

# Governance Review of the Tahoe Transit Institutional Structures

DRAFT – June 9, 2004

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Meeting Date 8/16/04



TAHOE  
REGIONAL  
PLANNING  
AGENCY

*Tahoe Regional Planning Agency*

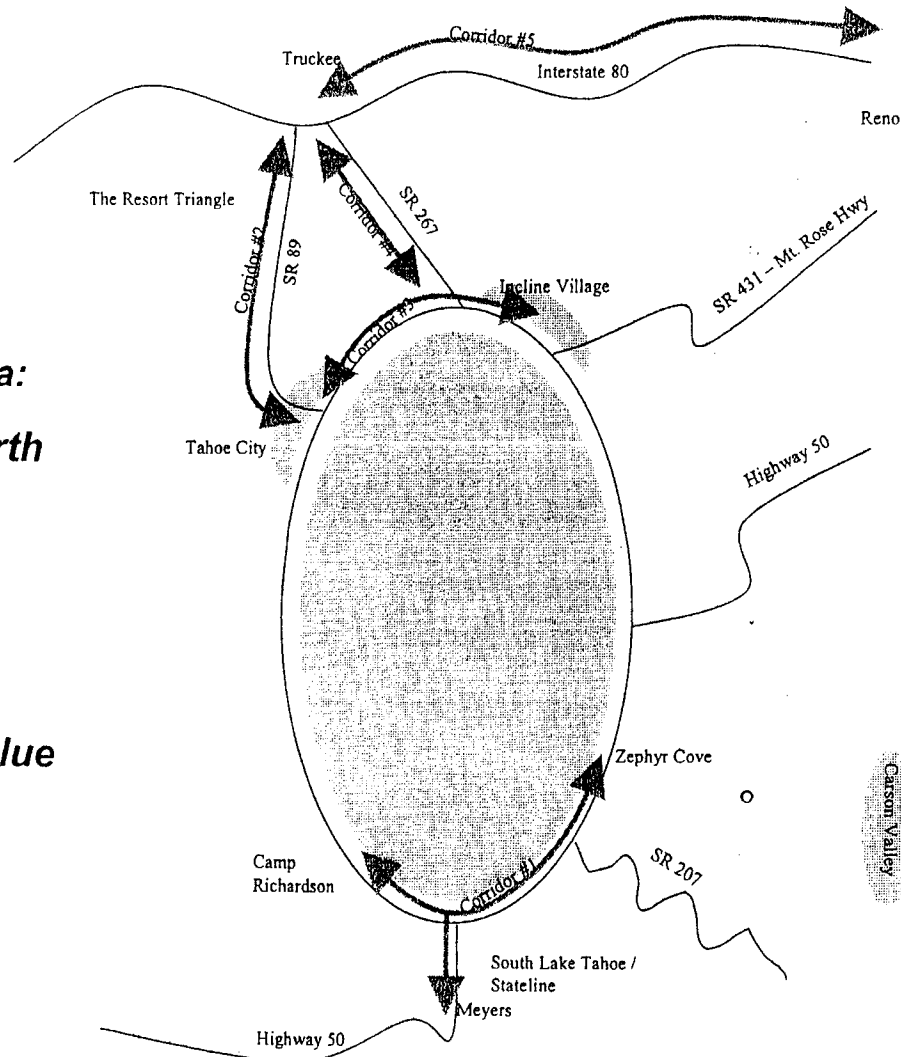
## ***The Project***

- ***Independent assessment of the institutional framework of transit in the Tahoe Region***
- ***Scope included Tahoe Transit District (TTD) and other transit entities in the region***
- ***Project included interviews, review of transit plans, assessments, ridership statistics, benchmarking data***

## Situation Analysis

### Transit demand in the Tahoe area:

- Resort triangle on the north shore
- CSLT/Stateline area on south shore
- Not region-wide
- Ridership on TART and Blue Go is centered on transit-dependent population.
- Shuttle services handle much of the visitor traffic.



