

*Transportation  
Development Act  
Performance Audit*



FY 06/07-FY 09/10

*Tahoe Regional Planning Agency*

Submitted by





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
AUDIT SCOPE & METHODOLOGY .....	7
DESCRIPTION OF COUNCIL OF TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY .....	8
TAHOE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (TMPO) .....	9
TAHOE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY (RTPA) .....	9
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES .....	10
AREA OF JURISDICTION .....	10
<b>COMPLIANCE .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS .....	19
COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATION 1 .....	19
COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATION 2 .....	20
FUNCTIONAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS .....	21
FUNCTIONAL RECOMMENDATION 1 .....	21
FUNCTIONAL RECOMMENDATION 2 .....	21
TRPA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & REGIONAL COORDINATION RECOMMENDATIONS .....	22
TRPA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & REGIONAL COORDINATION RECOMMENDATION 1 .....	22
TRPA CLAIMANT RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERSIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS .....	23
TRPA CLAIMANT RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERSIGHT RECOMMENDATION 1 .....	23
<b>FUNCTIONAL REVIEW .....</b>	<b>25</b>
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT .....	25
GOVERNING BOARD ACTIVITIES .....	26
ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS .....	28
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL .....	29
INTERNAL PLANNING & ACHIEVEMENTS .....	30

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND REGIONAL COORDINATION .....	32
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT .....	33
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN TOPICS .....	34
MONITORING OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION GOALS.....	35
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.....	36
TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT ADMINISTRATION .....	36
CLAIMANT RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERSIGHT .....	36
TDA CLAIMS PROCESS.....	37
MARKETING AND TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES .....	38
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN.....	38
<b>FINDINGS &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>41</b>
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	41
COMPLIANCE .....	41
PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	41
FUNCTIONAL REVIEW.....	42
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	44
RECOMMENDATION 1 .....	44
RECOMMENDATION 2.....	45
RECOMMENDATION 3.....	45

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: TRPA Jurisdictional Area .....	8
Figure 2: TRPA Organizational Chart 2011 .....	30
Figure 3: Tahoe Regional Plan.....	32
Figure 4: Mobility 2035 Logo.....	34

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations .....	5
Table 2: Summary of TRPA’s compliance with TDA statutes.....	12
Table 3: Mobility 2035 Timeline.....	34
Table 4: Summary of Recommendations .....	46



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section summarizes key findings and recommendations developed during the Transportation Development Act (TDA) Performance Audit of Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the Lake Tahoe Region. The Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) covers three (3) year period for the fiscal years ending:

- June 30, 2008 (FY 2007/08);
- June 30, 2009 (FY 2008/09);
- June 30, 2010 (FY 2009/10).

The Performance Audit was conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation, as outlined in the ***Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities***, as well as ***Government Audit Standards***, published by the U.S. Comptroller General. The Performance Audit has three elements:

1. Compliance requirements;
2. Follow-up of prior Performance Audit report recommendations;
3. Identification and review of the RTPA's functions and activities.

## OVERVIEW

TRPA was created by a compact that was enacted by the states of California and Nevada, affirmed by the United States Congress, and then signed by the states' governors and the President of the United States. The TRPA is a unique entity, with broad authority in two (2) states which border Lake Tahoe.

In order to enhance the efficiency and governmental effectiveness of the region, TRPA has been endowed with the powers, which were conferred by the compact, to *establish environmental threshold carrying capacities and to adopt and enforce a regional plan and implementing ordinances which will achieve and maintain such capacities while providing opportunities for orderly growth and development consistent with capacities* and it has the authority to *interpret and administer its plans, ordinances, and rules and regulations in accordance with the provision of the compact*.

Transportation, while an important aspect of the region development, is not the primary focus of TRPA.

TRPA shares Board members with the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO), which is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Lake Tahoe Basin. The direct focus of the TMPO is the transportation elements of the Tahoe Regional Plan.

In the State of California, TRPA is the designated RTPA and is responsible for the administration of the TDA.

## COMPLIANCE

TRPA administers TDA laws and regulations in an efficient and effective manner and is compliant with TDA rules and regulations with few exceptions.

1. Due to the financial difficulties and dissolution of South Tahoe Area Transit Authority (STATA), the filing and completion of the TPAs for TRPA were delayed. **This is a non-reoccurring situation.**
2. The State Controllers Report was not filed for STATA in FY 09/10 and financial audits for STATA were delayed. **This is a non-reoccurring situation.**
3. TRPA has not developed criteria, rules and regulations for Article 4.5 and bicycle and pedestrian claims. TRPA currently does not have a Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA).

## PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The prior Audit, conducted by C.G. Uhlenberg LLP. made six (6) recommendations.

Three (3) recommendations were fully implemented:

- *Train additional personnel in TDA administration and management functions to ensure that claims and reporting will be administered in a timely manner if the primary personnel responsible is not available.*
  - ◆ Although this recommendation was implemented, budget and staff reductions have severely limited staff's ability to manage the TDA function.
- *Clarify with Caltrans that the contents of the Federal Transportation Plan/Regional Transportation Plan contains all of the required elements for a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).*
  - ◆ Staff is fully aware of FTP/RTP required elements.
- *Establish a system to ensure that Triennial Performance Audit reports are submitted on time to the Director of the California Department of Transportation.*
  - ◆ In addition, TRPA should identify a person or persons responsible for maintaining this system and communicating the reporting requirements to operators on a regular basis. This recommendation was implemented and TRPA commissioned the TPAs in a timely manner; however, unforeseen situations with STATA delayed the schedule for completion of the Audits. Caltrans was properly notified.

Three (3) recommendations do not appear to be fully implemented:

- *Develop a system of ensuring that the transit operators in the jurisdiction comply with report submission timetables.*
  - ◆ This system and expectations should be documented and communicated to the transit operators. Timetables must be adhered to or funding will be withheld. Although this recommendation was not fully implemented, reasons for the late and non-filing are due in part to extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the TRPA and/or the operators.



- *Reevaluate the decision to reduce TRPA allocation of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) for administration, planning and programming functions to determine if the use of additional funds (up to the amount allowed by Sections 99233.1 and 99233.2 of California PUC) would enable TRPA to assign sufficient resources to TDA functions.*
  - ◆ This was partially implemented with a new staff member, but with the funding constraints during the Audit period, the position was not filled when the incumbent left the position. The TDA administration function is currently understaffed.
- *Meet with claimants in its jurisdiction and with the County auditors in its jurisdiction to clarify the responsibilities of each party with regard to submission of allocation estimates and claims and distribution of allocation instructions, and establish a methodology by which accurate claims may be submitted and approved in a timely manner for all claimants.*
  - ◆ TRPA has not developed a formal claims process or manual for submission.

## FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

While TRPA is the RTPA for the Tahoe region, its responsibilities are more encompassing than most RTPAs in California. It is charged to maintain the environmental health of the Lake across a multitude of threshold areas: water and air quality, scenic, recreation, wildlife, fisheries, soils, vegetation and noise. Transportation, including public transportation, is one element of its responsibilities.

Due to the complexity of TRPA's responsibilities, six (6) committees review technical items and then make recommendations to the full Board for final action. The committee members are TRPA Governing Board members and the meetings are public. TDA items are referred to the Operations Committee since they are typically budget and financial items. Ultimately, the full 15-member Governing Board will listen to the committee's recommendations and take final action.

The interviewed Board members, who were members of the Operations Committee, indicate that staff keeps them informed about the issues on which it must act through detailed staff reports. However, Board members do not view transportation planning as a core function of TRPA/TMPO.

The Executive Director reports to the Board and has overall responsibility for TRPA operations. In June, 2010, TRPA implemented a new organizational structure. In the new structure, the core planning functions (short and long-term transportation planning) were consolidated into a single planning branch.

TRPA hired a full time planner early in the Audit period. The planner's duties included TDA administration and management. However, he became primarily responsible for the BlueGO operations and was eventually hired by South Tahoe Area Transit to manage the transit service. Since that time, TDA administration and management has been the responsibility of one part-time employee, who has multiple other responsibilities. Staffing does not appear to be adequate.

---

## INTERNAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

TRPA's internal planning process is excellent. It has completed a detailed strategic plan and the Overall Work Program (OWP) aligns well with the related strategies in the strategic plan.

A core function of TRPA is the completion of the Tahoe Regional Plan Update (RPU). The RPU focuses on promoting environmental redevelopment in key locations as a strategy for more rapid environmental gain and increased economic opportunity. Plan amendments will increase TRPA's attention to regionally-significant environmental initiatives and streamline regulations to improve effectiveness.

The RTP is an integral part of the Tahoe RPU, both of which are scheduled for completion in 2012. The RTP identifies numerous transportation projects and programs targeted for implementation in the Tahoe Basin, including public transportation and non-motorized transportation projects. The RTP seeks to improve mobility and safety for the commuting public, while at the same time deliver environmental improvements throughout the transportation network.

A crucial part of any planning effort is monitoring and evaluating the system. The TRPA/TMPO, in cooperation with other basin transportation agencies, monitor a number of performance indicators.

TRPA/TMPO has completed a number of planning projects related to public transportation, including the adequacy of existing public transportation services and the potential alternative public transportation services.

---

## TDA ADMINISTRATION

TRPA has not developed a documented TDA claims procedure and checklist. Claim documentation was inconsistent during the Audit period. Claimant assistance and oversight appeared inadequate over the Audit period, due primarily to insufficient resources devoted to TDA management.

Although all TDA funding is used for public transportation purposes, TRPA conducts an annual unmet needs process and hearings; however, documentation was limited.

---

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

TRPA/TMPO has expanded its public outreach activities, including "fireside chats" by the Executive Director. TRPA/TMPO made special effort to include several stakeholder groups that have unique input into the transportation planning process, but may be harder to reach than other groups. These include (1) minority and low-income communities, (2) second homeowners and (3) persons with disabilities or special needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1

***Review staffing requirements for transit operator oversight and TDA administration and consider supplementing staff.***

With the limited resources, staff has done a remarkable job ensuring that administrative paperwork was completed and claims were apportioned. However, time and resources were not available to provide adequate oversight and assistance to the claimants. As part of the claims process, TRPA may establish supplemental rules and regulations for the submission of claims

### RECOMMENDATION 2

***Develop and maintain a TDA Claim Process Manual and Checklist.***

The establishment of clear and unambiguous claims procedures is key to ensuring public accountability for TDA funding. Although pedestrian and bicycle claims and Article 4.5 (Community Transit Service) claims have not been made, defining the process and criteria for these claims would provide a better understanding to current and potential claimants in regard to their obligations as TDA claimants.

