitative estimate specific to operational carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from the ferry service. Carbon dioxide equivalence will be used as a proxy for all GHGs potentially emitted as a result of project operation. GHG emissions from project construction will also be discussed qualitatively. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be recommended, if necessary.

Noise and Vibration. The EIS/EIR/EIS will assess potential short-term (i.e., construction-related) noise impacts relative to sensitive receptors and their potential exposure. Noise levels of specific construction equipment will be determined based on published resources and a list of construction equipment likely to be used during project construction. The resultant noise levels at nearby receptors (at given distances from the sources) will be calculated. Long-term (i.e., operational) noise impacts, including noise associated with vessel operation and increased noise from mobile sources resulting from terminal access, will be assessed based on applicable local, state, regional, and federal noise standards. The potential for construction and operation-related vibration to adversely affect sensitive receptors or result in structural damage will also be evaluated. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be recommended, if necessary.

Public Services and Utilities. The public services and utilities section of the EIS/EIR/EIS will evaluate potential effects on power, solid waste collection and disposal, police services, emergency response (including U.S. Coast Guard) and fire protection services, water treatment and distribution, and wastewater collection. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if necessary.

Other Resource Effects. Some resources requiring consideration during environmental review are not expected to experience significant effects as a result of the proposed project. These include socioeconomic impacts,

environmental justice, population and housing, energy, agriculture and forestry resources, and mineral resources.

Cumulative Impacts. The cumulative impacts analysis in the EIS/EIR/EIS will use the analysis included in the RTP/SCS EIR/EIS to the extent feasible. The RTP/SCS EIR/EIS cumulative impacts analysis included a discussion of regional transportation projects, including past, recently approved, and reasonably foreseeable projects likely to occur in the Region. The EIS/EIR/EIS will incorporate this analysis by reference.

Growth-Inducing Impacts. The proposed project and action alternatives could create a small increase in the number of jobs available in the region on a temporary basis during construction. Given the growth restrictions that existing in the Lake Tahoe Region (limited commodities and restrictions on development), project implementation is not anticipated to result in long-term growth-inducing impacts.

TRPA Threshold Carrying Capacities. The EIS/EIR/EIS will include assessment of the project alternatives' compliance with and contribution to the attainment and maintenance of threshold carrying capacities adopted by TRPA.