#### Tahoe Basin Transit Corridors

- #1 - Employment / some visitors (Camp Richardson - Meyers - SLT - Zephyr Cove)
- #2 - Resort employees (Truckee-Tahoe City)
- #3 - Resort employees (Tahoe City-Incline)
- #4 - Resort employees (Truckee-Kings Beach, N Shore)
- #5 - Seasonal - resort employees (Reno - N. Shore resorts & ski areas)

## ***Situation Analysis***

### ***What is the current institutional structure?***

- ***At least 18 separate entities are involved in policy, planning, funding and operations in the Tahoe region. Does not include individual businesses that provide courtesy shuttles.***
- ***These 18 entities oversee a combined annual ridership of approximately 1.2 million.***
- ***See matrix on following page for a breakdown of the institutional framework.***

## Situation Analysis

Responsibility Level	Entity	Note
Policy direction	1 TRPA Board	Staffed by TRPA
	2 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board	Transit planning entity recognized by feds. Staffed by TRPA
	3 Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) Board	Transit planning entity recognized by CA. Staffed by TRPA
	4 Placer County Board of Supervisors	Provides policy direction for TART
	5 Tahoe Transportation District (TTD)	Separate Board; staffed by TRPA; Forum for Tahoe region transit stakeholders.
	6 Coordinated Transit System Management Co (CTSMCo)	Private, non-profit org; separate board; Staffed by TRPA; Forum for S Shore stakeholders
Stakeholder forum	7 south shore Transit Management Association	Forum for south shore business & transit interests; long-time ED recently retired.
	8 Tahoe Transportation District (TTD)	Separate Board; staffed by TRPA; Forum for Tahoe region transit stakeholders.
	9 Tahoe Transportation Commission (TTC)	Provides support to policy bodies; Substantially the same as TTD Board
	10 Coordinated Transit System Management Co (CTSMCo)	Private, non-profit org; separate board; Staffed by TRPA; Forum for S Shore stakeholders
	11 Truckee-North Tahoe Transit Management Association (TNT/TMA)	Active on north shore; Forum for N Shore resorts, businesses
	12 Truckee-North Tahoe Transit Management Association (TNT/TMA)	Active on north shore; Collects from north shore resorts/hotels; Forum for north shore and Truckee interests.
Funding	13 Placer County	Room tax; TDA funds through role as western County RTPA
	14 Washoe County Regional Transit Commission	Funds service in IV
	15 Douglas County	Room tax
	16 City of Truckee	Contracts w/ Aztec for Truckee Transit. Provides some funding to Placer County for TART service.
	17 Coordinated Transit System Management Co (CTSMCo)	Private, non-profit Nevada Corp.; separate board; contracts with ATM for casino service; Staffed by TRPA; Collects funds from casinos
	18 Tahoe Transportation District (TTD)	Collects and distributes federal 5311 funds and car rental mitigation funds.
Operational planning	19 El Dorado County/ City of S. Lake Tahoe	TDA funds. Contracts w/ ATM for Blue Go fixed route and demand response system.
	20 Town of Truckee	Funds service on SR 89 & limited service in town
	21 Placer County Public Works Dept.	Operates Tahoe Area Regional Transit (TART); Operates in Placer Cty and I.V. under contract to Washoe Cty. Some service to Truckee.
	22 Area Transit Management (ATM)	Private sector operator on south shore; Operates "BlueGO" service; Contracts w/ SLT, El Do & Douglas Counties, casinos and Heavenly
	23 North Lake Tahoe Transportation Authority	Currently dormant. Authorized to provide transit service in N. shore up to Placer/Nevada County line.
	24 Aztec	Private operator. Operates Truckee Transit for City of Truckee under contract. Some wintertime service to north shore.
Operations	25 Area Transit Management (ATM)	Private sector operator on south shore; Operates BlueGO, casino, Heavenly, Nifty Fifty, demand response services; Contracts w/ CTSMCo, Heavenly, CSLT, Douglas, El Do