TRPA needs to also review how the agency can provide additional assistance to its operators, including help on productivity improvements.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

***Work with TART to develop a Short Range Transit Plan.***

The TART Systems Plan Study (which was the Short Range Transit Plan) was completed in 2005. Since that time, TART has revised its schedules and route structure. The system has continued to evolve and funding for the system has declined. By updating its SRTP, TRPA will ensure that TART is developing efficiently and that it effectively serves the community and its riders.

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility	Timeframe
Review staffing requirements for transit operator oversight and TDA administration and consider supplementing staff.	High	Executive Director	11/2012
Develop and maintain a TDA Claim Process Manual and Checklist.	High	Planning Analyst	12/2013
Work with TART to develop a Short Range Transit Plan.	Medium	Planning Analyst	12/2013



## INTRODUCTION

This report of the Triennial Performance Audit for Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) covers a three-year period ending June 30, 2010. The California Public Utilities Code requires each transportation planning agency to conduct a Triennial Performance Audit of itself to be eligible for Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding.

The proposed Audit is designed to be an independent and objective evaluation of the TRPA, as the regional planning entity. The scope and responsibilities of the TRPA extend beyond the traditional responsibilities of a Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) as designated by the State of California. Its area of jurisdiction expands outside the State of California into Nevada and encompasses two counties within the State: El Dorado County on the South Shore and Placer County on the North Shore. The focus of this Audit is on the TRPA's TDA administrative duties and responsibilities. Other functions of the organization were reviewed in the context of their influence and impact on TRPA's RTPA duties. The Audit had three objectives:

1. Assess compliance with TDA regulations;
2. Organization and Claimant Oversight;
3. Provide practical and useful recommendations for improving the efficiency and functionality of the TRPA as the RTPA.

## AUDIT SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

The Audit was conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation, as outlined in the *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities* (3rd edition, September 2008), issued by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the *Standards for Audits of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities and Functions* (2007 Revision), published by the United States General Accounting Office and the U.S. Comptroller General.

The Audit is a high-level review of performance evaluating the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of the regional planning entity. The Audit of the TRPA consisted of three tasks:

1. Review compliance with the TDA requirements and regulations;
2. Assess implementation of recommendations contained in prior performance audits;
3. Examine major functions performed by the RTPA in the following areas:
  - ♦ Administration and management;
  - ♦ Transportation planning and regional coordination;
  - ♦ Claimant relationships and oversight;
  - ♦ Marketing and transportation alternatives;
  - ♦ Grant applications and management.

## Triennial Performance Audit TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

The methodology for this Audit consisted of interviews with the following:

- TRPA;
- Board members;
- Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC).

Pertinent documents were reviewed, including published transportation plans, TRPA Administrative Operating Procedures and Policies, annual unmet transit needs findings, fiscal audits, staff reports, Council agendas, TDA and State Transit Assistance (STA) claim procedures and claims, TRPA Annual Reports and the TRPA Overall Work Program and Budget.

### DESCRIPTION OF COUNCIL OF TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

TRPA was created in 1969 as the first bi-state regional land use planning agency in the country. It is governed under a compact that was enacted by the states of California and Nevada, affirmed by the United States Congress, and then signed by the states' governors and the President of the United States. In 1980, the compact was amended to bring broader, statewide representation to the Governing Board. The jurisdiction of the TRPA incorporates the lake and adjacent land area in two states: California and Nevada.

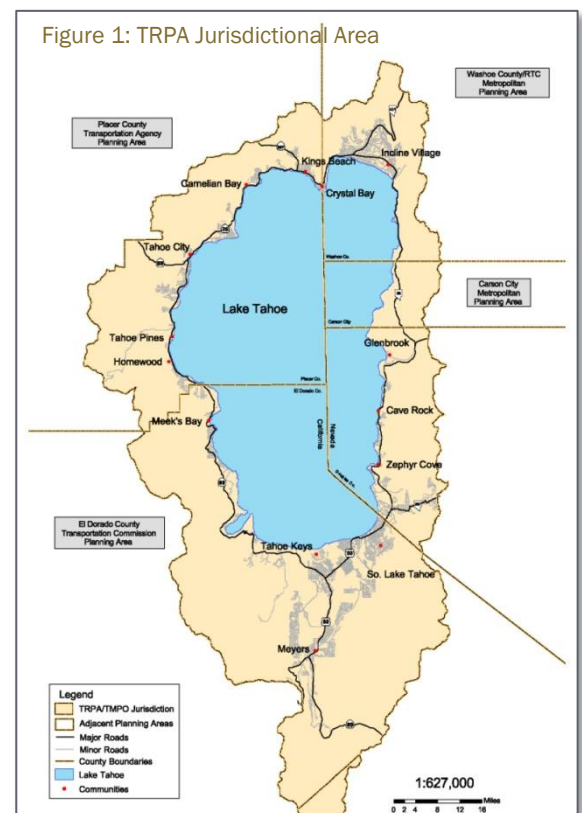
A 15-member Board oversees TRPA. It is comprised of seven members from California, seven members from Nevada and one non-voting presidential appointee member. Six members, who are locally elected officials or their designees, represent the units of local government. The compact provides for a majority of the seats to be held by citizens from outside the Tahoe region who represent at-large voters from the two states. This ensures that the Board reviews issues not only from a local perspective, but also from statewide and nationwide viewpoints.

In addition to a Governing Board, TRPA has a technical body called the Advisory Planning Commission. This body, also created by the compact, recommends plans and technical approaches to the governing body for adoption by ordinance.

This commission includes chief planning officers from all the counties in the basin as well as key water quality and natural resource agencies.

TRPA is currently the only organization charged to maintain the environmental health of the lake across a multitude of threshold areas: water and air quality, scenic, recreation, wildlife, fisheries, soils, vegetation and noise.

The Agency's vision is *for a lake environment that is sustainable, healthy and safe for the community and future generations*. Under the compact, TRPA is directed to “*establish environmental threshold carrying capacities and to adopt and enforce a*



*regional plan and implementing ordinances which will achieve and maintain such capacities while providing opportunities for orderly growth and development consistent with such capacities,” (Compact Article I(b)) and to “insure an equilibrium between the region’s natural endowment and its manmade environment,” Compact Article I(a)(10).*

The amended compact called for the adoption, by TRPA, of a set of environmental threshold carrying capacities (thresholds) to protect the ecological integrity of the region. The environmental thresholds were adopted on August 26, 1982, by TRPA Resolution 82-11. The thresholds covered various environmental components of the Tahoe region, including air and water quality standards that are linked to transportation. On July 9, 1984, the State of California designated TRPA as the RTPA for the California portion of the Tahoe region.

TRPA is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Lake Tahoe Basin. In the State of California, TRPA is the designated RTPA.

---

#### TAHOE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (TMPO)

The TMPO was created by the Governors of California and Nevada by designating the TMPO under authority provided in federal regulations. As with all federally designated MPOs, the TMPO’s role is primarily a planning and financial programming role. Products required of MPOs by federal rule are a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) and an Overall Work Program (OWP).

The core mission of the TMPO is to establish a safe, efficient and integrated transportation system that reduces reliance on the private automobile, provides for alternative modes of transportation, serves the basic transportation needs of the citizens of the Tahoe region, supports the economic base of the region in the movement of goods and people and minimizes adverse impacts on humans and the environment.

While the TRPA and TMPO consist of many of the same individuals, the missions and responsibilities of the two agencies are different. The TRPA’s overriding obligation is adherence to the compact, including attaining and maintaining environmental thresholds. The TMPO’s mission, on the other hand, is to provide policy decisions on transportation plans and programs. In many circumstances these two differences will be minor, while in some cases conflicting philosophies may develop. TRPA and TMPO have worked through the planning process to support the TRPA mission and policies through the TMPO and RTPA authorities and planning requirements.

---

#### TAHOE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY (RTPA)

TRPA is statutorily designated by the State of California as a RTPA for the Tahoe region. This designation is for California only. As an RTPA, TRPA must fulfill various statutory requirements, including those of the TDA, coordination with Caltrans on the development of Regional Transportation Plans and Regional Transportation Improvement Programs, and other project related activities. The TRPA Governing Board indicates that it is sitting as the RTPA when taking a policy action, but no change to the membership of the Governing Board occurs.

As a regional planning organization for Lake Tahoe, TRPA works across multiple jurisdictions with paralleling responsibilities, overlapping authority and differing interests and cross legal boundary lines. The Agency's responsibilities include the development and adoption of a regional plan and to adopt all necessary ordinances, rules and regulations necessary to put the adopted regional plan into effect.

---

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

TRPA is the RTPA for the area surrounding Lake Tahoe in California. The area includes parts of two counties: Placer County (North Lake Tahoe) and El Dorado County (South Lake Tahoe). As the RTPA, it is responsible for the administration of TDA funding. It also has the responsibility for planning and funding transportation improvements in Tahoe area. It has shaped and continues to shape transportation policy for the Tahoe region.

In partnership with local and regional bus transit operators, TRPA works to improve public transportation throughout the Tahoe Basin. In addition to TDA, funding for transit operations is obtained from Federal Transit Administration grant programs, local governments' general fund, rental car and air quality mitigation funds, private businesses and transient occupancy tax.

TRPA oversees two transit operations:

1. BlueGO in the South Lake Tahoe area (formerly operated by South Tahoe Area Transit Authority);
2. Placer County (TART).

TRPA transit related projects and programs include:

- Administration of California TDA, which provides two major sources of funding for public transportation: the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and the STA fund;
- Coordination of Short Range Transit Plans, transit passenger surveys, transit marketing studies, coordination of intra- and inter-regional transit, and coordination with transportation management associations.

---

## AREA OF JURISDICTION

TRPA's area of jurisdiction surrounds Lake Tahoe. The Lake Tahoe region is on the border of the States of California and Nevada between the Sierra Crest and the Carson Range. Approximately two-thirds of the region is located in California with one-third within the State of Nevada. The Tahoe region contains an area of about 501 square miles, of which approximately 191 square miles comprise the surface waters of Lake Tahoe. Nearly 80% of the land area in the Lake Tahoe Basin is publicly owned and represents a major recreation attraction.

The resident population of the Tahoe region is approximately 60,000 and has decreased since the Census 2000. The resident population of the California portion is around 70% of the total area population. Located within the California portion of the Tahoe region is the incorporated City of South Lake Tahoe and portions of El Dorado County and Placer County. This part of the Region is within the first and fourteenth Congressional Districts of California. The remaining 30% of the population reside within Nevada, which includes portions of Washoe County, Douglas County and the rural area of Carson City.



## COMPLIANCE

This section examines Tahoe Regional Planning Authority's compliance with Transportation Development Act (TDA) and relevant sections of the California Code of Regulations. An annual certified fiscal audit confirms TDA funds were apportioned in conformance with applicable laws, rules and regulations. Although compliance verification is not a Triennial Performance Audit responsibility, several specific requirements concern issues germane to the Performance Audit. The TPA compliance findings and related comments are delineated in Table 2, which begins on the next page.

Compliance was determined through interviews with TRPA staff and physical inspection of relevant documents, including the fiscal audits, planning documents, Overall Work Programs (OWP), performance reports and other related documentation for each year of the triennium.

TRPA administers TDA laws and regulations in an efficient and effective manner and is compliant with TDA rules and regulations with few exceptions.

- Due to the financial difficulties and dissolution of South Tahoe Area Transit Authority (STATA), the filing and completion of the Triennial Performance Audits for TRPA were delayed.
- In addition, the State Controllers Report was not filed for STATA in FY 09/10 and financial audits for STATA were delayed. This is a non-reoccurring situation.
- TRPA has not developed criteria, rules and regulations for Article 4.5 and bicycle and pedestrian claims. TRPA currently does not have a Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA).

Triennial Performance Audit  
TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

Table 2: Summary of TRPA's compliance with TDA statutes

Reference	Requirement	Compliance	Comments
PUC 99231	All transportation operators and city or county governments which have responsibility for serving a given area, in total, claim no more than those Local Transportation Fund moneys apportioned to that area.	In Compliance	TRPA allocated funds to the cities and counties within its jurisdiction in accordance to projections provided by the counties and adjusts distributions as may be required. The City of South Lake Tahoe and County of El Dorado funded STATA directly; however, the <b>Tahoe Transportation</b> has assumed responsibility for BlueGo. Funds flow directly to the district in accordance with apportionment instructions.
PUC 99233.3, 99234	The RTPA has adopted rules and regulations delineating procedures for the submission of claims for facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles.	Exception Noted	TRPA has not adopted rules and regulations regarding the submission of claims for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was completed in 2010. The Plan did not specifically identify TDA funding as a potential source of funding.
PUC 99238, 99238.5	The RTPA has established a Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC).	In Compliance	TRPA's SSTAC is appointed in accordance to TDA requirements and membership is consistent with TDA regulations. TRPA is considering forming two SSTACs (North Shore and South Shore) to more directly address local concerns. Because all funds are directed toward transit, a SSTAC is not mandatory, but recommended.
PUC 99238.5	The RTPA must ensure that there is a citizen participation process, which includes at least an annual public hearing.	In Compliance	TRPA normally conducts unmet needs meetings on both the North and South Shores. <b>Because of many issues concerning the transit operations on the South Shore, the public meetings were only held on the North Shore.</b> A public hearing was held each year. Because all funds are directed toward transit, a unmet transit needs hearing is not mandatory, but recommended.

Reference	Requirement	Compliance	Comments
PUC 99244	<p>The RTPA has annually identified, analyzed and recommended potential productivity improvements, which could lower the operating costs of those operators which operate at least 50 percent of their vehicle service miles within the RTPA's jurisdiction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recommendations include, but are not being limited to, those made in the Performance Audit.</li> <li>▪ A committee for the purpose of providing advice on productivity improvements may be formed.</li> <li>▪ The operator has made a reasonable effort to implement improvements recommended by the RTPA, as determined by the RTPA, or else the operator has not received an allocation which exceeds its prior-year allocation.</li> </ul>	In Compliance with Notes	<p>Although the TDA administration function appears understaffed, the staff has made an effort to assist the transit claimants improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations through various studies. However, the issues at STATA appear to have spiraled out of control without direct TRPA involvement. Closer monitoring and oversights may have prevented or limited the impact of the collapse of STATA. Due to limited resources, TRPA oversight has been limited.</p>
PUC 99245	<p>The RTPA has ensured that all claimants to whom it allocates TDA funds submit to it and to the State Controller an annual certified fiscal and compliance audit within 180 days after the end of the fiscal year.</p>	Exception Noted	<p>Due to the dissolution of STATA, a State Controllers report was not submitted for FY 09/10. Prior years were not consistently submitted within the 180 days.</p>

Triennial Performance Audit  
TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

Reference	Requirement	Compliance	Comments
PUC 99246, 99248	The RTPA has designated an independent entity to conduct a Performance Audit of operators and itself (for the current and previous triennia). For operators, the Audit was made and calculated the required performance indicators, and the Audit report was transmitted to the entity that allocates the operator's Transportation Development Act (TDA) moneys and to the RTPA within 12 months after the end of the triennium. If an operator's Audit was not transmitted by the start of the second fiscal year following the last fiscal year of the triennium, TDA funds were not allocated to that operator for that or subsequent fiscal years until the Audit was transmitted.	Exception Noted	Although TRPA initiated the Performance Audits to be performed within the allotted time period, they were not completed within the designated timeline for this Audit. The prior Triennial Audits were also completed beyond the 12 month requirement.
PUC 99246	The Performance Audit of the operator providing transportation services shall include, but not be limited to, a verification of the operator's operating cost per passenger, operating cost per vehicle service hour, passengers per vehicle service mile, and vehicle service hours per employee, as defined in Section 99247. The Performance Audit shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of the needs and types of passengers being served and the employment of part-time drivers and contracting with common carriers of persons operating under a franchise or license to provide services during peak hours, as defined in subdivision (a) of section 99260.2.	In Compliance	The Performance Audits were performed in accordance to TDA guidelines.
PUC 99246	The RTPA has submitted a copy of its Performance Audit to the Director of the California Department of Transportation. In addition, the RTPA has certified in writing to the director that the Performance Audits of operators located in the area under its jurisdiction have been completed.	Exception Noted	Due to difficult legal issues surrounding the bankruptcy and eventual dissolution of STATA, the Performance Audits for the three years ending in FY 08/09 were extended to include FY 09/10. Continuing issues have repeatedly delayed the completion of the Audit for TRPA and its operators.

Reference	Requirement	Compliance	Comments
PUC 99275.5	The RTPA has adopted criteria, rules, and regulations for the evaluation of claims filed under Article 4.5 of the TDA and the determination of the cost-effectiveness of the proposed community transit services.	Exception Noted	TRPA has not adopted Article 4.5 criteria, rules and regulations.
PUC 99312.5, 99313.3; Prop. 116	State Transit Assistance (STA) funds received by the RTPA are allocated only for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes.	In Compliance	STA funds are allocated for mass transportation purposes only.

Triennial Performance Audit  
TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

Reference	Requirement	Compliance	Comments
PUC 99401.5	<p>If TDA funds are allocated to purchases not directly related to public or specialized transportation services, or facilities for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles, the transit planning agency has annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consulted with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) established pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 99238;</li> <li>Identified transit needs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups who are transit dependent or transit disadvantaged;</li> <li>Adequacy of existing transit services to meet the needs of groups identified; and</li> <li>Analysis of potential alternatives to provide transportation services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Adopted or reaffirmed definitions of unmet transit needs and reasonable to meet;</li> <li>Identified the unmet transit needs and those needs that are reasonable to meet;</li> <li>Adopted a finding that there are no unmet transit needs; that there are no unmet needs that are reasonable to meet; or that there are unmet transit needs including needs that are reasonable to meet.</li> </ul> <p>If a finding is adopted that there are unmet transit needs, these needs must have been funded before an allocation was made for streets and roads.</p>	In Compliance with Notes	<p>Because all funds are directed toward transit, an <i>unmet needs</i> process is not mandatory, but recommended.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRPA consults with SSTAC.</li> <li>TRPA did not formally produce a transit needs evaluation, however— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRPA has identified groups who are transit dependent or transit disadvantaged and has made considerable attempts to outreach to these groups;</li> <li>Adequacy of existing transit services to meet the needs of groups is evaluated in Short Range Transit Plans and other reports, although not part of the formal report;</li> <li>TRPA has worked with other groups, including the recent work on the North Shore to provide out-of-area, non-emergency transportation for health and social services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The annual unmet transit needs resolution includes the definitions for unmet transit needs and reasonable to meet.</li> <li>TRPA annually analyzes requests for unmet transit needs, although in recent years, because of funding limitations, it has not been as proactive.</li> <li>TRPA annually adopts an unmet needs finding.</li> </ol>
PUC 99314.3	<p>The amount received pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 99314.3 by each RTPA for State Transit Assistance is allocated to the operators in the area of its jurisdiction as allocated by the State Controller's Office.</p>	In Compliance	TRPA properly allocates STA funding to operators.

Reference	Requirement	Compliance	Comments
CCR 6662	The RTPA has caused an audit of its accounts and records to be performed for each fiscal year by the county auditor, or a certified public accountant. The RTPA must transmit the resulting audit report to the State Controller within 12 months of the end of each fiscal year, and the audit must be performed in accordance with the Basic Audit Program and Report Guidelines for California Special Districts prescribed by the State Controller. The audit shall include a determination of compliance with the Transportation Development Act and accompanying rules and regulations. Financial statements may not commingle the State Transit Assistance fund, the Local Transportation Fund, or other revenues or funds of any city, county or other agency. The RTPA must maintain fiscal and accounting records and supporting papers for at least four years following fiscal year close.	In Compliance	TRPA annually audits its accounts per regulations and manages funds in accordance to regulations.





## PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the prior TPA recommendations provides a measure of each transit operator's efforts to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

The prior Audit, conducted by C.G. Uhlenberg LLP, made six recommendations.

### COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

---

#### COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATION 1

***Develop a system of ensuring that the transit operators in the jurisdiction comply with report submission timetables. This system and expectations should be documented and communicated to the transit operators. Timetables must be adhered to or funding will be withheld.***

---

#### STATUS

*Not fully implemented; however, this was due in part to extenuating circumstances beyond the control of TRPA.*

#### RATIONALE

---

The fiscal and compliance audits of the operators were not consistently received within 180 days of the end of the fiscal year and documentations of the required certification to the State Controller was unavailable. This was a carry forward recommendation from the previous Audit.

#### DISCUSSION

---

In the management response, TRPA indicated it was monitoring the operators' submittal of fiscal and compliance audits. Since it had hired a new Transit Planner/Administrator, staff would be able to ensure that the reports were submitted in a timely manner. Although the planner position was filled, the position was diverted to the operation of BlueGO during the Audit period and eventually left the agency. One Associate Planner handled all TDA related administration. The planner worked three days per week and their time was split between TDA administration, transportation planning projects and the front desk.

During the Audit period, fiscal and compliance audits continued to be filed beyond the TDA mandated timeframe. However, for Tahoe Area Regional Transit (TART), the Audit is part of a suite of audits contracted by the County and timing is not always in the control of either the operator or the TRPA. For BlueGO, the situation was more complex. BlueGO had been operated by South Tahoe Area Transit Authority (STATA), which was dissolved at the end of the period. With the dissolution of the organization, no final Audit was completed. TRPA does not appear to maintain documentation for the filing of the State Controllers Reports. TRPA has not developed a claims process, which delineates time frames or other requirements.

---

## COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATION 2

*Establish a system to ensure that triennial performance Audit reports are submitted on time to the Director of the California Department of Transportation. In addition, TRPA should identify a person or persons responsible for maintaining this system and communicating the reporting requirements to operators on a regular basis.*

---

## STATUS

*Implemented; however other factors impacted the timeliness of the Triennial Audits.*

---

## RATIONALE

The requirement to complete a performance Audit for the three years ended June 30, 2006 was not met within the specified timeframe by any of the operators. The operators have continued to receive allocations even though they did not submit the performance audits by the required timeline. This was a carry forward recommendation.

---

## DISCUSSION

Management indicated that the TPA for TRPA was not completed in the designated timeframe due to delays and a transition in staff. The state had been notified about the delays and the completions. With the hiring of the new Transit Planner/Administrator, the position would be responsible for facilitating the TPAs and would maintain constant communication with the transit operators.

The TPAs for the operators were extended to four years to bring them into the same cycle as the TRPA. However, due to extenuating circumstances and reductions in TRPA staffing for TDA administration, the completion of the Audits has extended beyond the mandated 12 months.

## FUNCTIONAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

---

### FUNCTIONAL RECOMMENDATION 1

***Train additional personnel in TDA administration and management functions to ensure that claims and reporting will be administered in a timely manner if the primary personnel responsible is not available.***

---

#### STATUS

*Implemented*

#### RATIONALE

---

Employee turnover had been an issue in the transportation planning department, which lead to the assignment of responsibilities other than operating an RTPA to transportation staff. The Audit implies this was a factor in issues with the timeliness of TDA reporting.

#### DISCUSSION

---

The TRPA hired a Transit Planner/Administrator to be responsible for TDA administration and management functions. The Transportation Team Leader was trained and able to perform the functions should the primary person be unavailable. In addition to the new Associate Transportation Planner working with the programming of funds, this individual was also trained to understand TDA administration. However, staff reductions impacted TDA administration during the Audit period, along with issues surrounding the dissolution of STATA. As a result, the staff's ability to manage the TDA function has be severely limited, even though some personnel are cross-trained in TDA administration.

---

### FUNCTIONAL RECOMMENDATION 2

***Reevaluate the decision to reduce TRPA allocation of LTF for administration, planning and programming functions to determine if the use of additional funds (up to the amount allowed by Sections 99233.1 and 99233.2 of California PUC) would enable TRPA to assign sufficient resources to TDA functions and to ensure compliance with regulations and to improve the timeliness of the administration process.***

---

#### STATUS

*Not implemented*

## RATIONALE

---

The prior Audit concluded that TRPA was not adequately monitoring the claimant's compliance with TDA requirements, nor withholding funds to encourage requirements. Additional funding for staff dedicated to TDA administration would provide the necessary manpower to ensure operator compliance.

## DISCUSSION

---

At the time of the prior Audit, Management responded that the TRPA would reevaluate the decision to reduce the allocation of LTF for administration, planning and programming. The TRPA has maintained that it was its objective to allocate the maximum possible for the operation of the two transit systems and it does not appear that a change in allocation occurred. As previously discussed, a new Transit Planner/Administrator, whose duties were shared with STATA and the Tahoe Transportation District, was hired. It was planned that with the shared responsibilities, TRPA's role in regional transit planning would improve. The position was eventually transferred entirely to STATA and staffing for TDA administration was not added.

## TRPA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & REGIONAL COORDINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

---

### TRPA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & REGIONAL COORDINATION RECOMMENDATION IV

***Clarify with Caltrans that the contents of the Federal Transportation Plan/Regional Transportation Plan contains all of the required elements for a Regional Transportation Plan.***

---

## STATUS

*Implemented*

## RATIONALE

---

The prior Audit's rational for this recommendation could not be inferred from the Audit document.

## DISCUSSION

---

TRPA is aware and considers the federal emphasis areas. The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration have not issued any new formal guidance for planning emphasis areas. They suggest continuing focus on compliance with SAFETEA-LU. TRPA is required to tie its work programs to the federal planning factors in CFR 450.306.

## TRPA CLAIMANT RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERSIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS

### TRPA CLAIMANT RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERSIGHT RECOMMENDATION V

*Meet with claimants in its jurisdiction and with the County auditors in its jurisdiction to clarify the responsibilities of each party with regard to submission of allocation estimates, claims and distribution of allocation instructions, and establish a methodology by which accurate claims may be submitted and approved in a timely manner for all claimants.*

---

#### STATUS

*Not implemented*

#### RATIONALE

---

By establishing a methodology for submitting accurate claims and a system for monitoring the claims, TRPA could ensure that all monies are distributed to claimants appropriately in a timely manner.

#### DISCUSSION

---

With the reduction of staffing, TRPA has not had the opportunity to refine its claims process. The current methodology does not adequately ensure that TDA requirements have been met. The issues with STATA and internal staff reductions have put a strain on the TDA administration process. The difficulties also strained the TRPA's relationships with the County controller in some cases. The staff has worked, within the restraints it had, to oversee the claims process in a competent manner. A more stringent claims process could help the TRPA provide better oversight of the administration of TDA funds and provide notice when difficulties arise. A more proactive approach could possibly have ameliorated the difficulties encountered with STATA.



## FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

The functional activities performed by TRPA are examined in this section. The degree to which each function is performed and the level of resources committed to the function are reviewed. An appraisal of the efficiency and effectiveness of each activity is included. The following functions are included in this review:

- Administration and Management;
- Regional Transportation Planning;
- Transportation Development Act Administration;
- Marketing and Transportation Alternatives.

TRPA is responsible for the implementation of the transportation planning process for the region in cooperation with the State of California. As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), TRPA is responsible for the following Transportation Development Act (TDA) functions:

1. Enforcing the rules and regulations governing the submission, analysis, review and approval of TDA claims;
2. Distribution of TDA and State Transit Assistance Program (STA) funds;
3. Proper record keeping associated with the TDA and its funding mechanisms.

TDA funds may be utilized by the RTPA, the Cities and the Counties of El Dorado and Placer for planning, expenses related to administering TDA, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transit systems and street and road projects.

Although the TPA covers a three-year period between July 2006 and June 2009, improvements (or deficiencies) which occurred subsequent to the mandatory timeframe were considered in the Audit.

### ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Administration and Management encompasses the overall administration of all RTPA functions, including:

1. General Administration;
2. Internal Planning and Achievements;
3. Governing Board Activities;
4. Personnel.

This review area determines if TRPA prepared and maintained the required documents. It also reviews the agency's goals and objectives and assesses if the goals and objectives are pertinent, complete, useful and effective. Interviews were conducted with staff, Board members, Committee members and other key stakeholders. Relevant documents were examined. The suitability and comprehensiveness of goals and objectives, and the progress in achieving them, were evaluated.

## GOVERNING BOARD ACTIVITIES

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) was created through a compact enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives and confirmed by the governing bodies of Nevada and California. The 15-member Governing Board comprises seven (7) representatives from California, seven (7) from Nevada and one (1) non-voting Presidential Appointee. Representing local government, six (6) members are locally elected officials or their designees:

- Douglas County, NV (1);
- El Dorado County, CA (1);
- Placer County, CA (1);
- Washoe County, NV (1);
- Carson City, NV (1);
- South Lake Tahoe, NV (1);

Per the compact, seven members (which represent a majority) are held by citizens from outside the Tahoe region, who represent at-large voters from the two states. Four (4) members are appointed from Nevada and four (4) from California. By the terms of the compact, the appointed members, except for the representative of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, cannot reside in the Tahoe region:

- Appointees of the Governor of California (2);
- Appointee of the Speaker of the California Assembly (1);
- Appointee of the California Senate Rules Committee (1);
- Appointee of the Governor of Nevada (1);
- Appointee of the Nevada Secretary of State (1);
- Representative of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (1);
- At-large member (1) appointed by the other six Nevada representatives.

While TRPA is the RTPA for the Tahoe region, its responsibilities are more encompassing than most RTPAs in California. In order to enhance the efficiency and governmental effectiveness of the region, TRPA has been endowed with the powers, which were conferred by the compact including the power to *establish environmental threshold carrying capacities and to adopt and enforce a regional plan and implementing ordinances which will achieve and maintain such capacities while providing opportunities for orderly growth and development consistent with capacities*, and it has the authority to *interpret and administer its plans, ordinances, and rules and regulations in accordance with the provision of the compact*.