## ***Situation Analysis***

### ***Why has the current institutional framework evolved as it has?***

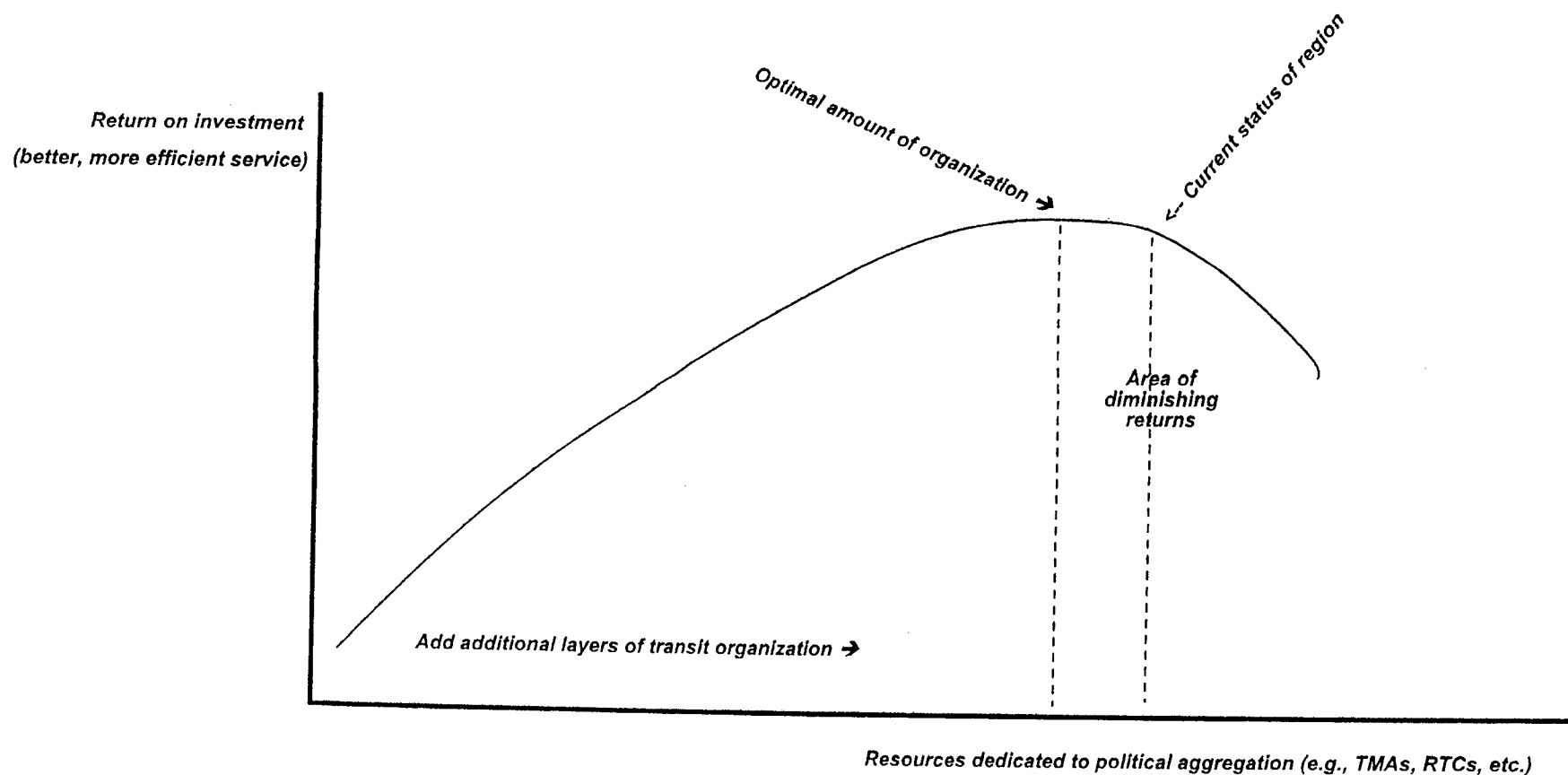
- ***There is no “Tahoe region” with regard to transit:***
  - ***Two separate regions of demand: south shore and north shore***
  - ***Political balkanization:***
    - ***Two separate States: California & Nevada***
    - ***Multiple political subdivisions: Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Washoe and Douglas counties; CSLT and Town of Truckee.***
- ***Local communities in the Tahoe region are political step-children to downslope population centers.***

## ***Situation Analysis***

### ***Why does the region teem with transit entities?***

- *Balkanization of the Tahoe region makes political aggregation both desirable and effective – TRPA is the prime example.*
- *In transit, political power is aggregated by the TMAs, CTSMCo, TTD.*
- *Groups are effective at consolidating political power to achieve greater results.*
- *TMAs concentrate what would otherwise be parochial interests of major tourism businesses in region.*
- *Question: when does too much political aggregation result in diminishing returns? (See chart on following page)*