The Governing Board's mandate is to set policy and to approve amendments to the Regional Plan. Each month, the Governing Board and Advisory Planning Commission hold open meetings and encourage the public to take an active role in the decision-making process.

Six (6) committees, comprised of TRPA Governing Board members meet publicly to review technical items and then to make recommendations to the full Board for final action. The six committees are:

1. Operations Committee;
2. Legal Committee;
3. Public Outreach Committee;



4. Fire and Fuels Committee;
5. Regional Plan Update Committee;
6. Local Government Committee;
7. Governance Committee.

While the Operations Committee will hear a presentation on TRPA's budget, the Legal Committee might be meeting to hear a report on a violation resolution. TDA items are referred to the Operations Committee since they are typically budget and financial items. Ultimately, the full 15-member Governing Board will listen to the committees' recommendations and take final action.

Agenda items of most committees are contained within the Governing Board packet of the month in which the committee convened. Not all committees convene monthly.

The Board members who were interviewed indicate that staff keeps them informed about the issues through detailed staff reports. They appear to have a broad understanding of transportation issues facing the Tahoe region, but indicated they do not believe transportation planning is a core function of the agency. Their responsibility with respect to transportation appeared to be viewed more in terms of its impact on the environmental quality of the Lake and environment. TRPA's purpose was viewed as fostering the regional social and environmental development of the Lake Tahoe region. They indicated that TRPA is responsible for leading the effort to preserve, restore and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe region now and in the future. Board members were very interested in alternative transportation, such as bike lanes, pedestrian paths and a proposed ferry, as a way to encourage visitors and residents get out of their cars.

To accomplish TRPA's purpose, the agency works on numerous issues that relate to the environment of Lake Tahoe. The TRPA staff works diligently to gather the most current scientific data and other related information about issues facing Lake Tahoe. Each month, that information is presented to the TRPA Governing Board at its regularly scheduled public meeting. It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to use that data along with public input to make decisions and create regulations that protect the health and quality of Lake Tahoe.

Designated by the Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) Governing Board comprises the 14 members of the TRPA Governing Board. In addition, a representative from United States Forest Service-Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (USFS) sits on the Board as a voting member. The addition of the USFS is in recognition of the major role this agency plays in transportation provision in the basin. The TMPO voted to provide that the Chair and Vice Chair of the TRPA serve as Chair and Vice Chair of the TMPO unless the TMPO votes otherwise. The TMPO meeting is held during the TRPA meetings, so notices and agendas are mailed at the same time. The TRPA Board must adjourn and the TMPO Board then convenes after being joined by the USFS. Once TMPO actions are taken, the TMPO adjourns and the TRPA reconvenes without the USFS.

The TMPO is charged with implementing a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning process among states and local communities. By federal law, the TMPO is required to produce several documents, including a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), an Overall Work Program (OWP), a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSP) and a

Public Participation Plan (PPP). With the passing of California Senate Bill 375, California MPOs are now required to produce a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for reduction of greenhouse gasses as part of the RTP.

---

## ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

---

### ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Advisory Planning Commission (APC) was established under the compact to support the TRPA Governing Board. The 19-member committee assists the Governing Board with technical and scientific issues. The APC was established by the original compact and is made up of local planners, general members of the community and other representatives who are experts in their fields. In addition to the chief planning officers of Placer County, El Dorado County and the city of South Lake Tahoe in California and of Douglas County, Washoe County and Carson City in Nevada, the APC includes the executive officer of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board of the State of California, the executive officer of the Air Resources Board of the State of California, the director of the State department of conservation and natural resources of the State of Nevada, the administrator of the division of environmental protection in the State department of conservation and natural resources of the State of Nevada and the administrator of the Lake Tahoe Management Unit of the United States Forest Service. The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) has one voting representative on the APC.

As a TRPA function, the APC does not review or act on TMPO or RTPA programming actions, but does have jurisdiction over planning issues related to the Regional Plan and therefore the transportation plan, and could have review responsibility over permits sought by TTD.

---

### TAHOE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The Tahoe Transportation Commission (TTC) was established as part of the metropolitan planning process to provide TMPO and TRPA transportation planning and policy recommendations. The TTC was formalized through TRPA and TMPO resolutions passed in 2007.

The TTC is charged with providing TMPO technical input and recommendations on transportation plans and programs, offering proactive public participation through its meeting noticing requirements, and with providing the TMPO Board necessary time to address the full range of complex and interrelated transportation issues facing the Lake Tahoe Basin. The TTC provides policy guidance to the full TRPA and TMPO where additional input and discussion can take place prior to final actions being taken. The TTC is comprised of the voting membership of the TTD, with the addition of representatives from the Washoe Tribe of CA & NV, USFS and the TRPA APC.

---

### SOCIAL SERVICE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Social Service Advisory Council (SSTAC) was established in accordance with Senate Bill No. 498, approved by the Governor of California on September 16, 1987. Membership, which includes representatives from disadvantaged populations, service providers to those populations and local Consolidated Social

Transportation Agencies (CTSA) is determined by statute. SSTAC serves as an advisory body regarding the transit needs of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, handicapped and persons of limited means. SSTAC also coordinates the unmet transit needs process.

The purpose of the SSTAC is to monitor and promote improvements to those public transportation services for low-income, transit dependent, persons with disabilities and seniors residing in the Tahoe Basin in El Dorado and Placer Counties. It identifies needs or shortcomings in the existing transportation service system and recommends feasible solutions to meet those needs and/or overcome the shortcomings.

The SSTAC meets on the North Shore and South Shore every other month alternating between the two shores.

---

#### RESORT TRIANGLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING COALITION

The Resort Triangle Transportation Planning Coalition (RTTPC) is an advisory group that coordinates and reviews of transportation planning activities, programs and projects. The RTTPC membership includes three RTP Agencies and two Metropolitan Planning Organizations including; TRPA, Placer County Transportation Planning Agency, Nevada County Transportation Commission, Washoe County Regional Transportation Commission and TMPO. Other partners include the Town of Truckee and the Truckee North.

RTTPC monitors major land use issues and projects for effects on the transportation system. The goal of the Coalition is to develop a consensus in support of projects and programs. Any action by the RTTPC is not binding upon the member organizations.

---

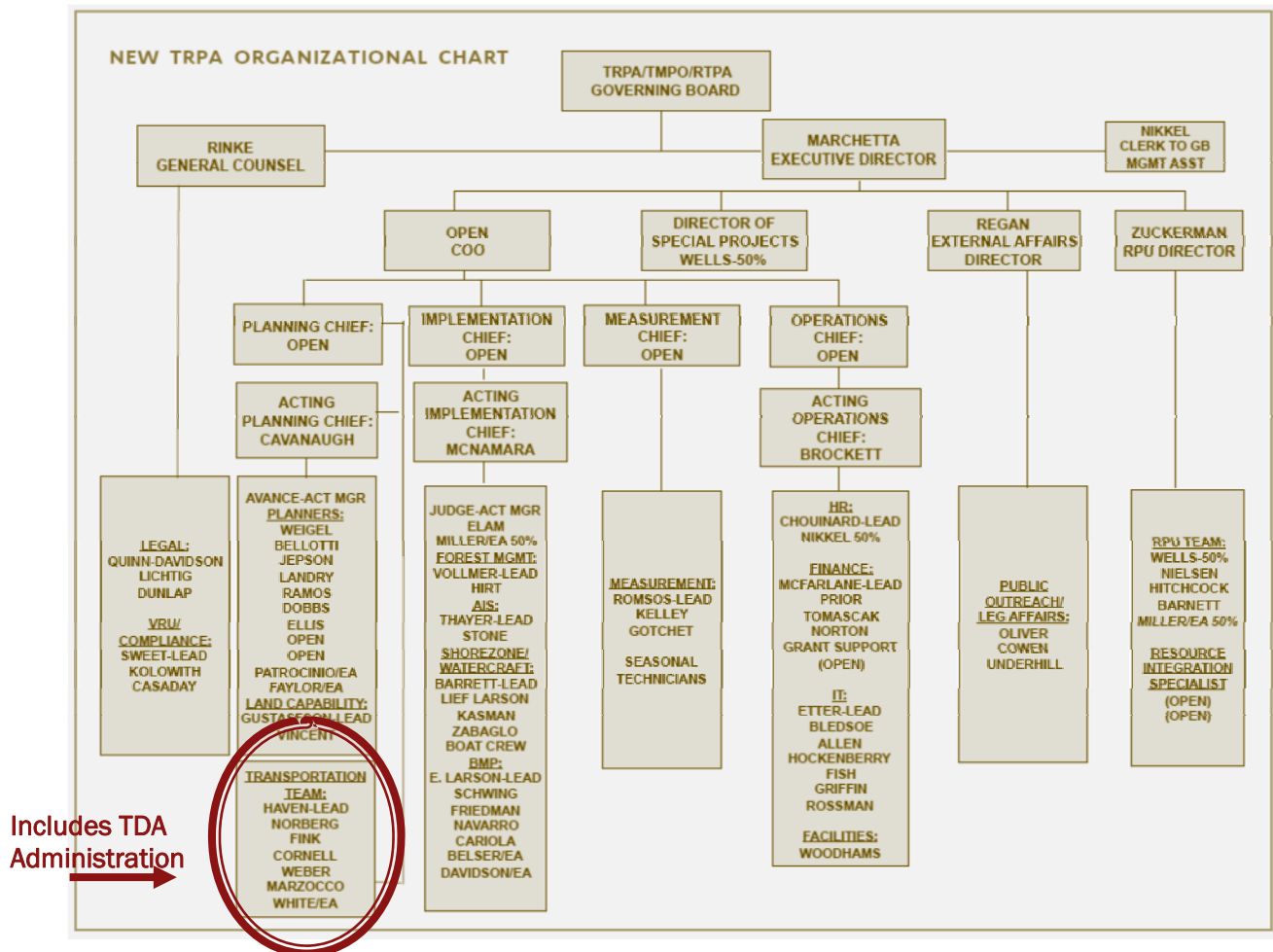
#### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

The Executive Director reports to the Board and has overall responsibility for TRPA operations. In June 2010, TRPA implemented a new organizational structure. In the new structure, the core planning functions (short and long-term transportation planning) were consolidated into a single planning branch with a single manager responsible for consistency and accountability rather than retaining the former split functions between two Branches. TDA administration is housed within the Transportation Planning Team.