## Situation Analysis



*What scenario gets us to the optimal point?*



## **Situation Analysis**

### **What do other resort regions do?**

- **Benchmarks (e.g., Park City, Summit County, Aspen) are not very relevant for analyzing the institutional structure of transit in Tahoe. Unlike Tahoe other benchmark transit agencies:**
  - **Have a limited number of political subdivisions; usually just one or two. Most benchmark agencies exist within one County (e.g., Summit Counties in UT and CO, Mono County, CA). Even resort communities in Vermont don't cross County boundaries.**
  - **Have a more linear route structure (e.g., Aspen, Park City, Vail.)**
  - **Cover a much more compact area than in Tahoe (e.g., Park City transit covers 10 miles of roadway)**
  - **Are centered around one large demand generator (e.g., Mammoth, Vail, Whistler.)**
  - **Serve one-horse communities that rely on a dominant business or demand generator (e.g., one large ski resort or skiing is the only industry.) This makes it easy to focus political energy on sustaining the health of that business.**

## ***Situation Analysis***

### ***Role of TTD***

- ***Intended to be the local transit operator per Article IX of the Compact.***
- ***Little underlying demand for region-wide transit although there is demand for transit in the region – big difference.***
- ***TTD boundaries (i.e., lake watershed) are currently not collinear with boundaries of where transit demand exists although boundaries can be expanded – omits Hwy 89 and Donner Summit resorts, Sierra at Tahoe, Kirkwood, Minden/Gardnerville, Town of Truckee, and Northstar.***
- ***TTD is widely perceived to be too south shore-centric. A de-facto administrative body for CSLT transit service.***
- ***Almost no history or legitimacy as a transit operator. Prior attempts at operations have not been particularly effective.***

## ***Situation Analysis***

### ***Role of TTD***

- ***But TTD has been effective at:***
  - ***Providing a forum for region-wide issues – during those times when that has been important.***
  - ***Acting as a conduit for State, Federal and local transit funds.***
  - ***Handling administrative tasks for Blue Go.***
  
- ***TTD has not been able to:***
  - ***Generate support for a regional transit tax. Three prior tax measures were all defeated.***
  - ***Establish an accepted region-wide vision for transit.***
  - ***Prove itself as an operating entity.***

## ***Impacts***

### ***How does this situation impact TTD?***

- ***Light agendas and uneven attendance at Board meetings.***
- ***Substantial gap between intent and reality of TTD.***
- ***Areas where TTD is successful can easily be handled by other entities.***
- ***TTD is an artificial entity without any underlying genuine need.***
- ***These limitations are largely beyond control of TTD:***
  - ***Little chance of a regional transit tax***
  - ***Little demand for region-wide transit***
  - ***Boundaries of TTD cut off major areas of transit demand***

## ***Impacts***

### ***How does this situation impact transit in the Tahoe region?***

- ***Two separate transit systems have evolved.***
- ***Minimal but self-sustaining service.***
- ***More reflective of local community needs than regional objectives.***
- ***Transit dependent population served. Discretionary ridership is handled more by private shuttles.***
- ***Both public transit and private shuttles benefit VMT reduction goals.***
- ***What configuration of services will yield the most VMT reduction and other benefits – at the highest operational efficiency?***

## ***Alternatives***

***Where does TTD go from here? Several alternatives:***

### ***Alternative 1 – Do nothing***

- ***Keep status quo***
- ***Maybe gasoline prices will rise to \$4 per gallon and generate desperate interest in a regional transit tax.***
- ***Continue to harvest minor benefits of TTD***
- ***Keep CTSMCo running***

## **Alternatives**

### **Alternative 2 – Re-scope the TTD**

- ***Change Article IX to reflect reduced role of TTD***
- ***Conduit for certain Federal, State and local transit funds.***
- ***TRPA continues to fulfill role as MPO and RTPA.***
- ***Lobbying role in Sacramento, Carson City and Washington.***
- ***Obtain transit grants.***
- ***Meet quarterly or semi-annually.***
- ***CTSMCo has small administrative staff separate from the TRPA.***
- ***Provide policy support to formation of Business Improvement Districts to provide reliable operating funds for transit. Use as springboard for possible future transit tax vote.***

## **Alternatives**

### **Alternative 3 – Delete TTD**

- ***Change Article IX to remove references to TTD; reserve certain responsibilities for TRPA:***
  - *Transfer legal responsibilities of TTD to TRPA.*
  - *TRPA Transportation Division takes on responsibilities as funding conduit (5311 funds, car rental mitigation fees, etc.), obtaining grants, lobbying.*
  - *TRPA fulfills role as MPO and RTPA.*
  - *CTSMCo has small administrative staff separate from the TRPA.*
- ***Establish Tahoe Regional Transit Commission:***
  - *Boundaries include north shore areas currently excluded from TTD.*
  - *Meet quarterly or semi-annually to discuss transit issues of regional importance.*
  - *Provide policy support to formation of Business Improvement Districts to provide reliable operating funds for transit. Use as springboard for possible future transit tax vote.*



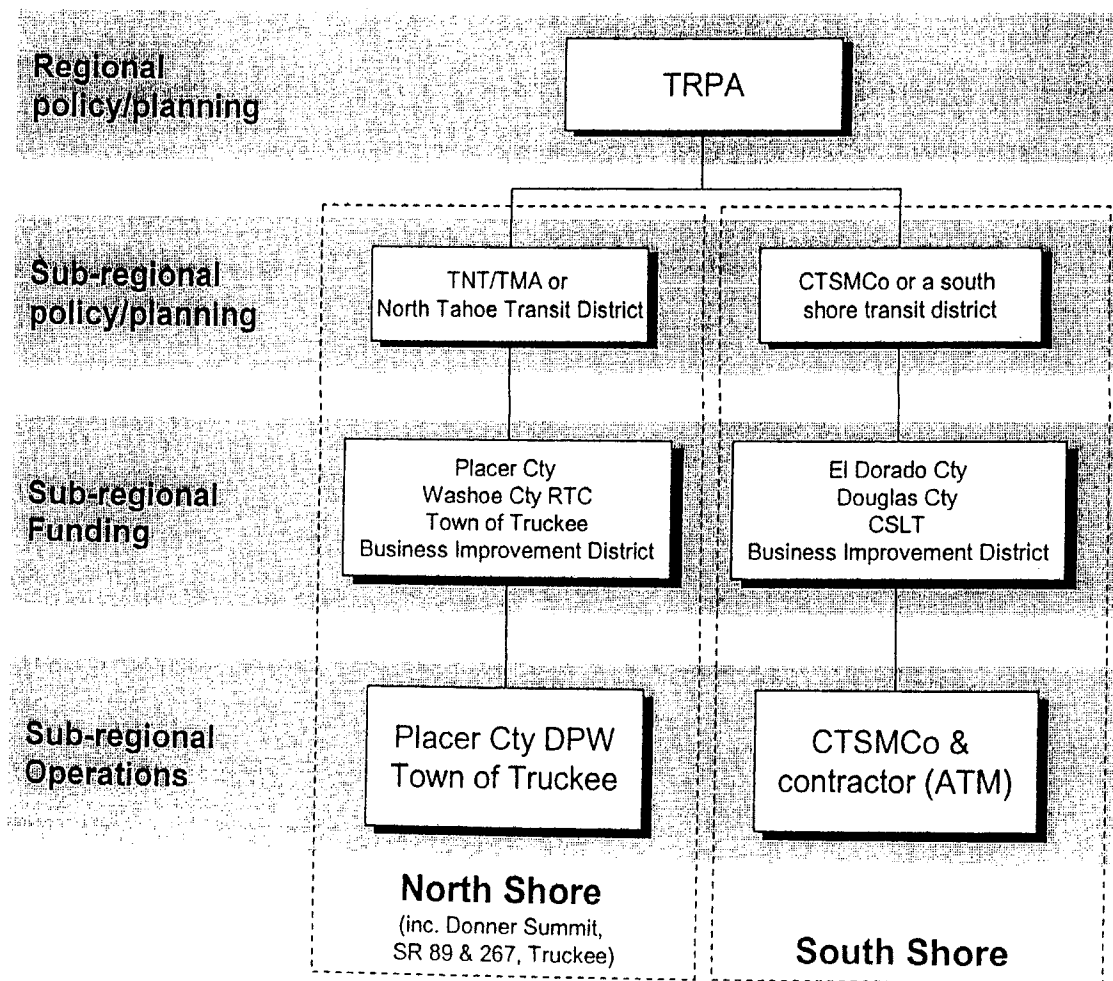
## ***Alternatives***

### ***Alternative 3a – Delete TTD / Formalize new institutional structure***

- ***Same as Alternative 3 but also formalizes a new institutional structure for transit (See next page)***

## Situation Analysis

*Alternative 3a – Delete TTD / Formalize new institutional structure*



## ***Next Steps***

- ***Meet on June 11***
- ***Discuss findings***
- ***Decide if action needs to be taken***
- ***Select an alternative (or a variant) to pursue***