Following the prior Audit, a full time Transportation Planner was hired; however, the employee was subsequently hired by South Tahoe Area Transit Authority (STATA) to manage public transportation in South Lake Tahoe. Since that time, TDA administration has been the responsibility of one part-time employee. In addition, the employee handles a number of other transportation planning functions within the department. Although the Transportation Team Lead assists, the employee hours available for administration and oversight of TDA are restricted. Oversight appears to be insufficient in providing the necessary controls. STATA experienced major financial problems that eventually led to bankruptcy. While TRPA may not have been able to prevent the dissolution of STATA, greater involvement and oversight of finances and performance could have possibly mitigated the impact on public transportation.

# Triennial Performance Audit TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

Figure 2: TRPA Organizational Chart 2011



## INTERNAL PLANNING & ACHIEVEMENTS

This section outline TRPA's internal planning activities and its internal planning accomplishments.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

Internal planning and achievements provide an indication of how well TRPA is fulfilling its mission. In April 2011, TRPA completed its Strategic Plan. TRPA's core strategy for success is to be the region's leader in developing the partnerships needed to deliver effective environmental gain.

The plan analyzes the demographic trends, external impacts and environmental trends for the Tahoe Basin. The plan also included a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the organization. Basing its strategy on the "hedgehog concept," which is based on developing and sticking with a single strategy based on three precepts:

1. What you are deeply passionate about;
2. What you can be the best in the world at;

3. What drive your economic engine.

TRPA's Hedgehog Concept can be summarized: *TRPA will position itself strategically to be the best at building the region-wide partnerships needed to deliver the environmental gain that will sustain Tahoe as a world-class natural treasure and tourism destination.*

TRPA developed four key strategic goals to support its Hedgehog Concept:

1. **Improving Operational Efficiency**—enhancing Agency sustainability with internal best practices;
2. **Implementing Streamlined Processes**—improving Agency business practices for enhanced public service;
3. **Enhancing community engagement and customer service**—building positive relationships in the community and improving customer service;
4. **Accelerating environmental gain on the ground**—restoring Lake Tahoe through partnership building and innovative planning.

---

## OVERALL WORK PROGRAM

The OWP is prepared annually and defines the TRPA/TMPO's work elements and products to be provided during the year, including mandated metropolitan planning requirements and other RTP activities. The OWP serves as a management tool for the TRPA and TMPO and outlines TRPA/TMPO's use of resources for transportation planning activities and funding sources.

The OWPs reviewed were complete and appropriately structured. They provided an overview of Lake Tahoe Transportation Planning functions and responsible agencies. It included background information and regional planning requirements. It provided a summary of prior year accomplishments. Federal Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) were delineated and included TRPA/TMPO's efforts in the areas of focus determined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), including the eight (8) SAFETEA-LU additional requirements.

The work elements are logically grouped into four (4) general areas:

1. Outreach and Administration;
2. Regional Intermodal Planning;
3. Project Tracking;
4. Blueprint Planning.

Caltrans Regional Planning Activities are also included.

Each Work Element explains the purpose of the Work Element with a discussion of the activity. An overview of previous work is provided. Planned products for the upcoming year with expected completion dates are detailed. Planned tasks and budgets with associated revenues (funding sources) and expenditures are specified. The Financial Program delineates revenues and costs associated with the OWP.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND REGIONAL COORDINATION

In order to integrate the responsibilities of the three authorities listed above to produce an RTP, the TRPA and TMPO adopted the *Lake Tahoe Basin Regional Transportation Plan 2004-2027* in October 2004 that satisfied TRPA, Federal and State transportation planning requirements. This RTP was the first time a single plan has combined the TRPA, Federal, and State mandates. The previous RTP for Lake Tahoe was completed in August 2008.

The integration of the three major regional transportation planning authorities will continue to strengthen and utilize the various institutional and policy structures to support each other. The ability to integrate land use and transportation planning at a regional level is a prime focus of this program. A new RTP is currently in process. The new RTP will fold into the Regional Plan Update. The Regional Plan is defined as a single enforceable plan and includes all of the following correlated elements:

Figure 3: The Transportation Plan is one component of the Tahoe Regional Plan



1. A **land use plan** providing for the integrated use of land, water, air, space and other natural resources within the region;
2. A **transportation plan** for the integrated development of a regional system of transportation, including but not limited to parkways, highways, transportation facilities, transit routes, waterways, navigation facilities, public transportation facilities, bicycle facilities and pertinent terminals and facilities for the movement of people and goods within the region. The goals of transportation planning for TRPA are—
  - ♦ To reduce dependency on the automobile by making more effective use of existing transportation modes and of public transit to move people and goods within the region;
  - ♦ To reduce to the extent feasible, air pollution that is caused by motor vehicles and giving preference to increasing capacity through public transportation and public programs and projects related to transportation when necessary.
3. A **conservation plan** for the preservation, development, utilization and management of the scenic and other natural resources within the basin;
4. A **recreation plan** for the development, utilization and management of the recreational resources of the region;
5. A **public services and facilities plan** for the general location, scale and provision of public services and facilities;
6. An **air quality plan** for attaining and maintaining Federal, State, or local air and water quality standards.



The Regional Plan Update is the blueprint for the Tahoe region's primary function of TRPA by the compact. The previous Regional Plan has not been updated since the original Regional Plan was created over 20 years ago. The Regional Plan will be a blueprint for the Tahoe region's sustainable future. It will guide how the communities in the area will evolve, how ecosystems function, whether the transportation network is efficient and effective, and whether the basin at-large is restored and economically sustainable.

The Regional Plan Update is focused on promoting environmental redevelopment in key locations as a strategy for more rapid environmental gain and increased economic opportunity. The presupposition is that Lake Tahoe's continued restoration will rely on public-private partnerships and the creation of sustainable communities that will deliver cleaner air and water and enhanced quality of life. The plan amendments focus on regionally-significant environmental initiatives and streamlining regulations to improve effectiveness.

To attain these goals and meet new statutory requirements including the Lake Tahoe total maximum daily load, California's SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy, and Nevada's SB 271, the Regional Plan Update leverages the strengths of the current Regional Plan while addressing some of its limitations with the following strategies:

- Focus on TRPA regional environmental gain and promote sustainable redevelopment in town centers;
- Transition to more local government involvement in permit review;
- Simplify and streamline the permit review process.

The planning commission and governing body are responsible for continuously reviewing and maintaining the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan and updates put forth for the projects and proposals for the implementation of the Regional Plan, a description of the needs and goals of the region and a statement of the policies, standards and elements of the Regional Plan.

Since TRPA is designated as the TMPO for State and Federal transportation planning, TRPA must develop a long-range RTP consistent with Federal transportation laws. The RTP must also meet statutory requirements in California through the adoption of SCS. The SCS lays out a plan for meeting greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets for cars and light trucks in California.

---

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In 2004, the RTP was adopted and TRPA Goals and Policies were amended to include transportation policy elements. The TMPS and TRPA adopted the 2008 RTP; however, goals and policies were not amended. The 2030 RTP was adopted in 2008. Its policies were included in the 2010 RPS Stakeholder and Governing Board sessions. In 2011, the RPU re-scope included the transportation policy package and a new update was started, which included multiple public workshops.

The Regional Plan Update, and accompanying RTP slated for completion in 2012, are the culmination of over six (6) years of public outreach. However, RPU and RTP information was not readily available to the public on TRPA's website. The RPU Fact Sheet provided an overview of the Plan's priorities and policies. To determine more specific information, an interested party need to sort through the RPU Committee Agenda Reports. Public involvement results and opportunities were not readily apparent.

The RTP has specific project information available through the TMPO.org website. The site includes an interactive map of proposed projects. Readers are encourage to

1. Review and comment on the capital projects on both maps including corridor/roadway and water quality projects and bike/pedestrian facilities (a separate map is available for streets);
2. Identify additional investments;
3. Vote on priorities and identify other recommendations;
4. Rank the South Shore and North Shore list of projects (and streets on a separate map);

The process is very forward-thinking and allows interested parties to provide very specific feedback; however, no obvious link exists between the RPU pages and RTP information page. This could be a valuable source of public outreach since the RPU has received considerable publicity.

Figure 4: *Mobility 2035* Logo



The timeline for the RTP parallels the RPU timeline.

Table 3: *Mobility 2035* Timeline

Aug 11	Sep 11	Nov 11	Oct 11	Dec 11	Jan 12	Feb 12	Mar 12	Apr 12	May 12	Jun 12	Jul 12	Aug 12	Sep 12	Oct 12
Scoping Period for the RTP Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS)	Public Workshops on the Draft RTP and Sustainable Communities Strategy							Public Draft RTP release						Approval of the Final Draft RTP

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN TOPICS

The current RTP during the review, *Mobility 2030*, has six chapters or sections:

1. Introduction and Trend Analysis;
2. Goals and Policies;
3. Strategies and Actions;
4. Financial;
5. Travel Forecasts;
6. Conformity / Environmental.

The *Introduction and Trend Analysis* provides background on TRPA, the requirements of the RTP and previous studies. Demographic and economic trends are discussed along with environmental indicators.

Goals and Policies encompassed 11 areas of concern:

1. Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Development;
2. Technology;
3. Mass Transit;
4. Inter-Intra Regional Transportation;



5. Economic Vitality;
6. Parking;
7. Transportation Demand Management;
8. Regional Roadways;
9. Transit Dependent Groups;
10. Aviation;
11. Regional Revenue.

The goal for mass transit in ***Mobility 2030*** was stated as: *Actively encourage the development and implementation of services and programs to expand the operation and use of environmentally conscious public transit in the Lake Tahoe region.* Eleven policies support the Mass Transit Goal. These policies include giving mass transit services preference in mitigating traffic and transportation relate impacts and operating transit services efficiently and effectively.

The RTP Strategies for six (6) projects include the Tahoe City Transit Center, Lake Tahoe Waterborne Transit, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements for U.S. 50. In addition, transit enhancements were identified as long-term and ongoing strategies.

The TMPO/TRPA is currently updating the RTP to be titled ***Mobility 2035***. This RTP update will include a SCS in accordance with California Senate Bill 375 (Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act). The SCS demonstrates how integrated transportation, land use, and housing strategies will help Lake Tahoe meet environmental thresholds and greenhouse gas targets for cars and light trucks on the California side of the basin.

The goals and policies of the RTP are identical to those in the Regional Plan Transportation Element. In addition to goals and policies, The RTP also includes a detailed transportation improvement strategy that is paired with reasonably foreseeable funding.

The RTP identifies numerous transportation projects and programs targeted for implementation in the Tahoe Basin. Transportation needs in the basin vary from those of pedestrians and bicyclists to those of commuting motorists and resort visitors. Projects identified in the RTP range from water quality and traffic flow improvements on major highways to the installation of new bicycle paths and development of a ferry system on the Lake.

The proposed RTP/Transportation Element of the RPU enumerates 13 goals to replace the 12 goals in the previous plan.

---

## MONITORING OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION GOALS

A crucial part of any planning effort is monitoring and evaluating the system. The TRPA/TMPO, in cooperation with other basin transportation agencies, monitor a number of performance indicators and also maintain data sets on other basic transportation information in the Lake Tahoe region.

Mobility/socioeconomic performance indicators that are monitored include travel mode, access by alternative and include vehicle-miles traveled and traffic volumes. Other data that is tracked are:

- Transit ridership;
- Bicycle trail system and user data;

- East Shore parking counts.

---

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

TRPA/TMPO has completed a number of planning projects related to public transportation. The transit needs of the Tahoe Basin, analyzes the adequacy of existing public transportation services and analyzes the potential alternative public transportation services. Staff have coordinated the development of a Short Range Transit Plan, transit passenger surveys, transit marketing studies, coordination of transit services, transit level of service formula development and coordination with transportation management associations.

Studies completed during the Audit period include:

- ***Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan for Lake Tahoe Basin, May 2008***  
A requirement of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is a “*unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services,*” that are “*developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.*”
- ***South Tahoe Area/BlueGO 2010 Short Range Transit Plan***  
The Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) was completed in 2010 and provided a thorough review of existing transit services provided in the South Lake Tahoe area. The plan evaluated the transit system as it existed at the time and identified strategies to meet the transit needs in the area. It also defined how transit resources should be devoted over the plan period. The plan went through several reiterations, which included a reduced service plan due to the financial constraints encountered by BlueGO.

An SRTP for TART on the North Shore is overdue. Issues with BlueGo interfered with plans to develop the SRTP for TART.

## TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT ADMINISTRATION

TRPA/TMPO distributes and monitors TDA funding, which includes Local Transportation Funds (LTF) and State Transit Assistance Funds (STA). These funds help fund needed transit projects in the Tahoe Basin. TRPA/TMPO ensures that the funds are used in accordance with TDA.

---

## CLAIMANT RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERSIGHT

As the RTPA, TRPA must ensure the effective and accurate distribution of TDA funds (both LTF and STA) and assist claimants in the process.

During the Audit period, STATA, which operates BlueGO, the public transportation service on the South Shore, encountered major financial difficulties and filed for bankruptcy. The agency was eventually dissolved.

The Transportation Planner, which was hired to administer TDA, was hired by STATA and eventually dismissed. TDA administration and claimant oversight was transferred to a part-time planner, working three days per week. TDA administration and claimant oversight was only one of a number of duties.

Although TRPA staff worked to assist STATA and TART to provide oversight, the supervision provided was minimal. Staff does not regularly request performance data or provide assistance.

When STATA dissolved, the remaining one STATA employee was removed from the TRPA building. The TTD provided assistance and eventually took over the operation of BlueGO.

---

### TDA CLAIMS PROCESS

The processing of TDA claims is another critical TDA Administrative function. Claims Process includes the following tasks:

- Issuing allocations;
- Providing notices to jurisdictions;
- Ensuring operator compliance with TDA requirements;
- Tracking fund balances;
- Process billings.

TRPA has not developed a TDA Claims Manual. A review of the claims files over the Audit period indicated inconsistencies in the documentation of the claims process. For some years files and checklists were included that ensured several key TDA requirements were met, such as a CHP Inspection Report, Operations Budget, etc. However, in other years, claim files appear to not include required documentation.

Considerable time and expense appears to have been spent coordinating with the El Dorado County Treasurer in processing fund transfers. This may be due in part to the difficulties with STATA.

---

### UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS

One of the primary functions of the RTPA is the unmet transit needs finding process, which is required under PUC Section 99401.5. However, since all TDA funds are directed toward transit, TRPA's compliance is voluntary.

TRPA's Governing Board adopted the following definitions of "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet:"

- **Unmet Transit Needs:** Those public transportation improvements identified for implementation in the claimant's jurisdiction during the first five-year phase of the Transportation Element of the Regional Plan;
- **Reasonable to Meet:** New, expanded or revised transportation service to the public that offers equitable access, can be implemented within the first five-year phase of the Transportation Element of the Regional Plan, is technically feasible, would be accepted by the community, can be funded within the five-year time period, and is cost effective.

Because all TDA funds are used for public transit, TRPA calls these unmet needs hearings Transit Forums. In most years, public meetings were held on both the North and South Shores of Lake Tahoe. The meetings solicited testimony on any transit need. The SSTAC reviews this testimony; along with staff's analysis of the request as being an unmet transit need or an "unmet transit need that is reasonable to meet" and makes an unmet transit needs finding recommendation to the TRPA Governing Board.

The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) reviews the information annually at a public hearing. The SSTAC meets on the North Shore and South Shore every other month, alternating between the two shores. Members of SSTAC are appointed by the TRPA Governing Board, acting as the RTPA. Per TDA regulations, members are appointed on three (3) year staggered terms. Membership is consistent with the TDA requirements:

- One (1) representative of potential transit users who is a person with a disability;
- Two (2) representatives of the local social service providers for seniors, including one (1); representative of a social service transportation provider, if one exists;
- Two(2) representatives of local social service providers for persons with disabilities, including one representative of a social service transportation provider, if one exists;
- One (1) representative of local social service provider for persons of limited means;
- Two (2) representatives from the local consolidated transportation service agency if one exists, including one representative from the local operator, if one exists.

TRPA/TMPO also appoints seven (7) additional members, which represent various stakeholder groups, including the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, the North Tahoe-Truckee Transportation Association, and local hospitals and senior services.

## MARKETING AND TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

---

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

In 2008, the TRPA/TMPO updated its Public Participation Plan (PPP). The development included a series of public workshops, a survey, targeted outreach to specific stakeholder groups and follow-up phone calls to cooperating agencies that did not participate in any of the first three activities.

To generate interest and attract more participation, the public participation discussion and outreach was combined with initial outreach for the RTP. Two Transportation Roundtables, one on the North Shore and one on the South Shore, were conducted. An on-line survey was also provided. A letter and a copy of the survey were sent to approximately 500 individuals and agencies, including local, State and Federal government, natural and environmental resource agencies, churches, lodging associations, representatives of different transportation user groups, and participants in the place-based planning process. Ads in English and Spanish newspapers, press releases, flyers in English and in Spanish and web advertisements were also used to promote the Roundtables and on-line surveys.

The TRPA/TMPO made special effort to include several stakeholder groups that have unique input into the transportation planning process, but may be harder to reach than other groups. These include (1) minority and low-income communities, (2) second homeowners and (3) persons with disabilities or special needs.

The PPP incorporated the results from the public outreach. The methods included were based on those that would gain the most input from diverse stakeholder groups, considering staff and resource limitations. Tactics include maintaining an e-mail and mailing list, targeted announcements, document summaries, bi-lingual outreach and specific rules for notices and public meetings.

TMPO/TRPA staff also participates in number of ongoing public forums. These opportunities provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes to citizens and other interested parties. Since 2003, a series of intensive workshops related to the update of the 20-year planning documents in the region have been held. These Regional Planning Process and the place-based planning process workshops solicit information from stakeholder groups on what environmental, social and economic standards should be set and how these standards should be attained. Both of these processes have identified major considerations related to transportation that are being incorporated into the TMPO RTP.

TRPA has continued to expand its public outreach activities including “fireside chats” by the Executive Director.

The TRPA website contains a lot of information, but is graphically simple and navigation is complex. The complicated navigation is a result, to large degree, of the large number of issues handled by the TRPA. The TMPO has a separate website, which includes an interactive map of projects proposed for the upcoming RTP. Visitors may vote, comment or add ideas. Another map provides information regarding 2011 Federal TIP projects. A number of documents and reports are also available.



## FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents an overview of those issues and concerns identified through our Audit process. It also outlines specific strategies and recommended solutions to address said issues.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Tahoe Regional Planning Authority (TRPA) was created by a compact that was enacted by the States of California and Nevada, affirmed by the United States Congress, and then signed by the States' governors and the President of the United States.
  - 1.1. It is charged to maintain the environmental health of the Lake across a multitude of threshold areas: water and air quality, scenic, recreation, wildlife, fisheries, soils, vegetation and noise.
  - 1.2. TRPA is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) for the Lake Tahoe Basin.
  - 1.3. In the State of California, TRPA is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and is responsible for the administration of the Transportation Development Act.

---

### COMPLIANCE

2. TRPA administers Transportation Development Act (TDA) laws and regulations in an efficient and effective manner and is compliant with TDA rules and regulations with few exceptions.
  - 2.1. Due to the financial difficulties and dissolution of South Tahoe Area Transit Authority (STATA), the filing and completion of the Triennial Performance Audits for TRPA were delayed. **This is a non-reoccurring situation.**
  - 2.2. The State Controllers Report was not filed for STATA in FY 09/10 and financial audits for STATA were delayed. **This is a non-reoccurring situation.**
  - 2.3. TRPA has not developed criteria, rules and regulations for Article 4.5 and bicycle and pedestrian claims. TRPA currently does not have a Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA).

---

### PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The prior Audit, conducted by C.G. Uhlenberg LLP. made six (6) recommendations.
  - 3.1. Three (3) recommendations were fully implemented:
    - 3.1.1. *Train additional personnel in TDA administration and management functions to ensure that claims and reporting will be administered in a timely manner if the primary personnel responsible is not available.*  
Although this recommendation was implemented, budget and staff reductions have severely limited staff's ability to manage the TDA function.

3.1.2. Clarify with Caltrans that the contents of the Federal Transportation Plan/Regional Transportation Plan contains all of the required elements for a Regional Transportation Plan. Staff is fully aware of FTP/Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) required elements.

3.1.3. Establish a system to ensure that Triennial Performance Audit reports are submitted on time to the Director of the California Department of Transportation. In addition, TRPA should identify a person or persons responsible for maintaining this system and communicating the reporting requirements to operators on a regular basis. This recommendation was implemented and TRPA commissioned the Triennial Performance Audits in a timely manner; however, unforeseen situations with STATA delayed the schedule for completion of the Audits. Caltrans was properly notified.

3.2. Three (3) recommendations do not appear to be fully implemented:

3.2.1. Develop a system of ensuring that the transit operators in the jurisdiction comply with report submission timetables. This system and expectations should be documented and communicated to the transit operators. Timetables must be adhered to or funding will be withheld. Although this recommendation was not fully implemented, reasons for the late and non-filing are due in part to extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the TRPA and/or the operators.

3.2.2. Reevaluate the decision to reduce TRPA allocation of LTF (Local Transportation Funds) funds for administration, planning and programming functions to determine if the use of additional funds (up to the amount allowed by Sections 99233.1 and 99233.2 of California PUC) would enable TRPA to assign sufficient resources to TDA functions. This was partially implemented with a new staff member, but with the funding constraints during the Audit period, the position was not filled when the incumbent left the position. The TDA administration function is currently understaffed.

3.2.3. Meet with claimants in its jurisdiction and with the County auditors in its jurisdiction to clarify the responsibilities of each party with regard to submission of allocation estimates and claims and distribution of allocation instructions and establish a methodology by which accurate claims may be submitted and approved in a timely manner for all claimants. TRPA has not developed a formal claims process or manual for submission.

---

## FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

4. While TRPA is the RTPA for the Tahoe region, its responsibilities are more encompassing than most RTPAs in California.

4.1. In order to enhance the efficiency and governmental effectiveness of the region, TRPA has been endowed with the powers, which were conferred by the compact, to *establish environmental threshold carrying capacities and to adopt and enforce a regional plan and implementing ordinances that will achieve and maintain such capacities while providing opportunities for orderly growth and development consistent with capacities* and it has the authority to *interpret and administer its plans, ordinances, rules and regulations in accordance with the provision of the compact.*

4.2. Six (6) committees, comprised of TRPA Governing Board members meet publicly to review technical items and then make recommendations to the full board for final action. TDA items are



referred to the Operations Committee since they are typically budget and financial items. Ultimately, the full 15-member Governing Board will listen to the committees' recommendations and take final action.

- 4.3. The TRPA Board share membership with the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization(TMPO).
- 4.4. The interviewed Board members, who were members of the Operations Committee, indicate that staff keeps them informed about the issues on which it must act through detailed staff reports.
- 4.5. Board members do not view transportation planning as a core function of TRPA/TMPO.
5. The Executive Director reports to the Board and has overall responsibility for TRPA operations.
  - 5.1. In June, 2010, TRPA implemented a new organizational structure. In the new structure, the core planning functions (short and long-term transportation planning) were consolidated into a single planning branch.
  - 5.2. TDA administration has been the responsibility of one part-time employee, who has multiple other responsibilities. Staffing does not appear to be adequate.
6. TRPA's internal planning process was excellent. It has completed a detailed strategic plan and the Overall Work Program (OWP) aligns well with the related strategies in the Strategic Plan.
7. The RTP is an integral part of the Tahoe Regional Plan Update (RPU), both of which are scheduled for completion in 2012.
8. A crucial part of any planning effort is monitoring and evaluating the system. The TRPA/TMPO, in cooperation with other basin transportation agencies, monitor a number of performance indicators.
9. TRPA/TMPO has completed a number of planning projects related to public transportation, including the adequacy of existing public transportation services and the potential alternative public transportation services.
10. Claimant assistance and oversight appeared inadequate over the Audit period, primarily due to insufficient resources devoted to TDA management.
11. TRPA has not developed a documented TDA claims procedure and checklist. Claim documentation was inconsistent during the Audit period.
12. Although all TDA funding is used for public transportation purposes, TRPA conducts an annual unmet needs process and hearings; however, documentation was limited.
13. TRPA/TMPO have expanded its public outreach activities, including "fireside chats" by the Executive Director.
14. TRPA/TMPO made special effort to include several stakeholder groups that have unique input into the transportation planning process, but may be harder to reach than other groups. These include (1)

minority and low-income communities, (2) second homeowners and (3) persons with disabilities or special needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1

***Review staffing requirements for transit operator oversight and TDA administration and consider supplementing staff.***

Currently, TDA administration and management is staffed by one part-time Associate Planner, who works three (3) days per week. In addition to TDA duties, the Associate Planner has a variety of other responsibilities. Backup is provided by the Program Coordinator for Transportation Planning.

Following the prior Audit, TRPA hired a full time planner to administer and manage TDA and provide assistance and support to the transit operators. The planner became primarily involved with the operation of BlueGO and was eventually hired by STATA to manage the operations. This left a void in the oversight and administrative function.

The claimant relationships under TRPA are more complex than most RTPAs experience. While there are only two (2) claimants, they are in two counties. Staff must work with two County auditors, with different procedures and requirements regarding the allocation of LTF.

With the limited resources, staff has done a remarkable job ensuring that administrative paperwork was completed and claims were apportioned. However, time and resources were not available to provide adequate oversight and assistance to the claimants. STATA filed for bankruptcy and eventually dissolved. Although STATA's collapse was not TRPA's responsibility, more stringent oversight and assistance may have provided planning, management and financial administrative tools lacking at STATA.

In addition, TRPA should work with the transit operators to provide additional oversight and assistance. As part of the claims process, TRPA may establish supplemental rules and regulations for the submission of claims. Recommended requirements included:

- Performance measures and indicators (reported quarterly):
  - ◆ Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH);
  - ◆ Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM);
  - ◆ Operating Costs;
  - ◆ Fare Revenues;
  - ◆ Local Support;
  - ◆ Passenger Counts;
  - ◆ Operating Cost per VRH;
  - ◆ Passengers per VRH;
  - ◆ Passengers per VRM;
  - ◆ Operating Cost per Passenger;
  - ◆ Fare Box Revenues;

- Operating Costs compared to Budget;
- Actions taken to address TPA Recommendations;
- Actions taken to address financial audit recommendations.

---

## RECOMMENDATION 2

### *Develop and maintain a TDA Claim Process Manual and Checklist.*

The establishment of clear and unambiguous claims procedures is key to ensuring public accountability for TDA funding. The procedures should include the following:

- Definitive dates for allocations and submission of claims;
- Clear instructions regarding TDA requirements:
  - ◆ Annual California Highway Patrol Terminal Inspection;
  - ◆ Budget or proposed budget for the fiscal year of the claim;
  - ◆ If the budget increases more than 15%, a statement identifying the need;
  - ◆ Fiscal and Compliance Audit;
  - ◆ State Controllers Report;
  - ◆ Documentation of Farebox Recovery Ratio or other criteria developed by TRPA.
- TRPA requirements, such as operating statistics and statements of actions taken to implement recommendations from Fiscal and Compliance Audits, Performance Audits.

Although pedestrian and bicycle claims and Article 4.5 (Community Transit Service) claims have not been made, defining the process and criteria for these claims would provide a better understanding to current and potential claimants in regard to their obligations as TDA claimants.

TRPA needs to also review how the agency can provide additional assistance to its operators, including help on productivity improvements.

---

## RECOMMENDATION 3

### *Work with TART to develop a Short Range Transit Plan.*

The TART Systems Plan Study (the Short Range Transit Plan) was completed in 2005. Since that time, TART has revised its schedules and route structure. The system has continued to evolve and funding for the system has declined.

By updating its SRTP, TRPA will ensure that TART is developing efficiently and that it effectively serves the community and its riders. As TRPA is currently updating its Tahoe Regional Plan and RTP, TRPA should ensure that the Transit Element for North Lake Tahoe is consistent with TART's Short- and Long-Range Transit Plans. TART's update of the Transit Development Plan should address the following elements:

1. **Overview of existing transit system:** Every route is detailed along with schedules, facilities, fleet and fare information;
2. **Transit Demand Analysis:** A key step in developing and evaluating transit plans is a careful analysis of the mobility needs of patrons. A survey of existing TART riders and the community should be a

key component of the analysis. In addition to demographic and trip information, the survey should attempt to capture customer satisfaction and the importance of key service attributes.

3. **Goals, Objectives, Measures & Standards:** Goals and objectives determine the parameters for the service. Measures and standards for each objective would allow TRPA to determine if the service is efficiently and effectively meeting the needs of the communities it serves.
4. **Service & System Evaluation:** Recent changes in ridership, operating costs, and operating revenues need to be analyzed along with any deficiencies in equipment or facilities. Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements is usually considered. The routes are analyzed individually and together as a system.
5. **Operations Plan:** The Operations Plan should set forth any proposed changes.
6. **Operations Budget:** The Operations Budget should take into consideration expense forecasts, regional and local revenue projections, fare policies, labor or service agreements, competitive level of service and committed service changes.
7. **Capital Improvement Program:** The Capital Improvement Plan would include vehicle replacement or additions. It would also address the capital requirements for the new Operations and Maintenance Center.
8. **Strategic Plan:** In addition to the standard five-year outlook, transit plans are also focusing on long-range goals and challenges. This helps ensure current actions are consistent with future plans.

Table 4: Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility	Timeframe
Review staffing requirements for transit operator oversight and TDA administration and consider supplementing staff.	High	Executive Director	11/2012
Develop and maintain a TDA Claim Process Manual and Checklist.	High	Planning Analyst	12/2013
Work with TART to develop a Short Range Transit Plan.	Medium	Planning Analyst	12/2013